Negotiating Displacement: A Study of Land and Livelihoods in Rural East Timor
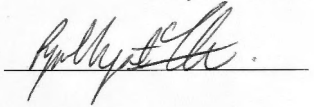
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A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at

The Australian National University

April 2012

Abstract

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own investigations, and where I have drawn on the work of others, due acknowledgement has been made. The text is no longer than 100,000 words.

Pyone Myat Thu

Abstract

This thesis is a study of the strategies two rural communities employ to negotiate land and livelihoods under conditions of internal displacement. I contend that internal displacement has enduring and transformative effects. The dynamics of internal displacement are examined in the context of East Timor, a country that has tolerated cumulative foreign domination, and where displacement is predominately considered a product of conflict. I take an alternative view to suggest that displacement has equally been produced by successive attempts of state territorialisation and development interventions.

One effect of conceptualising internal displacement as conflict-induced is the dominant representation of 'displaced' East Timorese as passive and disempowered victims of war and occupation. Engaging local perspectives and experiences of displacement, the ethnographic case studies presented in this thesis seek to illustrate how 'displaced' East Timorese respond, adapt and creatively transcend their circumstances. Focussing on two rural communities forcibly resettled by the Indonesian authorities in Laga and Samé Sub-Districts, findings illustrate that resettled individuals and families forged new economic relations and mobilised extended kin-based ties, in order to negotiate access to customary land to rebuild their livelihoods in the sites of resettlement. My ethnographic focus also considers the perspectives of customary landowners who have had to negotiate the consequences of displacement by reworking conditions of land access and social relations to accommodate incoming settlers.

What began as involuntary resettlement is increasingly showing signs of transforming into other modes of mobility. Now free to return to their ancestral places of origin, 'displaced' East Timorese are strategically situating themselves to create multi-local livelihoods within the changing political and economic environment. There is however an inherent tension in negotiating an existence between the ancestral settlement and resettlement sites as some individuals and families have come to embrace ideas of 'modernity' through their experiences, which is unsettling their commitment to their ancestral land. I suggest that 'displaced' East Timorese are attempting to ameliorate this tension by finding 'translocal' solutions.

Dedika ba Timor-oan tomak ne'ebe lori terus no susar realiza sira nia aspirasaun.

Dedicated to all East Timorese who endured extreme hardship to realise their aspirations.

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aspirations.*

Acknowledgements

Peskija ida ne'e sei la realiza se la ho ema sira ne'ebe permite ha'u hodi aprende sira nia moris no ambiente. Husi ha'u-nia fuan, ha'u agradese familia sira ne'ebe fo fatin mai ha'u iha distritu Baucau, liu-liu iha suku Tekinomata, Mulia no mos Waitame. Iha distritu Manufahi, ha'u agradese familia sira ne'ebe iha suku Letefoho, Daisua, Babulu, Foho Ailicu no mos Leo Lima. Hau fo agradese ba familia sira hakiak hau hanesan oan ida iha aldeia Caicasalari: Senor Baltazar Belo no mos iha aldeia Tomonamo: Senor Ricardo Araujo no Senor Supriano Araujo.

Husi ha'u-nia fuan, hau mos fo agradese ba sira ne'ebe asiste ha'u iha peskija ida nee, ba imi nia pasensia no servisu boot hau fo agradese liu-liu ba: Evangelino Monteiro Soares, Detaviana Madalena Guterres Freitas, Celestino Morreira, Januario Gaio Belo, Jose Baptista Belo, no Adaul.

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It is true what they say, that the PhD journey may be a lonely and personal undertaking but the end result is a collective achievement. The debt that I owe to the participants of this research, supervisors, colleagues, friends, and family is immeasurable, and there is no adequate way to express my gratitude. But let me make a small attempt here.

In East Timor, the National University of Timor-Leste (UNTL) kindly facilitated my research undertaking. I am grateful to the former Rector Benjamin Corte-Real and Assistant Rector Miguel Maia. I also thank the Social Economic of Agriculture Department, particularly Mr Gil da Conceição for sharing his knowledge, and giving me the opportunity to mentor his students.

I am greatly indebted to the families who let me participate in their everyday livelihood practices and, in doing so, incorporated me into their lives. I sincerely thank the families in Laga sub-district, especially the families in the villages of Tekinomata, Mulia and Waitame.

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Terms, Names and Currency

This thesis draws on the name 'East Timor' except in reference to the national government or state, where the terms 'Timor-Leste government' or 'Timor-Leste state' are used instead.

I mainly refer to East Timor as a 'post-independence' nation in this study. I take the post-independence period to start from 20 May 2002 when East Timor restored formal national independence until the present time. The 'post-referendum' period refers to the years immediately following ballot vote for national independence from twenty four years of Indonesian rule on 30 August 1999 through to the formative years under the UNTAET (United Nations Transitional Administration of East Timor) interim government ending in 2002. To a lesser extent, I describe East Timor as 'post-conflict', a categorisation commonly drawn in academic and non-academic works to describe the violence and destruction that ensued with the final departure of the Indonesian administration in September 1999. My usage of the term 'colonial' in the current period of East Timor is inclusive of both the Portuguese and Indonesian rule as I see the Indonesian invasion and occupation as a modern form of 'colonisation'.

Fieldwork was conducted in Tetun, however, interlocutors conversed in a mixture of Tetun, Indonesian, Portuguese, and local mother-tongue languages - and these terms are labelled accordingly. Non-English terms are italicised with the exception of place names and geographical features. For reasons of confidentiality, the names of interlocutors have either been left out or replaced by pseudonyms. The US dollar (USD) is the national currency of East Timor. All monetary values in this thesis are in US dollars. At the time of fieldwork, the currency exchange rate was approximately USD 1.00 to AUD 1.10.

Prologue

I set foot again in East Timor (Timor-Leste) in May 2007 a few days ahead of the country's fifth anniversary of restoration of national independence. Thesis fieldwork had been delayed for over three months due to travel restrictions imposed by the university due to civil strife that had continued sporadically following the country's internal crisis in 2006. While anxiously waiting for the travel approval, I made alternative contact with various humanitarian and development agencies in Thailand in the event that I was forced to change my thesis focus to study protracted displacement among ethnic minority refugees along the Thai-Burma border.

The general atmosphere upon my arrival in East Timor was tense. Compared to my previous research trips to the country in 2004 and 2006, the capital, Dili, was restless and visibly messy.[1] I was struck by the scale of property destruction and the internal displacement of people. Internally displaced persons (IDP) camps and improvised shelters made of tarpaulin sheets were erected in every possible available space across the city centre and surrounding areas.[2] The physical and social devastation can be traced back to the violent events of 2006. Initially triggered by grievances among elements of the national security forces, the troubles later escalated into localised violence around the capital that left nearly 150,000 Timorese to become internally displaced and homeless.

A large contingent of international security forces returned to restore order on a scale unseen since the 1999 post-referendum period. The presence of the International Stabilisation Forces, comprised of Australian and New Zealand soldiers, was difficult to ignore as they patrolled the streets carrying firearms, clothed in their camouflage attire, as did the riot police from Malaysia and the Portuguese Republican National Guards in their armoured vehicles. This was accompanied by over a thousand United Nations Police officers, drawn from across the globe to take over local policing responsibilities in all districts. Gone were the days when Dili buzzed at night as locals chatted and sung on the streets. Instead, the streets emptied once the sun had set, everyone retreated inside, sleeping to the distant sounds of helicopters,

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1   In 2004, I spent six weeks researching in the central highlands of Ainaro and Manufahi for my Honours project. I investigated gendered access to customary land and the impacts on household food security. In 2006, I carried out a three-week reconnaissance trip for my PhD to identify potential field sites. I visited the central highlands of Manufahi and south coast of Covalima.

2   People had set up temporary shelters in alleyways, parks, on the beach, and inside, adjacent, or behind recently burned buildings. In 2007, there were 53 camps located in Dili. The three largest were Dom Bosco (Comoro), the Comoro Airport and Becora camp areas. Outside of Dili, Metinaro camp was the largest.

police sirens, and gang fights. Occasionally, the roofs of houses and travelling vehicles were showered with rocks.

Barely a month or so into my field work, violence peaked again in the lead up to the mid-year Parliamentary elections and immediately following the vote count where the ruling FRETILIN party lost its power in office[3]. During this time, I was in Dili renewing my visa, but upon receiving advice from a close friend, I left for the safety of Baucau town in order to return to quiet 'village life' in my first field site in Laga, hoping to steer clear of the looming troubles in Dili. Post-election troubles followed my way instead, with disgruntled voters venting their anger and frustration in Baucau town centre. Numerous houses and businesses of known supporters of the winning candidate parties (later to form the CNRT coalition[4]) were targeted, and humanitarian agencies and government buildings were burned by angry mobs. I ended up residing in the UN compound for two nights, having had a personal taste of being forcibly 'uprooted', my personal safety, freedom and physical movement involuntarily constrained. This enmeshing of conflict, violence, and displacement shapes East Timor's past and present, and, I wish to emphasise, *its future*. I embarked on a journey to understand the prevalence of displacement and its effects on rural communities within this volatile context playing out at the time of my research undertakings.

Situating East Timor

This study is situated within the broader conversations of East Timor, where the recurrence of internal conflict has come to shape how this small half-island nation-state in the Lesser Sunda region is represented in contemporary international politics. At present, the dominant political discourse of East Timor is that of a post-conflict nation characterised by a 'failed state', 'a nation without a state', and a society built on 'multiple fracture lines' (Harrington 2007:1; Trindade 2008:160; Scambary 2009:265-266). Studies that discuss East Timor acknowledge its long and difficult rise from successive foreign occupations. In the transitional period to formal independence from 1999 to 2002, East Timor was heralded as a success story of international intervention on post-conflict state-building. However, with the departure of the United Nations Transitional Administration of East Timor (UNTAET) mission, hard earned peace and stability were quickly overcome by urban violence in 2006. In 2007, Parliamentary elections resulted in further disruption to everyday activities, particularly

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3   The 30th June 2007 legislative election results showed that Fretilin (Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor) had won the most votes. However the party failed to form a coalition ahead of CNRT (National Congress for the Reconstruction of Timor-Leste), which received the second highest number of votes. CNRT went on to form a four party-coalition with PD (Democratic Party) and the ASDT-PSD Coalition. Together they are the current government known as AMP (Alliance with Parliamentary Majority).

4   The National Council for the Reconstruction of East Timor (CNRT) shares the same acronym as the National Council for Timorese Resistance – this was the umbrella resistance body of the East Timorese during the Indonesian occupation.

in the eastern district of Baucau. The following year, both the president and prime minister were targeted for assassination.

The initial success story of UNTAET-led reconstruction efforts was swiftly replaced with an image of a young nation-state stifled by the copious and acute challenges of nation- and state-building, improvements to education and health, economic reconstruction, and restoration of justice and peace. The discourse of a 'failed state' gained traction in the regional political realm, and influenced the international development community's engagement with East Timor (for example, see Australian Broadcasting Corporation 2006)[5]. The application of such metaphorical language, I suggest, has certain real implications for constructing knowledge and practices that concern East Timor and its citizens. The East Timorese are represented in these broader narratives as victims and survivors of political violence, a representation which obscures the capabilities of the populations.

The extended legacy of colonialism and conflict has influenced basic social and economic characteristics of the Timorese population. Despite steady progress across health and education indicators, East Timor is still considered a low ranking country by international standards of socio-economic development. In 2011 for example, East Timor ranked 120 out of 169 countries with respect to the Human Development Index value, an improvement from 162 out of 182 in 2010 (UNDP 2011). The population of 1.1 million is growing at 2.41 percent per annum (National Statistics Directorate (NSD) 2010). This has been accompanied by a significant decrease in infant mortality rate (64 to 45 per 1,000 live births) between 2004 and 2010. The situation in the rural districts is worse compared to urban areas. However, maternal mortality rate remained high during the same period (ranging between 380 and 600 per 100,000 live births) (NSD 2010).

With respect to education, adult literacy rates rose from 38 to 61 percent between 2001 and 2007. Within this period, there has been an overall net increase in primary and secondary school enrolments, even though enrolment numbers dropped during the 2006 crisis (NDS 2010). Not surprisingly, schools and universities have repeatedly closed during times of social unrest, preventing students from completing their studies. While male and female enrolment rates are relatively balanced, retention rates for females are lower, particularly at the secondary

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5   In the Asia Pacific region, East Timor was included under the geopolitical banner of the 'arc of instability', a label first coined in the late 1990s to represent Australia's small island nation-state neighbours that were considered politically volatile. The 'arc of instability' stretches from Timor across east to Melanesia and South Pacific. Within this arc, Australia is increasingly providing humanitarian and policing assistance in times of natural disasters and socio-political conflicts.

level[6]. Improvements have been made, but these quantitative measurements reinforce the negative image of post-independent East Timor, given that the country's inhabitants are still poor relative to other 'less developed' nations in the region.

The second National Census completed in November 2010 similarly provides an improved but mixed outlook of socio-economic development of the country[7]. Overall employment rates decreased between 2004 and 2010 from 91.5 to 89.6 percent, with increased employment in the urban areas, decreased employment in the rural areas and for women (NSD 2010). Employment in the agriculture sector declined from 75 to 63 percent, but this figure still represents the majority of Timorese livelihoods. East Timor's economy is highly dependent on revenue from the oil and gas industry (the country's petroleum wealth was worth over USD 8 billion in 2011), which has led to much speculation as to whether the country will suffer from a 'resource curse' in the long term if the petroleum wealth is not managed well by state institutions (Drysdale 2007: 77). Together, the above macro trends paint a slowly progressing nation-state. The perceived lack of socio-economic progress nevertheless must be understood within the context of the country's extended colonial legacy – this need for an historical perspective is a point I stress throughout the thesis.

This thesis is not policy-oriented but the empirical observations presented here seek to contribute to a different narrative of East Timor, one that is informed by actual lived experiences of the Timorese people, and not necessarily limited to what is quantitatively measurable. Taking a 'grounded' analysis, I have placed local voices, perceptions and everyday practices at the forefront of investigation to direct the analysis presented in this thesis. Adopting such a view, this thesis does not seek to provide an ultimate solution to address the effects of displacement in East Timor. Rather, I seek to examine ethnographically how the East Timorese have come to manoeuvre within the broader opportunities and constraints at hand to negotiate displacement, land and livelihoods.

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6 There is also a rural-urban divide, with children in urban residences four times more likely to attend school than children in rural East Timor (NSD 2010).

7 The first national census was conducted in 2004.
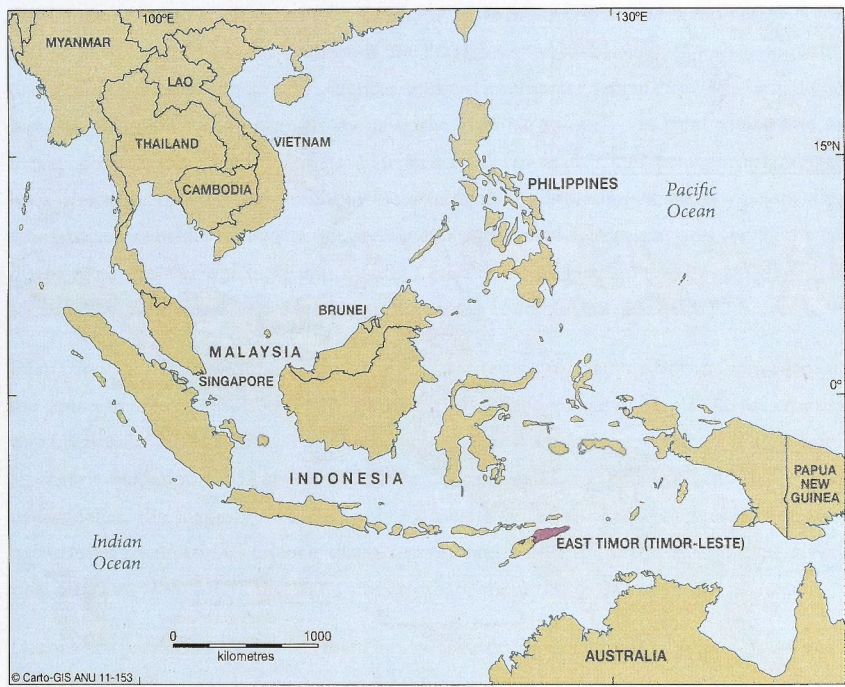
Fig. i Map placing East Timor in a regional context within southeast Asia and to the north of Australia
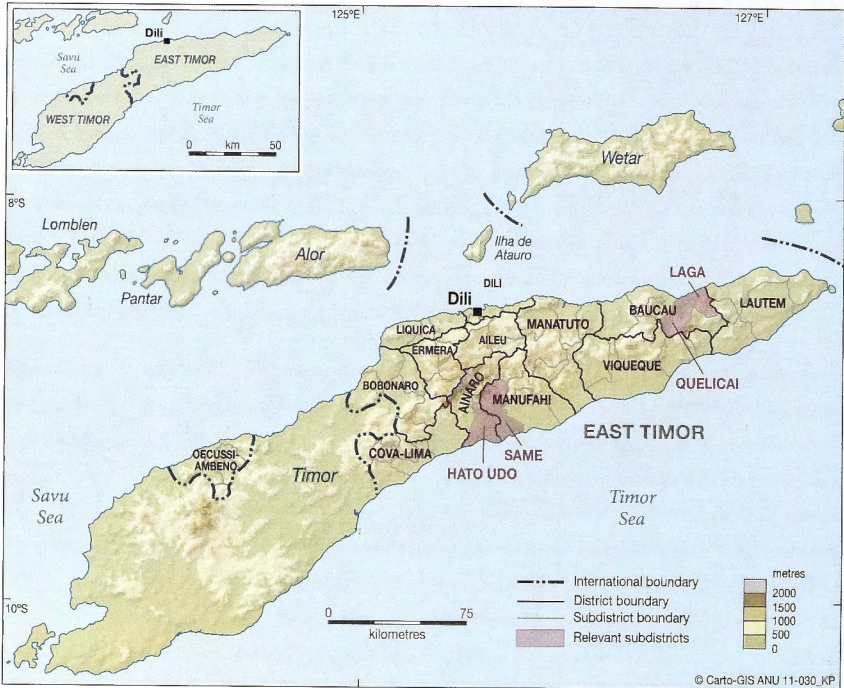
Fig. ii Map of Timor Island showing the borders of the 13 mainland districts of East Timor and the four sub-districts relevant to this thesis.

Chapter One

Introduction

This thesis examines the strategies people employ to negotiate land and livelihoods under conditions of internal displacement. Situations of internal displacement can result in the loss of property, the basis for livelihoods, the breakdown of social relations and institutions, disruption to cultural norms and practices, and environmental degradation. Understanding how people actively and creatively mobilise the available resources at hand to respond to locally situated struggles and to broader structural constraints can provide insight into how lives are recovered and rebuilt in the aftermath of displacement. Such a perspective is instrumental in developing better strategies to address displacement and the needs of displaced people. Perhaps more importantly, a greater comprehension may be gained on how society reproduces itself in the face of wide-ranging conditions of adversity.

East Timor or Timor-Leste (Fig. i to ii) provides a setting to examine how people adapt to the consequences of displacement. Gaining formal independence in May 2002, the country was previously subjugated by Portuguese colonialism (sixteenth century to 1974), a brief Japanese occupation (1942 to 1944) and the Indonesian occupation (1975 to 1999). As a consequence, the majority of East Timorese have endured the cumulative effects of war, occupation, pacification, violence, dispossession, and a host of historical injustices. Every East Timorese who I have met has a story to share about displacement and its effects.

Despite the prevalence of displacement as a constant component in East Timor's past, there has been limited research focussed on the phenomenon itself. I argue that attention must be paid to the particular historical processes and practices that resulted in displacement and their effects on local livelihoods. I suggest that the historical processes that generated displacement in East Timor are not limited to conflict, but include various attempts of state territorialisation, nation-building and development into the present. By giving historical and ethnographic attention to displacement, I seek to unveil its unpredictable dynamism and outcomes for the East Timorese. An opportunity also arises to explore people's responses to displacement's enduring effects by examining the range of practices, processes, and relationships that intersect, challenge and contribute to the adaptability, resilience and transformative aspects of local societies.

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Grounded in an ethnographic analysis, I focus on the lived experiences of two rural communities in East Timor that were forcibly displaced and resettled during the Indonesian occupation. I follow Moore's (2005: 4) use of the phrase 'situated struggles' to emphasise the experiences and strategies of 'displaced people' as *situated* in the 'salience of contingent constellations of practice, milieu, and materiality'. The ethnographic case studies seek to illuminate short and long term livelihood strategies 'displaced people' have devised in response to the particularities of the broader processes that caused displacement and the local social settings they are situated in. With nearly three quarters of the East Timorese residing in rural and remote districts and engaged in agrarian activities (SDP 2011: 107), and displacement a common condition, rural livelihoods and landscapes are contingently shaped by its impacts.

The normative framework to address internal displacement is established through the 'durable solutions' of return, resettlement and reintegration (OCHA 2004: 14-15). This thesis thus asks if the two rural communities have found 'durable solutions' to address their situations; and, if they have what these 'durable solutions' look like in their own terms. The study of displacement inevitably invokes questions of de-territorialisation and re-territorialisation. Historical and contemporary East Timor ethnography has shown that the East Timorese place great emphasis on their ancestral settlements and sacred ritual houses to inform everyday ritual and social life (Hicks 1976; Forman 1980; Traube 1980, 1986; McWilliam 2005). This thesis therefore examines how the relationship between people and their places of origin have transformed through movement (including displacement). Furthermore, independence has given the East Timorese the opportunity to reoccupy their ancestral land. I ask what the prospects of return are, what influences people's decisions to remain or leave the sites of resettlement, and if return is the most desirable solution. This thesis seeks to explore the nature of re-territorialisation by examining the material, affective and social reproduction of the ancestral lands.

Therefore, the core contribution of this thesis seeks to derive a 'grounded' and meaningful theorisation of internal displacement by engaging in local experiences and perspectives. Taking the view that displacement and its effects are context-specific, I follow a growing body of ethnographic research that stress displacement is shaped by gender, age, class, racial, ethnic, religious, economic and/or political affiliation (for example see Daley 1991; Stepputat 1999a; Brun 2003a; Erdem et al. 2003; Modi 2003; Willems 2003; Moore 2005; Wise 2006). These dimensions not only shape the impacts of displacement, they also influence response strategies of 'displaced people'. Together, these studies advance the need for researchers and

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policy makers to think outside the conventional academic field of 'forced displacement', to work from the bottom up and to attend to the specific place-based circumstances.

A second contribution of this thesis is to Area studies by focussing on how the complex phenomenon of internal displacement manifests itself in East Timor. My ethnographic research approach aims to demonstrate that 'internally displaced people' in rural East Timor are situated within a particular history and geography that shapes the webs of social (and power) relations, place-based livelihoods, and cultural practices.

1.1 INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT IN EAST TIMOR

East Timor's legacy of internal displacement is observable in its extensive history of foreign incursions. The Indonesian occupation marked the most violent and extensive history of displacement within, and outside of, the territory. In the invasion years, 300,000 East Timorese out of an estimated total of 668,771 were internally displaced and resettled into 'strategic camps' (Taylor 1999a: 88-89). The flow of East Timorese refugees had began earlier during the civil war in 1974 that involved the two national political parties of FRETILIN and UDT; a total of 2581 refugees escaped on ships (Wise 2006: 43). From 1975 to 1986, there were nearly 4572 refugees in Australia, and equally large numbers in Portugal, Mozambique and Macau (Wise 2006: 45). In 1999, after the overwhelming vote for national independence (78.5 percent), the violent withdrawal of the Indonesian administration and East Timorese militias generated nearly 400,000 internally displaced people and 250,000 refugees in West Timor. Nearly 90 percent of physical infrastructure in East Timor was severely damaged. Between 1974 and 1999, an estimated 102,800 East Timorese died due to conflict-related causes (CAVR 2006: 44). In the recent years after national independence, localised violence erupted in the capital Dili during 2006, which forced around 150,000 East Timorese to flee their homes into IDP (internally displaced persons) camps, and further into the rural districts. After the crisis, the 2007 parliamentary elections were similarly marred by further troubles. In the following year, both the president and prime minister were targeted for assassination.

The country's history of internal displacement however goes back to the pre-colonial and colonial period. Intra-family rivalries and warfare, and the search for new cultivation land prompted the East Timorese to move (Fox 1988, 2003). Although there are no concrete figures of internal displacement during the Portuguese times, suffice to say, colonial pacification and slavery would have resulted in deaths, displacement and dispossession. In addition, the Second World War (WWII) and Japanese invasion produced nearly 530 refugees to Australia and 40,000 deaths between 1941 and 1946 (Ranck 1977: 140; Wise 2006: 22). These repeated episodes of displacement suggest the lives of the East Timorese

are intertwined with displacement effects over the generations, and that understanding the characteristics of contemporary Timorese societies requires a thoughtful consideration of this troubled history.

The recurrence of displacement in East Timor has given rise to the overarching narrative that it is a product of conflict (for example see CAVR 2005a; Harrington 2007). This thesis contends that *conflict-induced* displacement alone, however, does not fully explain the salience and recursive qualities of the phenomenon. I contend that the Portuguese and Indonesian administrations took active roles in perpetuating displacement through their respective pursuits of 'a civilising mission' and 'development'. This thesis is interested in drawing attention to the nexus between *conflict-induced* and *development-induced* displacement, particularly by underlining the less visible, less violent, and mundane manners in which the state can produce and embed displacement. I suggest that these processes may entail hidden violence that may have an equally strong bearing in shaping the livelihoods of the 'internally displaced'.

There is no official record of the current numbers of internally displaced East Timorese pre-dating national independence. The limited attention on internal displacement can be contrasted to the experiences of East Timorese refugees and overseas diaspora that have gained both national and international compassion (see, for example Goodman 2000; Wise 2006; Crockford 2007; Bexley 2009). To date, the most substantial study of internal displacement and internally displaced people has been the work of the Commission for Reception, Truth, and Reconciliation of Timor-Leste (CAVR). Its mandate was to carry out truth-seeking, community reconciliation, reception and victim support on human rights violations committed between 25 April 1974 and 25 October 1999. The commission pursued truth seeking into nine forms of human rights violations, including 'forced displacement and famine'.[1] The Commission's mandate strictly covered the 25 years period starting from the 1974 civil war to the departure of the Indonesian regime. As a result, there is no research as yet that has examined the physical, social, economic and cultural effects of displacement that have predated or outlived the duration of the Indonesian occupation. The Commission's mandate was further limited in its scope to investigate the initial experiences and coping strategies during displacement, and neglected the long term strategies individuals and groups employed to transcend their plight. A fundamental question remains unanswered, that is how the East Timorese who were historically internally displaced have developed strategies to take control of their lives over time.

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1 The CAVR addressed the following human rights violations: self-determination, killings and disappearance, forced displacement and famine, detention and torture, violations of the laws of war, political trials, sexual violence, violations of the rights of children, and violations of economic and social rights.

This thesis gives ethnographic texture to the examination of internal displacement by focussing on the two study sites of Mulia in Laga Sub-District, and Simpang Tiga in Samé Sub-District (see Fig. ii). The residents were forcibly displaced from their ancestral land and resettled in these sites which served as 'strategic camps' set up to demarcate Indonesian controlled-areas from the Timorese resistance frontiers. Initially, the camps were places of suffering, but later transformed into 'modern' resettlement sites that promoted new ideology introduced by the Indonesian 'New Order' government. Therefore, these spaces were also sites where state practices were actualised and the effects of forced displacement and resettlement are displayed.

Narrowing my focus on the situated strategies displaced East Timorese draw on to rebuild their livelihoods in the resettlement sites, I concentrate on local land relations with the host communities – a major preoccupation faced by displaced populations across the globe. The two resettlement sites were already claimed by customary landowners during the occupation, and as such, displaced people or settlers, had to negotiate land access through the landowners. Because the resettlement sites are customarily claimed, the negotiations of land access run in parallel to contestations over land ownership and the symbolic meanings of place. As such, negotiations for land access are intimately tied to community membership, identity, belonging and authority. The entanglement of negotiation with conflict animates the complexities of situated land relations. It demonstrates the pragmatism and adaptability of landowners and settlers – and by extension, the evolving nature of customary land tenure and customary systems – under socio-political duress.

In contrast, the national attention on land relations rests primarily on clarifying ownership to resolve land conflict. This attention to land ownership has paved the way for national land registration and titling, which I argue neglects the actual social practices and power relations at work to shape local land access and livelihoods. In order to highlight the array of actors engaged in the tenure arrangements, the power relations between them, and the distribution of benefits from access to land (Ribot and Peluso 2003; Peluso and Lund 2011; Hall et al. 2011) my empirical analysis of land relations at the resettlement sites thus distinguishes between land access and land control.

In East Timor, kin and marriage ties serve as primary channels of access to customary land (Fitzpatrick 2002; D'Andrea 2003). Inter-group alliances that feature within localised 'orders of precedence' may also provide the means to access customary land through mutual obligations and reciprocity (Fox 1996a, 1996b; Fitzpatrick and Barnes 2010). Non-kin settlers must therefore forge socio-political and economic relationships with customary landowners

to negotiate land access. Although social relations act as pathways to customary land access, I cast my analytical net wider to explore how the availability of labour, capital and technology, along with the broader political, economic and ecological constellations, are also at work, shaping and reshaping conditions of access (cf. Ribot and Peluso 2003).

There is strong evidence that the East Timorese who were displaced, or who remain so, are actively reconstituting and revalidating relations with their ancestral land and its spiritual qualities (McWilliam 2005; Hicks 2008; Bovensiepen 2009; Fitzpatrick and Barnes 2010). Specifically, these studies have tended to focus on the socio-cultural significance of the sacred ritual house (*uma lulik*) as the source of fertility and life. They examine how these abandoned or destroyed houses are restored through ritual performances, which can also be read as a performance of local identity and legitimatising the authority of ancestor spirits. These studies are featured within a broader set of literature that suggests the 'resurgence of custom' and 'revitalisation of tradition' in the post-independence era (Palmer and de Carvalho 2008; Palmer 2010; Fitzpatrick and Barnes 2010). Together, they illustrate how customary practices and institutions are in the constant process of remaking and reinvention to both counter and engage with, nation-building.

Situating my research within these broader conversations of social continuity and change, the puzzle for this thesis does not lie in whether displaced people are re-emplaced at their places of origin and if 'customary practices' are maintained. Rather, I aim to explore the nature of re-emplacement at the ancestral land, which I suggest is more than the 'resurgence of custom'. I aim to understand the reasons that compel people to return, and in the process, observe if the return journeys are momentary or enduring. This empirical approach, I believe, will facilitate in illustrating to what degree 'custom' has been re-constituted and transformed. My study of internal displacement in rural East Timor is therefore also a study that informs contemporary issues of rural livelihoods, local politics of land, internal migration, social change, and resilience of individuals and communities in the face of adversity.

In the section below, I outline the key terms, concepts and theoretical debates on 'internal displacement' that guide this research. I highlight the conceptual and methodological challenges of studying 'internal displacement' and 'internally displaced persons' as a specialised field and discuss my inter-disciplinary research approach that is grounded in ethnographic methods and informed by the theoretical contributions from geography, anthropology, history and sociology.

1.2 DEFINING INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT

The phenomenon of internal displacement gained attention from international humanitarian organisations and national governments only in the 1990s. The end of the Cold War generated an influx of displaced populations on a mammoth scale, driving the international humanitarian community to reassess their protection and assistance measures. In particular, the non-containment of people within their own country (i.e. asylum seekers and refugees) required the mobilisation of large amounts of resources from donor countries and agencies. Therefore, the international community's preference was to prevent refugee flows by assisting people inside their country of origin as much as possible. In defining internal displacement, it must be stressed that the main criteria underpinning this concept are involuntary movement and remaining within the territorial space of one's state.

The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (OCHA 2004: 1) establishes the rights and guarantees to the protection of populations from displacement. It lays out international standards for the protection and assistance offered to populations during displacement and upon return or resettlement and reintegration. Introduced to the UN General Assembly and the Commission on Human Rights in 1998, the proliferation of interest on internal displacement, both academic and non-academic, is credited to this seminal publication. In contrast to refugee law developed under the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the subsequent 1967 Protocol, the Guiding Principles is not a legal document.[2] Nevertheless, the principles identify rights and guarantees in all phases of displacement that are consistent with international human rights and international humanitarian law.

The Guiding Principles defines 'internally displaced persons' (IDPs) as follows:

> Persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalised violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognised State border.
>
> OCHA (2004: 1)

From the above definition, internal displacement broadly refers to situations where people are forced, intimidated, or coerced to move away from their habitual residence for reasons

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2 The 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the subsequent 1967 Protocol have ensured the legal protection (i.e. asylum) of individuals who cannot return to their place of origin for fear of persecution for civil and political reasons, and escape from environmental disasters. Under the Convention and Protocol, refugees are guaranteed basic socioeconomic entitlements in the transition and receiving countries.

relating to social conflict, political, military, religious, and/or ethnic persecution, and natural and man-made disasters. Internal displacement is analytically distinguished in the displacement/forced migration literature as *conflict-induced* displacement and *development-induced* displacement. While the former pays attention to displacement created by war or physical conflict of some manner, the latter focusses on displacement created through development interventions (for example see Cernea 1990, 1997). The theoretical distinction between the two forms of displacement however overlooks the possibility that similar experiences and outcomes may be produced by conflict and development. The two forms of displacement are not mutually exclusive, and each can overlap, or trigger the occurrence of the other (for example see Muggah 2000, 2003; Unruh 2008; Kälin 2009).

Conflict-induced displacement can be a consequence of war, persecution, violence, and violation of human rights that force people to flee, but displacement can conversely be used as a strategy of conflict which commonly result in human rights violations and deaths (Smith 2008: 212). This has particular resonance for the events of colonial pacification and in particular, the Indonesian invasion of East Timor. Conflict may also indirectly cause displacement by fragmenting social relations, trade networks, and the degradation of environment through deliberate military tactic or neglect. In addition, state violence can be cleverly veiled under pretences of national 'development' and in the name of improving population welfare (Cernea 1990; Castels 2003; Muggah 2003). Conversely, conflict can drive the need for development interventions, and development can revive old conflict or induce new ones.

Under international humanitarian frameworks, national authorities are tasked with the main responsibility to manage internal displacement and 'internally displaced persons'. Paying attention to the state's nation-building and development activities can therefore inform the risks of displacement and whether the rights of the internally displaced are protected and enforced. This thesis takes the perspective that *conflict-induced* displacement and *development-induced* displacement may mutually implicate on one another, and their effects are spatially and temporally transformable. East Timor, with its extended history of displacement, therefore appears to be an ideal location in which to contextualise, and unsettle the current dualist frameworks inherent in the conceptualisations of internal displacement.

The definition of 'internally displaced people' found in the Guiding Principles mainly alludes to situations of conflict and does not specifically stipulate 'development' projects as a cause of displacement *per se*. The inclusion of *development-induced* displacement can be implied from the usage of the term 'human-made disasters'. *Development-induced* displacement

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is mainly discussed in the tradition of the impacts brought about by mega infrastructure projects such as dam construction, transportation and infrastructure expansion, and natural resource exploitation (Scudder and Colson 1982; Downing 1996; Cernea and McDowell 2000; Tan et al. 2005). These large scale development projects, akin to 'high-modernism' projects (Scott 1998) can have similar impacts to *conflict-induced* displacement. Recognising this potential for 'human-made disasters', Cernea (2000) notably developed an impoverishment risks and reconstruction (IRR) model to assess the intrinsic risks of displacement through development. Similarly, international development banks and institutions such as the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank have developed their own guidelines and policy to address resettlement, rehabilitation and compensation for lost assets during the undertaking of large development schemes. This thesis focusses on a different sort of 'development' schemes, the kinds which are less visible and less destructive, and promoted in the interests of improving local livelihoods which do not have such guidelines and policy.

Whilst development projects can alleviate poverty and bring new rights and freedoms, there is always a risk that the 'development' may disguise human rights violations under the name of the 'nation's interest'. The danger lies with the role of the state, which has proven in cases to be the driver of displacement in the name of national economic development. For example, states may systematically carry out war, ethnic cleansing, or displace and/ or resettle its populations in the name of 'development' or 'conservation', or expropriate land in the 'public interest', consequently destroying people's livelihoods and social worlds (Scudder 1982; Cernea 1997; Cernea and McDowell 2000; Brun 2003a; Vandergeest 2003). As such, IDPs are not always guaranteed state protection, or worse, their plight may be deliberately unacknowledged by the state of which they are citizens. It follows that studies on *conflict-induced* and *development-induced* displacement have typically been analysed from a rights-based viewpoint. Proponents of a rights-based analysis contend that viewing displaced people as by-products of structural effects is an injustice in itself, for it overlooks the terror, abuse, and trauma intrinsic to the involuntary nature of human movement (Ibeanu 1999; Muggah 2000; Leckie 2003).

Displacement is commonly considered as a single event that occurs in a particular space and time. Shami (1993: 12) takes issue with such a theorisation, arguing, 'displacement needs to be seen as the culmination of evolving forces operating much earlier than the actual physical migration of people'. In Shami's view, displacement is an event that is triggered by a chain of earlier processes that are often left out of evaluations. I take on a similar longitudinal perspective to examine the precursors that triggered displacement and the enduring effects after displacement had ceased. I seek to trace the local historical and ongoing encounters

with the challenges presented by displacement enables the dynamism in the character of displacement and the transformation in people's responses to displacement, to come to the fore.

Internal displacement can be considered as a subset of 'forced migration'. Forced migration, in turn, has a tendency to be conceived in opposition to 'voluntary migration', on the basis that the former supposedly involves some kind of violence, and the latter presumably involves freedom of movement associated with economic, education, and other purposes. A binary view between 'forced' and 'voluntary' migration neglects cases where the prevailing conditions of impoverishment, social, economic, political and/or environmental conditions suppress social, cultural, economic, political rights, forcing people to relocate elsewhere (Turton 2003). The theoretical distinction between 'forced' and 'voluntary' migration is clearly demonstrated by the growing disciplinary fields of refugee studies, forced migration, forced displacement, and forced resettlement (Malkki 1995; Castels 2003; Turton 2003).[3]

Furthermore, the dualistic conception of migration overlooks individual and collective agency exercised by 'displaced' populations who seek out better livelihood opportunities by drawing on migration as a coping strategy or long term adaption (Turton 2003). The binary between forced and voluntary migration has been shown to be overly simplistic. Zhang et al.'s (2006) study of internal migration in Vietnam illustrates the complex causal pathway of migration and displacement, shaped by the country's historical state development plans, market forces, and individual and family pursuit of livelihood trajectories. Their findings blur the boundary between planned and unplanned movement, and forced and voluntary migration.

Another example that blurs the forced migration and voluntary migration divide is the large numbers of female overseas contract workers from the Philippines. Arguably, economic out-migration in the Philippines began in the 1970s with the global oil crisis, forcing Filipino citizens to move abroad in search of better wage employment. Over the decades, decentralisation of governance has shifted the responsibility for economic development to local governments (Gibson, Cahill and McKay 2010: 238). Out-migration in the long run

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3 The University of Oxford leads in the field of displacement studies, having established a Refugee Studies Centre, peer-reviewed journals and publications. Journals produced by the University of Oxford include *Journal of Refugee Studies, International Journal of Refugee Law,* and *Forced Migration Review. Journal of Immigration and Refugee Studies, Journal of Migration and Refugee Studies* are additional examples of journals focussing on refugee studies. There are also Internet portals and forums where scholars, practitioners and others can obtain information on forced displacement and exchange ideas, resources and tools for research, policy and practice (e.g. Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre: http://www.internal-displacement.org/, Migration Information Source: http://www.migrationinformation.org/, and Forced Migration Online: http://www.forcedmigration.org/).

has become a viable way to secure livelihoods and a significant contributor to national and local socio-economic development through the circulation of remittances (McKay 2003, 2006a, 2006b). McDowell and de Haan (1997) tried to capture this difficulty in establishing the boundary between 'voluntary' and 'involuntary' movement by proposing a model that features the two categories of migration on the opposite ends of a lineal conceptual continuum. However, their approach does not escape the trap of binaries. Taking Shami's (1993) perspective that displacement has to be examined as a process to understand its longer effects, I examine how displacement can merge or alter its form into other modes of migration in the context of rural East Timor.

1.3 DEFINING INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS

Globally, the total number of 'internally displaced persons' stands at 27.5 million, almost double the total number of refugees; the majority of internally displaced people are concentrated in Africa and the Asia-Pacific (IDMC 2011a). Nearly 70-80 per cent of IDPs are women and children (IDMC 2011a). Despite these figures, 'internally displaced persons' continue to receive less attention in academic, political and popular arenas in comparison to other categories of displaced people, such as asylum seekers, refugees, exiles, and trafficked people on the basis that they 'have not crossed an internationally recognised state border (OCHA 2004: 1).

The fundamental flaw in creating theoretical distinctions between the different categories of displaced people is that there may be common causes and experiences of displacement across the categories regardless of geo-political boundaries (Turton 2003). These movements can further be differentiated as legal or illegal, adding another layer of complexity in terms of dealing with formal regulations and eligibility for welfare assistance.[4] In a criticism about the international legal rights available to displaced people, Ibeanu (1999) makes the case that the rights of people who are able to cross national borders are privileged over those who have not/or are unable to do so. Indeed, proponents of a more flexible and generalised theory of displacement argue that location should be of secondary concern to the causes and experiences of displacement, and to the exercise of human agency and social relationships in responding to displacement (Ibeanu 1999; Castels 2003; Turton 2003). Exponents of this viewpoint contend that the conflation of the different categories of displaced people can hinder the specific needs of each displaced populations in terms of rights, protection and humanitarian assistance (Barutciski 1998). Therefore the notion of

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4 Human trafficking, for instance, where people are willingly or unwillingly moved to another place illegally, and may involve extortion or labour exploitation, does not fit neatly into the established displacement categories (Lazcko 2005; Piper 2005).

state sovereignty is implicit in the conceptualisation and treatment of different categories of displaced populations. I give attention to the ideas of state and territorial sovereignty and state territorialisation below.

Malkki (1995: 496) critically calls into question whether the study of refugees, and indeed all categories of displaced people, warrants a 'naturally self-delimiting domain of anthropological knowledge'. Tracing the birth of the modern 'refugee' figure to the time of the WWII, Malkki (1995: 498) argues that the refugee camp was instrumental in visibly isolating refugees from the nationalities of the host countries by systematically quantifying, documenting, and disciplining people in the camps. In this manner, the refugee camp is a spatial 'technology of power' that gave rise to the standardisation of refugee management practices, prompting an entire industry of academics, camp administrators, doctors, humanitarian relief and welfare workers to specialise in the study of the 'refugee life'. The Guiding Principles (OCHA 2004), in the same manner, can be argued to politicise internal displacement as a new socio-political phenomenon and IDPs as a distinct social and/or political group.

More generally, the usefulness of humanitarian categories such as 'refugees' and 'internally displaced persons' has been increasingly debated. Malkki (1995: 510-512) contends that the specialisation of the study of 'forced displacement' has given rise to the generalisation and essentialisation of all displaced people; she posits that 'displaced people' become mere statistical figures, removed from their individual experiences and socio-cultural embeddedness.[5] In this process, displaced people become a homogenous mass, often rendered as aid dependent recipients and passive victims. In reality, displaced people are distinct groups of ordinary people faced with diverse circumstances arising out of situated social, economic, political and historical contexts (Turton 2003). Stepputat (1999a: 417) stresses that while the IDP and refugee categories bring visibility and heightened attention to the difficult settings people find themselves in, these labels can simultaneously bring threats to personal and livelihood security by highlighting vulnerable individuals and groups.

In a similar vein, Brun (2003a, 2003b) cautions that while 'IDP' begins as a humanitarian label, different social meanings get attached to it in the local contexts, and can bring considerable privileges and entitlements over other equally vulnerable social groups, or restrict basic citizenship rights in cases where the government is responsible for displacement (and discrimination). Turton (2003) further adopts a reflexive perspective to ask if the use of

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5   The rising numbers of displaced people globally has additionally spurred the growth of internationally-funded agencies that advocate rights, awareness, and monitoring of forced displacement situations. The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) is foremost the leading inter-governmental organisation in addressing forced displacement.

such categories serve to exclude more than include, and in doing so, create new categories of 'others' in the moral community of humanity at large.

Central to the task of improving the comprehension of 'internally displaced people' is thus the recognition they are neither a homogenous group nor passive victims of structural effects. 'Internally displaced' East Timorese are subject to both international and national discourses that conjure up images of passive victims and survivors of human rights violations. In challenging these dominant perceptions, this thesis aims to demonstrate the resilience of 'displaced people' in responding to, and transforming their plight to their own betterment. In this way, I cast an alternative light on 'displaced people', and in the process, re-present a narrative that empirically challenges the prevailing disempowering representations.

1.4 TERRITORIAL SOVEREIGNTY AND STATE TERRITORIALISATION

The ideas of state sovereignty and territorial sovereignty have shaped and limited the ability of 'internally displaced persons' to gain international legal rights and international humanitarian protection and assistance. By remaining inside their countries, internally displaced people are subject to national laws and policies. The Guiding Principles (OCHA 2004: 2) establish that national and local authorities are tasked with the responsibility to protect and assist the internally displaced, however, the international humanitarian community can act in a supportive role (Harris Rimmer 2009). The cardinal function of the state to address internal displacement premises on the state exercising its political power over a defined territory and population.

Vandergeest and Peluso (1995: 386-387) distinguish 'external territorialisation' from 'internal territorialisation'. They define the former as relating closely to territorial sovereignty and to be concerned with differentiating one sovereign state from another and the latter as the spatial exercise of state power to establish control over people and natural resources *within* its defined territory. State 'internal territorialisation' can be accomplished through the delineation of new spatial categories, such as the demarcation of new administrative boundaries, zoning regulation, cadastral maps, land allocation, land tenure reform, and renaming of place names (cf. Winichakul 1994; Vandergeest and Peluso 1995). I am interested in this aspect of 'internal' state power being asserted spatially, either in material or symbolic manners (cf. Stepputat 1994), which has the potential to cause displacement. Vandergeest (2003: 47-49) relays that all development policy, regardless of whether they are large scale infrastructure-related projects, have the potential to cause displacement because development inherently involves reorganising the meaning and use of space. Here, Vandergeest widens the scope of *development-induced* displacement to include state 'territorialisation' practices.

The exercise of state power, as Mitchell (1991) observes, is produced through very local social and material practices that include law enforcement institutions, schools, bureaucratic officers, and the usage of a common currency and language. Together these have an overall hegemonic effect that state and society are distinct entities. He suggests that the state 'should be addressed as an effect of detailed processes of spatial organisation, temporal arrangement, functional specification, and supervision and surveillance' (Mitchell 1991: 95). For my purposes, I am interested in how 'state power' is established spatially, rather than the 'state' itself, and as such, the 'state' is represented in this thesis as a single entity.[6]

Echoing Mitchell's perspective, Ferguson and Gupta (2002) contend that the 'spatialisation of the state' has a tendency to be ordinary and prosaic. However forceful effects are produced that presents the 'state' as an abstract and monolithic structure that is 'above' society or is 'encompassed' in society. These practices, processes and relationships are deployed to preserve the legitimacy of the state as much as they are for the betterment of the citizens (Ferguson 1994; Painter 2006). In this light, the state is not only preoccupied with ordering nature and society in ways that simplifies its task of management and administration (Scott 1998: 4), but is also involved in territorialisation practices that seek to create 'citizen-subjects' (Ong 2003), and at the same time bring welfare to the population.

As the modern state's earlier incarnation, the colonial states of the nineteenth and twentieth century carried out pacification campaigns with the same idea of buttressing their territorial authority in the colonies. Local populations were subject to 'sedentarisation', 'territorialisation' and 'villagisation' for the purposes of taxation, census, labour recruitment, and natural resource extraction to finance the colonial bureaucracy (Vandergeest and Peluso 1995: 390). The reorganisation of people into clearly defined spaces further served as a tool of state surveillance (Malkki 1992; Vandergeest and Peluso 1995; Moore 1998, 1999, 2005; Scott 1998).

Increasingly, 'development' interventions involve a host of non-state actors and they are not the sort of 'high-modernism' schemes that were implemented by the colonial governments. Rather, these interventions involve more subtle ways of governing that can be equally intrusive on local societies. They seek to act by consent not coercion, yet like the large-scale projects, they do not take heed of local knowledge, power relations and historical contingencies (Li 2005, 2007). These new interventions, in my view, also require scholarly attention.

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6 Following Mitchell (1991), I find it useful to conceive the modern state as a 'structural effect' produced from the combination of everyday processes, actors, and agencies that seek to establish social, cultural and political order in a given society.

Expanding on the idea that 'development' interventions are a form of state territorialisation, and that all 'development' processes have the potential to directly or indirectly generate internal displacement, the theorising of internal displacement has to go beyond just charting the actual practices and processes of territorialisation and development. This thesis contends that attention needs to be paid to the particular features of nation-building that are not only spatial processes, but are embedded within specific cultural discourses. The Portuguese colonial state and the Indonesian 'New Order' government drew on a myriad of territorialisation and development practices (see Chapters Two and Three), many involving violence, to refashion local societies in their attempts to recast the local 'peasants' into citizens. The two political regimes shared the rationale of bringing 'civilisation', 'progress' and 'development' to the East Timorese through their interventions. The different discourses linked to space, economy, progress, and citizenship embedded in those practices and processes therefore require as much scholarly attention as the practices and processes themselves. I argue that the construction of these ideas at the national and international levels, and the way they manifest and are reworked at the local level, continues to shape and reshape the lived experiences of displacement. My historical treatment of internal displacement is not limited to documenting the materiality or the spatial dimensions of these strategies. Instead, I aim to examine the discourses and ideologies that underpin these strategies, which together have come to have far-reaching local effects on the East Timorese.

1.5 PLACE-BASED IDENTITIES

The conception of the modern nation-states with its bounded territory is underlined by the Western conception of space as bounded, discontinuous and divisive (Malkki 1992; Massey 2005). In this formulation, citizens are spatialised within state territorial boundaries. State formation draws on moral boundaries of inclusion and exclusion, and the creation of 'citizen-subjects' necessitates 'pathological homogenisation' (Rae 2002: 14). Inevitably the processes of citizen-making involve the discrimination and displacement of groups – physically, socially, culturally etc. – that are deemed subversive to the state's ideas of citizenship (Rae 2002; cf. Ong 2003).

The formation of modern nation-states has given rise to the idea that citizens are 'rooted' in 'home soil', and more broadly, culture and identity are situated in place, with terms such as 'indigenous', 'native' or 'diverse' emphasising clear breaks between places, and correspondingly, people (Malkki 1992). Terms such as 'home', 'territory', 'homeland', 'nationality' and 'citizenship' affix identity to place and such pairings become naturalised, and are associated with domesticity and morality (Deleuze and Guattari 1987; Malkki 1992,

1995; Cresswell 1996, 2006).[7] The moral underpinnings of place-based identities thus view mobile people as deviating from the norms of the citizens (Malkki 1995; Cresswell 2006).[8] Displaced people are thus depicted as amoral, 'uprooted', and 'out of place', because they are supposedly removed from their territorial moral anchoring (Malkki 1992).

Further, fixing culture and identity to a specific locality falls short of considering the transformative aspects gained through experiences of displacement. Extending Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) rhizomatic model on culture and identity, Malkki (1992: 7) suggests that there are multiplicities of identity. Identity and culture are porous and hybrid, connected to other lines of thinking, acting, and being. Here, Malkki's contention aligns closely with the literatures on economic and social mobility, and diaspora, which challenge the theorisation of identity and culture as static and 'rooted' – a perception which remains entrenched in the displacement literature. I discuss below the usefulness of drawing on translocality studies to inform my analysis of internal displacement.

1.6   DETERMINING WHEN DISPLACEMENT ENDS

The normative framework adopted by the international humanitarian community to address situations of internal displacement follows a 'solutions-based' approach that established three 'durable solutions' of repatriation, reintegration, and resettlement (UNHCR 1996; OCHA 2004). These three solutions are not mutually exclusive, and each can influence the achievement of the other options. Foremost, voluntary repatriation to the place of one's former habitual residence is perceived to be the ideal solution. Return tends to be facilitated by re-integration processes such as conflict mediation and reconciliation in the cases of protracted displacement and persisting conflict within the social group. Resettlement in a different location is an alternative solution, should return be unsafe or unfeasible. Resettlement may similarly be facilitated by integration processes to incorporate displaced people into

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7 Cresswell (1996) points to the idea of 'home' as a prime example of place-based identities. He contends that 'home', in practice, may be the site of domestic abuse and hidden violence. Environmental change, war and conflict can also agitate the relationship between people and 'home', compelling people to move.

8 Since the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks in New York, there has been global heightened concern over the protection of national borders through stricter immigration policies and demonising of 'displaced people' – even though the terrorists involved in the 11 September incident were not actually displaced (Castels 2003: 16).

their new social and physical environments. Local integration is a third alternative, where displaced people may be integrated in the location of their first refuge.[9]

The Guiding Principles (OCHA 2004) state that 'displacement shall last no longer than required by the circumstances' (Principle 6). This definition is vague and inadequate, because research is increasingly acknowledging that even when the 'root causes' of displacement have ceased, personal security, exchange practices, social networks, and local production systems may take longer to be restored (Shami 1993; Muggah 2000, 2003; Unruh 2008; Kälin 2009). It comes as no surprise that there is no international consensus on formal criteria to mark the end of internal displacement. But one might ask if reaching some kind of a consensus is even necessary, or to the benefit of displaced people, if each displacement situation is characterised by unique placed-based struggles.

It is indisputable, however, that determining when displacement ends will inform IDP statistics, which may in turn inform humanitarian interventions and planning for displacement situations (Mooney 2007: 22). Since the label of 'internally displaced person' is not a legal status, the termination of applying this classification is all the more significant in shaping the availability of international and national protection and assistance for those displaced (Mooney 2007: 23). However, there are methodological challenges to determining when displacement ends. As Mooney (2007: 32-34) points out, displacement can be deemed to end based on the change in circumstances that resulted in displacement; displacement can also be considered to end if displaced people experience a change in living conditions. However it becomes more difficult to discern if displaced people remain displaced if they are reluctant to return to their former residences not for reasons of security but because of better socio-economic conditions in their area of refuge (Mooney 2007: 32-34)?

1.7 THE LIMITS OF 'DURABLE SOLUTIONS'

Considering there is no consensus on when displacement ends, when and how 'durable solutions' can be found becomes less clear. Smith (2008: 212) probes into the application of the three 'durable solutions' by asking at whom are these solutions directed? He asks if they are formulated for the benefit of the sending/receiving states, the donors, or displaced people. He further points out the need to consider the impacts on host communities, who

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9 The Guiding Principles outline additional conditions to achieve 'durable solutions' for IDPs (see Principles 28 to 30). Primarily, state actors are accorded with the duty and responsibility to enable displaced people to return voluntarily, in safety and with dignity to their places of habitual residence, or to resettle voluntarily in another part of the country (Principle 28(1)). If durable solutions are not found, national authorities (with the assistance of non-state humanitarian actors) should identify and address factors preventing the end of displacement.

are seldom factored into addressing displacement, but may be affected directly by the arrival of displaced people or indirectly by the consequences of displacement. Mooney (2007: 33) expanded beyond the definition of 'durable solutions' to ask what specific 'durable solutions' might entail for specific displaced peoples.

Stepputat (2004) similarly looked to enhancing the applicability of 'durable solutions' in diverse displacement settings. He showed that achieving 'durable solutions' alone may not necessarily imply 'sustainable' return, resettlement and reintegration. Taking a livelihoods perspective, Stepputat (2004: 5) observed that displaced people may return to their places of origin due to a symbolic value of 'home' but they may leave again after a period of time should the living conditions not support new skills, education and livelihood opportunities acquired during displacement. Specifically, women and youths may experience more freedom of livelihood options than compared to the pre-displacement period. He added, displaced people may return or resettle, but they may also continue to engage in 'mobile livelihoods' by maintaining economic and social linkages established during displacement (Stepputat 2004: 4-7).

Furthermore, Stepputat's (1999a, 2004) work suggests that the processes of return, resettlement and reintegration require long term monitoring to assess how displaced people manage their expectations and assess their experiences. Displaced people, as Stepputat (1999a: 73-75) illustrates, may take on new political and economic subjectivities and no longer feel they belong at their place of origin or in their reintegrated community. These issues of subject-making, associated with social, political and economic subjectivities, are less explored and incorporated into the 'durable solutions' framework.

The formulation of the three durable solutions presupposes that displacement is a single event, or at best, a linear process that should ideally be followed by one of the three 'post-displacement' processes of return, resettlement and reintegration. This conception remains grounded in the dominant thinking that people are 'rooted' in a single place, and does not transcend the polarised terms of de-territorialised/re-territorialised, displacement/emplacement, and rooted/uprooted. It follows that 'durable solutions' ignore the attachments to multiple places people may have created during displacement (Brun 2001, 2003b).

Increasingly, research demonstrates that transnational and translocal relations and practices are equally significant for displaced people who, like 'voluntary' migrants, function within 'linked social fields' across space and time as they seek out diverse strategies to secure better livelihood opportunities (Stepputat 1999a, 2004; Achieng 2003; Willems 2003; Van Hear

2006). Despite mounting evidence, the importance of social networks figure less prominently in the study of displacement. Transnational connections may also be forged between displaced people and relatives or friends who are migrants, and displacement may transform into other modes of migration in the continued search of better livelihood options (Van Hear 2006: 10-12).

Wise's (2006: 197-198) research on East Timorese refugees in Australia challenges the dominant idea that displacement is solved by emplacement in a single place. Her study found that although there is a symbolic importance in the idea of return held by refugees, they are constantly renegotiating and contesting the idea of 'home'. As a strategy to ameliorate this dilemma of return, refugees engage in translocal relationships that connect their residence in Australia and residence in East Timor. Wise writes there is continued social interaction and material circulation between the two countries - between specific localities. These translocal connections she observes, are 'operating across an extended, yet distinctly local milieu, and that home can be found at the intersection of a range of symbolic and material spaces' (Wise 2006: 199-200).

My analysis of the changing relationship between people and their ancestral land thus draws on the 'translocality' literature that observes the extended nature of social ties established across space (Appadurai 1996, 2003; McKay 2003, 2006a, 2006b; Wise 2006). Examining three place-making dimensions of the material, affect, and the social, I consider how people can come to hold multiple attachments to place and other communities through movement. This can consequently transform their subjectivities, inter-personal relationships, capabilities, knowledge; values and aspirations influencing their decisions to return, resettle, or move further afield.

Drawing on a translocal lens allows me to emphasise the situated, experiential, 'local-local' practices that create and maintain linkages between the resettlement area, the ancestral settlement, and other places. It enables a nuanced understanding of what are the specific 'durable solutions' for specific displaced people. I contend that 'durable solutions' do not necessitate settling down in a single place, but rather, the connections formed and maintained between people and places can be 'enduring solutions' in themselves. Nonetheless, taking heed that displacement impacts are changing with the broader political, economic and ecological conditions, what constitutes a 'durable solution' or 'enduring solution' in particular spaces and times, may also change.

The core contribution of my thesis seeks to derive a 'grounded' and meaningful theorisation of 'internal displacement' and 'internally displaced people' through an ethnographic study of two communities in rural East Timor. I contend that attention must also be given to state territorialisation and development processes which can directly or indirectly produce displacement. More broadly, an ethnographic account of how displaced people rebuild their livelihoods provides a window into how societies practically respond to, and overcome, socio-political upheaval (Smith 2008).

1.8 FIELD WORK

This research is based on nine months of empirical field work carried out in two rural districts of East Timor, Baucau and Manufahi from June 2007 to February 2008. Prior to field work, I undertook a three-week reconnaissance trip in June 2006 where I visited Manufahi and Covalima districts to search for potential study sites. Based on a national 'non-customary' land survey (Nixon 2007), Manufahi and Covalima were identified as having the highest numbers of Indonesian era transmigration, translocation and housing sites. The village of Daisua in Manufahi was selected as the first field site. Daisua's residents were displaced at the outset of Indonesian invasion and were forced to resettle on the lowland river plain for security purposes. The resettlement site was named 'Simpang Tiga'. The village of Mapé on the south coast of Covalima was chosen as the second site. Its residents were relocated to make way for a landmark Indonesian transmigration agricultural scheme. However, I later decided not to pursue field work in Mapé because travel between the two sites was hampered by poor road conditions, and regular flooding during the wet season.

On my return to East Timor in 2007, I selected an Indonesian resettlement village in the eastern district of Baucau as a field site. Similar in size to Daisua in Manufahi, villages in the highlands of Quelicai Sub-District were displaced during the Indonesian invasion and forcibly resettled on the north coast of Laga. The resettlement village was named Mulia. This became the second study area only after several hurdles explained below were addressed. In April and November 2009, I revisited the two study areas for a month to clarify outstanding questions, and to get an update on interlocutors' lives – many of whom by this time had become close acquaintances. I also took the opportunity to give local leaders two publications that I had written from my preliminary field work findings (Thu 2008, 2009).

Methodology

The research methodology employed is multi-disciplinary, as I draw on geographical, anthropological, sociological and historical literatures on migration, mobility, land tenure, property relations, state power, and development, to inform my theoretical framework and

empirical analysis. Nevertheless, it must be stressed that the methodology of this study has been reworked through the research process. In the early phases, I had proposed an ethnographic approach to map the impacts of displacement on rural livelihoods, with a particular focus on the contestations and negotiations of land access. The methodological approach drew on the 'sustainable livelihoods' framework to examine rural livelihood practices in a displacement context (Chambers and Conway 1992; Scoones 1998; Ellis 2000; McDowell 2002). Whilst I initially adopted a 'sustainable livelihoods' research trajectory, broader conceptual issues relating to the phenomenon of displacement came to the fore during fieldwork. The precarious status of interlocutors as 'internally displaced persons' and the recursive nature of 'internal displacement' in rural East Timor came to the fore as issues that required greater attention. Without understanding 'displacement' and 'displaced people', it was difficult to understand what interlocutors were doing and why. It became clear that focussing solely on the impacts of displacement was not sufficient; simply mapping livelihoods 'before' and 'after' displacement would only be unravelling part of a larger, more complicated story.

Furthermore, I found it difficult to interpret and analyse the livelihoods of interlocutors based purely on the 'sustainable livelihoods' framework. The five livelihood 'capitals' (human, physical, natural financial, and social) in the framework are conceived of as distinct categories, when in practice they are entangled with one another in local contexts. In addition, there is no single definition of what entails 'sustainable'. Hence, I decided to ask a different set of questions and take a heuristic perspective that sought to raise more questions on how people have negotiated an existence in the aftermath of displacement.

After returning from field work, I revisited the displacement/refugee literature to re-examine the debates and discourses on 'displacement' and 'internally displaced persons'. Further, I delved deeper into the anthropological studies of Timorese sociality which proved critical to an understanding of the intimate sociality of East Timorese societies. These literatures have resulted in my research to be reshaped to focus on the nature of displacement in East Timor, the local and national discourses on 'displaced' East Timorese, and the local impacts of displacement on rural livelihoods and Timorese sociality. Adopting this multi-disciplinary approach has been useful to examine the nature of displacement in East Timor. As I focussed on capturing the voices and views of individuals and groups living with the complexities of displacement, I was able to overcome a methodological oversight typically found in displacement studies, the tendency to regard 'internally displaced persons' as a homogenous mass with certain predicable characteristics.

Every East Timorese seems to have a story to share about displacement and its consequences. My interest in this topic of displacement as a difficulty seemed, at times, a non-issue for interlocutors precisely because they have had to move involuntarily at least once during their life time. Indeed, the prevalence of displacement has given rise to the general impression that because they continue to practise 'traditional' agrarian livelihoods the lives of displaced East Timorese in the rural districts were not as heavily impacted as the East Timorese refugees and displaced urban residents. The ethnographic case studies however show that the rural East Timorese's sheer capacity to resume 'normal' livelihoods masks the torture, deprivation, anger, trauma, separation and loss endured in the last three decades. It is not so much a calculated attempt on my part to actively present an 'agency-focussed account' (Hartnack 2009) of the displaced East Timorese, but the fact remains that even though they bear the scars of failed colonial development projects and conflict, they have found ways to negotiate displacement, and gain access to land and livelihoods in constructive and successful ways.

Methods

This study draws on qualitative and quantitative methods to investigate what rural East Timorese are *doing* to overcome the immense physical and social devastation of displacement. I took an active role in participating or observing daily livelihood activities, and where possible, I resided in the homes of interlocutors. Where I gained a deeper understanding of individual perspectives on living with the consequences of displacement. I also conducted one-to-one semi-structured interviews and collected life histories to appreciate the personalised experiences of displacement and recovery. Small focus group discussions were conducted to gain a wider community level perspective.

Some of the more interesting and surprising contextual information came to light through everyday conversations and interactions. For example, it was only after residing in Tekinomata for a least a month, when I was walking on the beach one afternoon, with an interlocutor, that I came to learn that the neighbouring village of Mulia was an Indonesian resettlement site created on Tekinomata's customary land. Before then, I had naively been led to believe that the displacement was localised, with families from three *aldeia* (hamlets) within Tekinomata forcibly resettled on the low-lying plains. This was certainly the case, and residents of those three hamlets were readily given land access to reside on the coastal land. However, the conflict between Mulia and Tekinomata turned out to be persistent and was known throughout Baucau as well as by national officers at the Land and Property Directorate. It became evident that my host family, who were large customary landowners, wanted to protect me from the tenuous relationship they had with residents in Mulia.

To elaborate, I was first introduced to families in Tekinomata who were eager for me to carry out research there. My host father, who was a prominent government official and descendant of the local noble lineage of Oma Ina Wai, readily accommodated distant kin who were displaced on his land. It was explained to me that populations from three highland hamlets were moved onto the land but they remained within the village boundary. Hence, I carried out a general household survey with the idea that displacement was localised within Tekinomata itself. It was only by chance on that afternoon on the beach that I discovered about the longstanding land conflict between Tekinomata and Mulia. I became more attentive to minor details such as the reluctance of customary landowners to walk through Mulia, particularly in the evenings. By the time I started to research in Mulia with the permission of the village chief (*chefe de suco*), residents in Mulia saw me as a member of the host community, and they were initially reluctant to participate in my research. Certainly, my host parents incorporated me as a 'daughter', and for the five months I was in residence, they insisted that I returned 'home' before the sun set.

Secondary historical data drawn from archival materials held at the CAVR national office in Dili was incorporated into this research with the commission's permission. Quantitative methods were called upon where broader social and economic patterns could provide additional context for the qualitative observations. For example, a general household questionnaire was conducted to sketch a broad picture of the demographic characteristics of the study areas to compare to formal census data.

The administrative village (*suco*) seemed an appropriate entry point to begin investigation as the *suco* is the lowest level of national land administration, has an official cartographic boundary, a census recorded population, and presumably, residents who share social and cultural affiliations. With research assistance, I rapidly built up a demographic profile of the first resettlement site, Mulia. It then became clear that I had to reduce the scale of my study to the sub-village or hamlet level. The administrative village is a composite site that contains three or more hamlet made up of origin- or 'house'- based groups related by descent, which also corresponds to local territorial-political entities. These groups typically conform to systems of land ownership and tenure arrangements which are broadly similar.

Considering I had elected to work in two field sites, I concentrated on working at the hamlet level to get richer ethnographic data. I focussed on tracing the livelihoods of several individuals and families instead. This strategy was beneficial as kin and social relationships were vital channels from which resources are drawn during times of adversity. Interlocutors exhibiting different characteristics to the majority were included in the study to establish

who and why certain individuals were excluded from the social networks. By establishing the boundaries of the local moral community, this answered part of a broader question around vulnerable individuals and groups that may not have had access to local resources and networks in times of adversity. It also served to indicate what form 'durable solutions' to displacement might take in East Timor if interlocutors have the necessary resources and social relations to overcome their predicaments.

Participant observation was used to verify what people were actually *doing* in terms of livelihood activities as opposed to what they said they were doing in the fields, as diverse as rice cultivation, raising livestock, food gardens, fishing and small trading *kiosk*. I travelled with interlocutors to their ancestral land to attend ceremonies and exchange practices associated with life cycles and agriculture, and where possible, I witnessed and participated in these rituals. Life histories of older interlocutors were recorded as they recalled the Indonesian invasion years and the strategies they employed to respond to military tactics. This process of talking about their past experiences appeared to be therapeutic, especially for the former resistance fighters and individuals who although they had to deal with quite traumatic events, they remained open to sharing their experiences. These personal historical narratives added richness to the ethnographic gap in the years of Indonesian rule, and in turn, created a space to conceptualise forced displacement in a way that reflects lived East Timorese experiences.

Small focus group discussions were conducted to reveal local livelihood concerns. In Mulia, interlocutors spoke of recurring droughts that destroyed maize yields, which gave rise to longer periods of food insecurity and drove families to engage in a range of supplementary non-farm activities. In Simpang Tiga, the main concern was the erosion of the Ai-Asa River banks where families cultivated private food gardens. There was neither government nor non-government interventions related to agriculture, livelihoods or food security in the field sites at the time of field work. Lastly, I was able to conduct a small focus group discussion with thirteen youths ranging from 16 to 27 years of age in Mulia and the neighbouring *aldeia* of Bulabai from Tekinomata village to discuss the notion of 'home', their perceptions of traditional beliefs and practices and their future ambitions. The youths were born and raised in the resettlement sites and were second generation displaced people, so I was interested to understand what sentiments they held of the ancestral settlement and when these sentiments were evoked.

Field Sites: Mulia and Simpang Tiga

Mulia and Simpang Tiga are located in the rural districts of Baucau and Manufahi respectively (Fig. 4.1 and 5.1). Both settlements were established during the Indonesian occupation as

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detention camps for pacification before 'New Order' development (see Chapter Three) transformed them into 'modern' resettlement sites. A minority of interlocutors surrendered immediately to the invading Indonesian forces in fear of persecution and other forms of violence. The majority of people in both field sites abandoned their places of residence and hid in the safety of mountains during and only later surrendered between 1977 and 1978. Those who fought as resistance fighters remained in hiding until 1980 or later. At the time of the invasion, most interlocutors lived in traditional palm-thatched houses with dirt floors, although several wealthier families resided in dwellings with corrugated iron roofs. Interlocutors were engaged in smallholder agriculture, selling surplus crops in the local sub-district and district markets. Due to land shortages in the resettlement areas, some families returned to their former settlements, including their ancestral territory, after the Indonesian authorities eased their security measures to cultivate gardens and harvest family groves of betel nut, citrus, and coffee.

The populations resettled in Mulia were originally from at least four highland villages in Quelicai subdistrict (Fig. 4.1). Interlocutors that participated in this study were originally from Waitame village on the foothills of Matebian Mountains, nearly two hours away by motor vehicle from Mulia. In the early 1980s, Mulia became an official *desa* (Indonesian administrative village) even though the settlement is sited on the land of a customarily claimed territory ruled by local residents of Tekinomata village.

At Mulia, the contested nature of land between resettled families and the customary landowners is well known throughout the country. Inter-village conflict erupted every now and then during my period in residence, and the conflict was exacerbated during the time of unstable economic and political conditions in mid-2007. Youths in Mulia and Tekinomata were notorious for making trouble, so much so international development agencies were fearful of passing through the two villages after dark; from what I witnessed, the youths stoned passing vehicles in the night. Amid the politicisation of land claims in the post-independence years, Mulia has assumed the status of 'provisional village' (*suco provisório*) until a formal decision is made in accordance to the proposed Transitional Land Law. Despite persisting communal violence over land claims, many families in Mulia have entered sharecropping arrangements with landowners – which was an unexpected productive engagement.

The second field site of Simpang Tiga is within the Portuguese-established village of Daisua (Fig. 5.1). Located on the river plains of the central southern interior of Samé Sub-District, Manufahi, Daisua was established in the early twentieth century. Simpang Tiga is located on traditional territory claimed by residents in the *aldeia* (sub-village or hamlet) of Loti.

Families were forcibly relocated *intra*-village, within the boundaries of Daisua itself, but they derived from three highland hamlets of Riatu, Lesuai and Lesulau (Fig. 5.1). Instead of being established as a new hamlet, Simpang Tiga was incorporated as a settlement of Loti. By drawing on longstanding kin and marital networks, resettled families can readily gain access to land through landowners of Loti. Livelihoods are nonetheless constrained by environmental factors, mainly the lack of cultivable land, which has encouraged families who cultivate garden and raise cattle to resettle themselves in the neighbouring village of Foho Ailicu (Fig. 5.2), where they also have strong kinship ties to draw on. The moral economy invoked by pre-established marriage ties and indigenous political alliances has enabled resettled families to gain secure land access from landowners in Loti and Foho Ailicu. Nevertheless, during the field work period, there were open tensions over land matters due to historically-established kinship ties with customary landowners.

It was not immediately apparent that a large number of interlocutors in both sites were moving regularly between the resettlement area, a previous place of residence, and an ancestral settlement. A small number in Simpang Tiga had furthermore resettled themselves again after the initial forced resettlement, choosing to retain a dwelling in Simpang Tiga while residing in the neighbouring village of Foho Ailicu. These cases of self-resettlement occurred on land claimed by members of the extended kin network; as such, traditional sharing and dispute mechanisms were in place, and no conflicts were observed during the period of field work.

In both Mulia and Simpang Tiga, resettled families find themselves in an 'interstitial space' (Tsing 2007: 27) – negotiating access to land and a means of livelihood between custom-arily-sanctioned land rights and the absence of legal rights to land. Customary principles of social inclusion in Simpang Tiga and Mulia neccessarily excludes 'others' to produce a stark contrast in the two sites in terms of the everyday livelihood practices and the sense of security they hold. Chapters Four and Five expand in greater detail on the lived experiences of interlocutors and compromises of power between them and the customary landowners. Given that each field site had distinctive characteristics, I have chosen to present the empirical findings in two separate chapters, focussing on place-specific themes that emerged during fieldwork to orient the analysis. These site-specific themes nonetheless serve as a comparative basis to conceptualise forced displacement more broadly in East Timor.

Interlocutors

I use the term 'interlocutor' to acknowledge the research process is a two-way dialogue. A total of 189 interlocutors participated in this study, spread across the administrative villages

(*suco*) of Mulia (26), Waitame (16), Tekinomata (42), Simpang Tiga (56), Foho Ailicu (25), and Daisua (24). For confidentiality purposes, the names of all interlocutors have either been left out or replaced by pseudonyms. Interlocutors encompassed displaced families, customary landowners, government officials, and members of non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Local political figures such as the head of village (*chefe de suco*), head of hamlet (*chefe de aldeia*), members of the village council (*concelo de suco*), ritual leaders (*toko adat*), and respected elders (*lia nain / katuas*) were instrumental in the re-construction of the historical shifts in village administration due to internal displacement. In most cases, these figures exerted some influence over decisions made by ordinary displaced families under their leadership. These figures were also pivotal in instigating the return process to the former settlement and ancestral territory.

Among the displaced families, interlocutors can be differentiated into those who remained in the resettlement sites, those who returned permanently to their former settlement, or ancestral territory, and the second and third generations of individuals and families who have grown up in the resettlement sites. It must be stressed that all interlocutors, regardless of where their usual residence was, were highly mobile between the resettlement site, the former settlement, and the ancestral land. Many interlocutors had family members that worked and resided in the district towns, Dili or overseas, and these members visited their rural kin during times of life cycle and agricultural-related ritual ceremonies, holy days in the Catholic calendar and public holidays.

The displaced families and customary landowners were engaged in subsistence and smallholder agriculture. Nevertheless, it was common to find within a household, which could encompass a nuclear or extended family living under one roof, family members who engaged in diverse economic activities, such as wage employment, fishing, trading, kiosk vending and *microlet* driving. For instance, one displaced household in Mulia had a son that worked with the United Nations in Dili, another son who worked as a builder in Baucau, meanwhile the parents and daughters were sharecroppers in the rice paddies of customary landowners. Remittances from the two sons covered the daily household expenses, and the rice yield was mainly used for subsistence consumption.

Language

Tetun was the main language used to conduct field research; a language I learned formally in Australia before going on fieldwork. East Timor has at least sixteen distinct ethno-linguistic groups, broadly classified under the socio-linguistic categories of Austronesian and non-Austronesian. Tetun is the *lingua franca* of East Timor spoken extensively across the country. At the local level, linguistic and cultural affinities between different groups are much

more fluid and it is common to encounter East Timorese who were fluent in two or more local languages (McWilliam 2007a). Local languages may be distinguished into mutually intelligible dialects.

Interlocutors in the field sites conversed in a mixture of Tetun, Indonesian, and Portuguese to varying degrees, but they were most fluent and comfortable speaking their local mother tongues. Recruiting research assistants from the National University of Timor-Leste (UNTL) who spoke the local languages was a valuable asset when interviewing interlocutors who were not confident in speaking Tetun.

Interlocutors who remained 'displaced', that is residing in the areas of resettlement, did not refer themselves as IDPs. The terms 'IDPs', *refujiado* (refugee in Portuguese (P)), and *ema dislocado* ('dislocated person' in Tetun) were generally used interchangeably by interlocutors, but when probed further, these terms were defined in ways that reflect local realities rather than international definitions. Terms such as 'displacement' and 'home', which are important to this research do not have Tetun equivalents. As such, it was necessary to discuss with research assistants how such terms could be best translated to elicit meanings consistently comprehensible to interlocutors. The closest Tetun terms that translate to 'home' are *knua* (ancestral settlement), *moris fatin* (birth place), *uma* (house), and *rai* (land, settlement, or country). I also drew on the Indonesian (I) term *kampung halaman* (home, dwelling, or country) in instances where interlocutors were fluent in the language, to reinforce the notion of 'home' in a second language. This is a significant point that marks a disjuncture between the international literature on 'displacement' and 'displaced people' and local experiences, a point I return to discuss in Chapter Six.

Language is undoubtedly an important element in forced displacement, particularly in terms of resettlement, where a lack of linguistic affinity with the host community could prove detrimental to the prospects of harmonious assimilation and integration. Interlocutors in both field sites were resettled in areas where they shared language and customs with the customary landowners. In Mulia, interlocutors spoke a dialect of Makassae (Mk) which was intelligible to their host communities in Tekinomata and Seisal villages. In Simpang Tiga, interlocutors spoke Mambai (Mb), whereas the hosts in Loti and Foho Ailicu were Bunak speakers. Due to close historic socio-political ties, interlocutors had a good knowledge of Bunak language (see, for example, Schapper 2009). The Mambai and Bunak speakers further held close socio-political ties to the Tetun speakers in the downstream village of Betano, and as such, the three groups were to some extent tri-lingual.

Communicating in Tetun proved to be less politically-sensitive than the use of Indonesian for numerous interlocutors were former resistance fighters, and they either did not understand Indonesian or refused to speak it. Portuguese language, on the contrary, was spoken by a small minority of the educated older generation and local political figures. Conversations were nonetheless always sprinkled with Indonesian and Portuguese loan words (e.g. significant dates, numerical figures, and terms of expression).

The Role of the Researcher
The general consensus among social scientists is that the nature of qualitative research is messy, incoherent and complex. It is therefore important to be self-reflexive in the research process as our vision of the field is narrowed. Viewed in this way, academic inquiry is ultimately skewed, subjective, and conditioned by our epistemologies (Hoggart et al. 2002). Hence, knowledge is always partial and situated; and our understanding of the world and ourselves is shaped by our cultural background, educational training, age, gender, class, beliefs and inter-subjective understandings (Rose 1997: 305-306).

Arriving in the field, the standard introduction involved interlocutors asking me 'where are you from', which was met by my long response of leaving Burma early on, the formative years spent in Singapore, and my current residence in Australia. This background, together with my status as an unmarried female researcher certainly had a bearing on my interactions with research participants. I was considered an 'insider' in terms of sharing an Asian background. Interlocutors would often say, 'although you come from Australia; you are like us. Not a foreigner (*malae*)'. This routine interrogation was also posed to my research assistants. Selected on the basis that they were of the same ethno-linguistic group to interlocutors, the research assistants tended to share kin networks and mutual acquaintances with the interlocutors, enabling them to be incorporated as 'insiders' in the study sites. Upon reflecting, I think there is a natural inclination for humans to categorise, to fit things and people into some form of schema that makes sense in our understanding of the world. By finding a common ground, interlocutors were able to position strangers somewhere along the continuum between friend and foe.

Interestingly, my country of origin, Burma, resonated in the hearts of interlocutors who see a strong 'resistance solidarity' between the two countries based on our shared history of militarisation and subjugation to fear. I was surprised how frequently and easily the name Aung San Suu Kyi entered into our conversations even in the remotest of settlements. I believe these markers of 'sameness' gave me access to some degree to explore various aspects of interlocutors' experiences of living under authoritarian rule. Having said this,

being incorporated into the local lives brought kinship obligations which required me to step out of my role as a researcher. Indeed, for a large part of doing fieldwork, I was also a daughter, sister, friend, and mentor. With increased trust, my research undertaking was also considered as a 'bridge' to communicate interlocutors' experiences and desires to the Timor-Leste government, non-government organisations (NGOs) and others.

In other instances, I was set apart as an 'outsider', and excluded from accessing several domains of inquiry. A prime example was my inability to probe deeper into local clan histories and origin myths in Simpang Tiga and Daisua where kin networks formed a significant channel to gain land access. Every ritual leader I interviewed gave me fragmented pieces of history. This was because origin groups and 'houses' are featured within a nested hierarchy, and only the most senior groups had the authority to communicate local history, legends and origin myths. Local myths and clan histories were for the most part reserved in the area as 'sacred' information to be shared only amongst members of kin and during specific spatial and temporal ordering (see Appendix Two for 'house' group names in Daisua village (some of which were not disclosed)).

I was further excluded from particular spaces because of my gender. One prominent example was my exclusion from observing in close proximity a rice harvest ritual ceremony in Tekinomata. Together with the female family members of the landowners, I was not permitted inside the perimeters of rice paddies during ritual proceedings where sacrificial offerings were made to the spirit inhabitants of the land. Local belief has it that female attendance interferes with the communication with the spirit realm, which may adversely affect rice yield in the following season. This instance of exclusion can be reversed and inferred as an indication that I was included as a member of community. Thus, I was expected to adhere to the same norms as the other female members of the family. The 'insider-outsider' boundary was surely dynamic and shifted at specific space and time, a point made by Mohammad (2001) who posits that the boundary is flexible and contingent in practice. As I oscillated between being included in one instance and excluded in the next, it became clear that the power relation between researcher and interlocutor oscillated accordingly. I had little knowledge of how the 'insider/outsider' boundary was exactly negotiated, but it is clear the research process is embedded within the negotiations of difference and sameness, inclusion and exclusion.

Nevertheless, a certain power imbalance must be acknowledged here as the knowledge researchers produce can have direct and indirect impacts on the lives of interlocutors through our representation of them. As Hay (2005: 23) reminds us, 'the stories you tell about your participants' actions, words, and understandings of the world have the potential to change

the way those people are thought about'. In this manner, there is an ethical dimension to undertaking social research (Skelton 2001). In addition, the researcher is privileged in not only having access to material resources, there is power in the ability to construct and shape knowledge about others (Rose 1997: 307). This power to choose the type of representation must be handled with care. As emphasised earlier, I have chosen to highlight interlocutors' agency, something that was striking from my empirical observations. Compared to official representations of displaced people as victims of war and human rights violations, I attempt here to represent human agency by drawing on interlocutors' own voices and reconceptualise what displacement means in the East Timor context, something that is largely missing from the existing literature.

1.9 THESIS OUTLINE

This introductory chapter has outlined the theoretical orientation, analytical framework and methodology of the study. This thesis seeks to contextualise internal displacement by focussing on how people draw on situated strategies to negotiate displacement, land and livelihoods. I have examined the key theoretical debates relevant to the study of internal displacement, and have made a case to unsettle the binary between *conflict-induced* displacement and *development-induced* displacement in the context of East Timor. I have emphasised the need to pay attention to state territorialisation processes, in particular the role of everyday state practices implemented under the guise to improve the welfare of populations which can similarly generate displacement. I have also contended that this thesis represents 'displaced people' as active actors to challenge the overarching narratives that present them as disempowered victims of war while dismissing their other subject positions. Finally, I seek to examine the nature of re-emplacement at the ancestral settlement. The concept of translocality is proposed as an analytical lens that can disrupt the idea that people must be 'rooted' in a single place.

Chapter Two takes an historical perspective by situating rural Timorese sociality in the final years of Portuguese rule (mid-nineteenth century to 1974). For the most part of 400 years of colonialism on Timor, Portuguese authority was characterised by indirect rule. The chapter presents a particular historiography of Portuguese colonialism by pinpointing the Portuguese government's efforts to generate revenue from the colony through coffee, forced labour and household tax collection in the late nineteenth century. Colonial displacement and dispossession thus gathered speed with the aforementioned processes, and regained momentum in the post-WWII period as the colonial government sought to rebuild the colony. The chapter also chronicles ethnographic studies undertaken in the 1960s and 1970s

– at the cusp of Indonesian invasion – to examine the features of 'traditional' East Timorese societies and colonial relations to foreground the various forms of transformations to take place in the twenty four and a half years of Indonesian occupation that follows.

Chapter Three continues with an historical approach by analysing the forms of spatial, social, economic and political transformations that occurred in East Timor during the Indonesian occupation from 1975 to 1999. Attention is given to the Indonesian 'New Order' rhetoric of order and development, where forced displacement and resettlement physically transformed the rural landscape as much as it disrupted East Timorese societies. I argue that Indonesian 'resettlement sites' were equally a product of war and a tool used by the Indonesian New Order government to bring development to the formerly 'neglected' Portuguese Timor, with the underlying aim to integrate the East Timorese into the Indonesian narrative.

Chapter Four explores the first of two case studies affected by the Indonesian state enforced resettlement scheme. This case study is based in the north eastern sub-district of Laga, where populations from the mountainous interior of Quelicai Sub-District were forcibly resettled on the coast in the invasion years. Interlocutors in the resettlement site known as Mulia forged economic linkages with non-kin traditional landowners through rice sharecropping. Despite economic collaboration with landowners, tensions over land persist, and strong social ties have not emerged over the course of thirty years of interaction. Families have diversified into non-agricultural livelihoods that operate outside of customary regulations, raising questions over the sustainability of resource extraction and management.

Chapter Five presents the second case study of Simpang Tiga, a community that was resettled in the sub-district of Samé. Most families did not remain in this designated area, and instead resettled themselves in adjacent areas of higher quality land for cultivation and livestock production through tenure arrangements embedded in well-established kin-based affiliations. I pay attention to the contemporary articulation of expansive kin-based networks in the area to examine how they translate into land access. In particular, land access is guided by the customary notions of 'sacred land' (*rai lulik*) and customary peace-making agreement (*juramentu*). The growing demand for cultivable land has nonetheless prompted some customary landowners to assert their own identity in order to re-establish their prominent social status and cut off their extended kinship networks that seek to gain land access.

Reflecting on the ethnographic findings, Chapter Six analyses the nature of internal displacement and examines the representations of 'internally displaced people' in post-independence East Timor. I contextualise the particular practices of state territorialisation and development

that have produced local livelihood impacts which are geographically situated and historically contingent. I then turn my attention to national land debates that concern clarifying land ownership and contrast it with local concerns over land access for livelihood security. I suggest that there is a disjuncture between the national and local politics of land. The chapter probes the possible legal effects brought by transitional land laws on resettled families, and more broadly on land vulnerable groups. Lastly, the chapter contrasts official representations of 'internally displaced people' and local perceptions to advance the need for a locally grounded discourse.

Chapter Seven examines the reasons that compel resettled families to return to their ancestral lands. Although the ancestral settlement has been reinstalled as the focal point of Timorese social life, people's relationships with the ritual locus is nonetheless transforming, specifically among the young who expressed an affective sense of belonging to the ancestral land but have little spatial practices that actually tie them to place. Many reasons motivate individuals and families to return, and these journeys, momentary and permanent, should not be narrowly conceived as merely primordial attachments to land or the 'resurgence of custom'. The chapter concludes by suggesting that translocality is an 'enduring' solution in itself for those forcibly displaced.

In Chapter Eight, the concluding chapter, I take a future-oriented outlook by asking how translocal realities might shape rural East Timor. Drawing on two examples of international donor-funded projects, the first being the proposed National Library in Dili, and the second, a rural household food security program, I reflect on the main themes raised in this thesis. At the same time, I discuss the East Timorese's inevitable encounter with new development schemes, which are aimed at improving their living conditions. I contend that development processes need to take into consideration the historical processes associated with displacement that have led to the current local circumstances, and how people have to date dealt with the enduring effects to avoid creating new waves of displacement and conflict.

Chapter Two

East Timorese Society Under Portuguese Colonial Rule

Portuguese presence on the island of Timor spanned over 400 years but its colonial rule of Timor's eastern half was far from omnipotent. Portuguese rule was characteristically indirect for the most part, and had minimal impact on the lives of the East Timorese. The late nineteenth and early twentieth century however heralded a new era of colonial encounters in Portuguese Timor, with the rise of colonial interest in capital, the development of greater European weaponry and increased bureaucratic capability through a larger presence of settlers. As was the case in most colonies elsewhere, this late colonial era resulted in more extensive and intensive forms of dispossession and displacement of the local inhabitants.

The purpose of this chapter is not to provide an exhaustive recount of the historic events of Portuguese colonialism in East Timor. There already exists a small body of literature that provides detailed chronological accounts of this era (Jolliffe 1978; Dunn 1996; Gunn 1999; Molnar 2010). Instead, I focus on East Timor's late colonial history (mid-nineteenth century to 1974) to chart the history of internal displacement. The creation of a plantation economy and the introduction of the head-tax in the late nineteenth century – to mitigate the economic losses from a dwindling sandalwood trade – resulted in the intensification of colonial relations that directly resulted in dispossession, and inextricably catalysed displacement. In the twentieth century, a cultural discourse of 'civilisation' and 'modernisation' further influenced how colonial powers governed (Harris 2004: 170-171). This led Portuguese authorities in East Timor to modify local settlement and livelihood patterns to meet Portuguese ideas of progress and development. Colonial dispossession was moreover justified through the introduction of a legal framework over land. In the end, the Portuguese administration did not have the institutional and financial ability to completely reassemble Timorese society to its own modern terms. Nevertheless, the Portuguese regime introduced a formal administrative system of local government, a feature that continues to influence the contemporary Timorese political landscape.

East Timorese colonial experience is comparable to accounts of colonialism elsewhere where the voices of the colonised have been mostly neglected in historical accounts and there is

little discussion about the nature of settler-native relations (Davidson 1994: 3-4; Dunn 1996: 13). More precisely, there is little mention in the literature, in both Portuguese and English sources, about the extent of displacement and resettlement that came hand in hand with the opening of large plantations, anti-colonial revolts, and later, the expansion of government services and 'development' projects in the post-WWII period. Despite this gap in knowledge, it is possible to piece together from several key writings and from evidence gathered in my own field research, some of the changes in settlement and migration patterns that took effect in the final years of colonialism.

This chapter also takes advantage of the rich anthropological studies carried out in Portuguese Timor in the period from the late 1960s to the early 1970s which offer intimate perspectives of Timorese village life ahead of the profound socio-cultural impacts which came under Indonesian rule. The anthropological studies explored the central elements that shape Timorese cosmology and social life. They stress the importance of the 'house' in tracing origin and ancestry (Hicks 1976; Lazarowitz 1980; Traube 1980; Fox 1993), marriage alliance and exchange (Forman 1980), and life cycle rituals (Hicks 1976; Forman 1980; Friedberg 1980). These societal qualities, I suggest, are the foundations of the kinship and social networks used to respond to socio-political adversity. As each of the authors worked in a specific ethno-linguistic community, primarily with the Bunak, Kemak, Mambai, Makassae, and Tetun people, they shed light on the diverse social forms, belief systems and modes of subsistence that constituted East Timorese society during the colonial period. The East Timorese viewpoint of Portuguese colonialism is similarly not well-documented in these empirical studies (see, for example, de Silva 1956; Metzner 1977; Traube 1986). This retrospective mapping exercise of 'Timorese social life' in the final stages of colonialism is not to essentialise the character of the diverse ethno-linguistic groups. Rather, it is to chart socio-cultural continuity and change, something that will have more resonance in the proceeding chapters.

2.1 PORTUGUESE COLONIALISM (MID-SIXTEENTH CENTURY TO 1974)

Jolliffe (1978: 22) describes Portuguese colonialism on Timor as distinguishable by two periods. An earlier 'mercantile phase' began in the mid-sixteenth century; the Portuguese community was concentrated on the northern coast and engaged in the customary tribute system to maintain good relations with the indigenous chiefs (*liurai*) in order to gain access to precious sandalwood in the interior. Later, a 'settler phase' followed in the mid-nineteenth century when Portuguese colonialism intensified and transformed in response to local and international circumstances, which entailed the diminishing supply of sandalwood on the

island, and the rapid industrialisation of Europe. Extensive economic reforms took effect on Portuguese Timor with the creation of a plantation sector and the introduction of the household head-tax as the main driving forces to sustain the colonial administration (Jolliffe 1978; Davidson 1994; Gunn 1999). This later period was marked by colonial attempts to reorganise land and labour in Timorese society, which directly resulted in displacement and dispossession. To this end, Portuguese Timor was a remote colonial trading outpost that never featured high on the colonialist's priorities.

Early Mercantile Period

The Portuguese presence on Timor began as early as the mid-sixteenth century with merchant interest in sandalwood. The first written record of Portuguese arrival on Timor dates back to 6 January 1512 by the Commander of Malacca, Rui de Brito Patalim, who noted the abundance of sandalwood on the island (Dunn 1996: 13). Nonetheless, Chinese traders are thought to have reached Timor a century earlier in 1436 (Boxer 1947, cited in Fox 2003). The first Portuguese settlement on Timor was established by Dominican friars who had arrived from Larantuka – a harbour on the neighbouring island of Flores. The Portuguese communities on Solor and Flores were comprised of priests, sailors, soldiers and traders. Marrying into the islands' local populations, they gave rise to a mixed Portuguese and indigenous population, known as the Topasses, who came to dominate the inter-island sandalwood trade. The Topasses were also known to have had tenuous links with the Portuguese priests and colonial authorities, and rivalled both the Portuguese and Dutch colonial governments in their influence on Timor and control of the maritime trade in the region (Fox 2003).[1]

The priests established their base on the northwest coast of Timor from 1642 onwards in Lifau, in the present day enclave of Oecussi.[2] Upon being defeated by the Dutch in Kupang (the present day capital of the Indonesian territory of West Timor), the Portuguese relocated in 1769 to Dili, which became the colony's capital, and remains the current capital of East Timor. The Dutch and Portuguese competed for colonial supremacy on the island, and boundary conflicts persisted until the two powers demarcated their spheres of interest in

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1 The Topasses (from the word *topi* for hat, as they had referred to themselves as the 'People of the Hat') were an independent group, and had forged good trading and personal relationships with the indigenous peoples of the neighbouring islands, including the Timorese, as they had the advantage of being multi-lingual in Portuguese, Malay, and the local island mother-tongues (Fox 2003: 6-8).

2 The presence of the Dominican friars in the Lesser Sunda Islands began after their occupation of Malacca in the Malay Archipelago, prompting them to expand further to the south. The priests had initially set up settlement on Solor Island in 1566 and began converting the local populations to Catholicism. Solor then became the base for the missionaries to the islands of Flores, Lombok, Alor, Roti and Timor (Dunn 1996). The Dutch later arrived in the Less Sunda region becoming a rival to the Portuguese for colonial dominance in the area. The Dutch finally managed to overtake the Portuguese fort on Solor in the early seventeenth century, forcing the Portuguese to relocate to eastern Flores, and subsequently to Timor.

1893 under the Lisbon Convention. The *Sentenca Arbitral* further sealed the border agreement in 1913 (Dunn 1996: 17). The agreement displaced, at least cartographically, several autochthonous Timorese kingdoms and allied clans that became arbitrarily divided along colonial-established lines (Jolliffe 1978; Dunn 1996).

Sandalwood was the main export of Timor for almost two centuries, before the island's groves were nearly exhausted by the 1830s.[3] The depletion of sandalwood forced the colonial administration to find alternative sources of revenue to sustain its enterprise, as all overseas Portuguese territories had to raise funds independently of the metropole (Gunn 1999: 195). As major economic restructuring took effect in the territory, the colonialists carried out calculative measures to free up land and labour, which in turn resulted in the expansion of state territorial control into the interior and its direct interventions on local livelihoods.

Increased Colonial Contact

With the cessation of the sandalwood trade, the Portuguese administration, influenced by the Dutch success in the plantation sector on Java, proceeded to introduce coffee, coconut, and rubber as cash crops in order to secure finances (Clarence-Smith 1992: 1-2). Furthermore, the Portuguese administration sought to levy taxes from cash crop export, among which coffee came to dominate. The state plantations relied on forced labour. The household head-tax (*capitação* (P)) was additionally introduced. Davidson (1994: 8) succinctly describes this later colonial period as one defined by 'coffee, corvée, and capitação'.

With the arrival of Governor Celestino da Silva and his military personnel in 1894, the colonial government forcefully expanded its presence into the territory's interior by relying on European military advances. From 1895 to 1897, Governor da Silva's pacification campaign caused increased devastation of local lives and the dispossession of customary landowners. Ermera District in the northwest of the territory was effectively pacified and land was freed up for coffee cultivation (Clarence-Smith 1992: 9). Coffee and coconut soon replaced sandalwood as the main export crops, and they proved to be complementary cash crops as the former thrived in the colder mountainous climate in the western districts, and the latter grew on the dry eastern half of the country (Clarence-Smith 1992: 3). In the 1850's, additional varieties of cash crops were introduced, leading to a diversification of agricultural export commodities (Clarence-Smith 1992: 11; Dunn 1996: 16). In the late 1880's, the Portuguese introduced a series of laws pertaining to the head-tax, imposing payment on all males aged between 18 and 60 (Taylor 1999a: 11). This growing bureaucratic and

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3 This precious wood was traded for silver, porcelain and textiles. Sandalwood trade finally ceased in the years of the First World War.

military control of Timorese society was not met without resistance (Jolliffe 1978). A series of anti-colonial uprisings ensued particularly between 1894 and 1912, and dissident clans attempting to avoid head-tax payment were reported to have fled into Dutch-occupied West Timor (Davidson 1994). On the Portuguese side, the colonial enterprise was neither unified nor coherent. Tensions persisted amongst the Catholic Church, Topasses and the colonial bureaucracy (Jolliffe 1978; Gunn 1999).[4]

The cultural contact between the coloniser and colonised intensified as Governor da Silva firmly pushed to establish a plantation economy. Coffee seedlings were distributed to Timorese farmers who were coerced to cultivate coffee and other cash crops. Those who grew coffee and coconut were exempted from tax payment but were required to give a percentage of their produce to authorities (Gunn 1999: 195-196). State revenue to fund administration costs and to repay loans from the metropole was sought through duty placed on both imports and exports; coffee export duty, for instance, was set at 20 percent of its sale (Gunn 1999: 195).

Many subsistence Timorese households who could not afford to pay the head-tax worked as plantation labourers or porters on the harbours of the north and south coasts in lieu of paying tax. Indentured labour and slavery were thought to have been inseparable from plantation work. Historian Clarence-Smith (1992: 12) suggests that Portuguese plantation labour was largely 'a kind of quasi-slavery' in the form of coerced contract labour. Chinese plantations, by contrast, were thought to have relied on free labour. The nature of Portuguese colonialism therefore shifted from one of resource extraction to human exploitation. Indeed, Portuguese slave export was still prevalent during this period. Not surprisingly, the number of conflict exchanges between the colonial authorities and Timorese peasants increased.

Portuguese pacification of East Timor thus came relatively late in history, in part hampered by the lack of administrative resources, and to some degree, their presence met with local resistance evident in the series of anti-colonial rebellions that erupted periodically in protest against tax payment, and labour and resource extraction. Nonetheless, rebellions were commonplace in East Timor's history and not always staged against foreigners, but instead waged amongst rival indigenous clans (Gunn 1999). Internal displacement was commonplace due to inter-clan warfare, which limited socio-economic mobility to shorter distances due to the hostility between rival clans that threatened the safety of travellers and discouraged migration (Metzner 1977: 16). Portuguese Timor was finally recognised as an independent

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4 The colonial government, for instance, expelled all missionaries from Timor in 1834, removing what had been 'a perpetual irritation to them' for forty years (Jolliffe 1978: 32).

colony during Governor da Silva's rule. Rather than falling under the leadership of Macau, the governor of Timor reported directly to Portugal (Dunn 1996: 17).

The colonial authorities understood the power commanded by indigenous rulers (*liurai*), and relied on a 'divide and rule' strategy by manipulating the relationships between rival indigenous groups to meet their own goals. Portuguese authorities attempted to incorporate allied indigenous rulers into the formal administration and awarded them military ranks of colonel (*coronel* (P)) and lieutenant (*tenente* (P)). Officially-appointed noble men were also awarded the honorific title of *Dom* (P) (Davidson 1994). Despite the military advantage, the inland colonial presence was restricted to the major town centtes called *posto* (P) (administrative sub-district), and further in the remote mountains communities suffered little interruption to their usual way of life.

Colonial Re-assembling of Society

To facilitate tax collection and the recruitment of peasants as plantation workers, the colonial authorities attempted to resettle the East Timorese closer to towns and away from their remote ancestral territories. Historically, the majority of East Timorese resided in fortified mountainous settlements, commonly termed *knua*, in order to avoid malaria and tribal incursions (Forbes 1884; Metzner 1977; Lape 2006). Upon colonial resettlement, communities were forcibly moved onto inhospitable lowland areas susceptible to malaria outbreaks. With little colonial investment in basic infrastructure, such as health care, the resettled populations had to devise coping strategies independently to rebuild their livelihoods and adapt to the new environments.

Further, the East Timorese were physically displaced through enslavement and forced labour recruitment on the plantations. Some did however choose to work on the plantations to flee from tribal feuds and in lieu of tax payment (Clarence-Smith 1992: 12). Although labour was to a large extent coerced and low-paid, Clarence-Smith argues that the plantations were expensive undertakings. The concentration of labour on plantations incurred high costs for planters, as it necessitated temporary shelter and food provision. European administrators and supervisors were additionally hired to manage plantation labour (Clarence-Smith 1992: 12). Until the twentieth century, labour was forcefully recruited through local chiefs succumbing to the orders of the colonial authorities. In return for their assistance, local chiefs were rewarded small sums of money for each recruited worker (Clarence-Smith 1992: 14).

The plantation sector stagnated after WWI. The colonial administration was in debt due to the Great Depression in the 1930s, and agricultural production dropped significantly. To a

lesser extent, constant warfare waged by the East Timorese against their colonial masters also slowed down the pace of agricultural development and more generally, hindered the spatial expansion of state power. The largest uprising was the 1912 War of Manufahi (*Funu Manufahi*) led by the local ruler Boaventura da Costa, whose name is now synonymous with Timorese nationalism (Davidson 1994). The rebellion is thought to have garnered the support of over twelve thousand-strong East Timorese warriors, forcing the Portuguese to request additional troops from Macau for defence.[5] Approximately 3,000 rebels were killed and 4,000 were taken as prisoners of war (Jolliffe 1978: 36). With the added Macau reinforcement, the Portuguese eventually quelled the resistance, but the historic campaign left a prominent mark in the minds of the colonisers. The uprising also resulted in both internal and external deportation of the East Timorese.

My field research in southern Manufahi demonstrates that the 1912 rebellion fragmented the participating communities. Boaventura's family and allied networks, in particular, were separated and forced to work as labourers on the harbour in Betano. The descendants of these rebels still remain today in the designated resettlement sites. Interlocutors were however hopeful that they will be able to return to their ancestral land in the post-independence period. The local social impacts are clearly enduring considering the descendants of the rebels remain 'displaced' from their places of origin. I discuss some of the other interrelated social impacts that ensued from this historic event in Chapter Five.

Following the rebellion, the colonial administration vigorously sought to reorganise the traditional socio-political structure of East Timorese society. Those *liurai* deemed to be rebellious were replaced by Portuguese-appointed leaders. The existing local territories known as *reino* where *liurai* reigned were stripped of their political significance, and divided or amalgamated into administrative villages (*suco*) on terms set by the Portuguese to diffuse any future possibility of revolts. Colonial authorities proceeded to place greater emphasis on the *suco*. Some *suco* were nevertheless polities in their own rights (Sherlock 1983: 3-4). Four levels of political administration were formalised; the lowest level of administration began with the hamlet (*povoação* (P)) that encompassed clusters of 'origin' groups or 'houses' that typically shared lineage and affinal ties. Each origin group traced their lineage to a common set of founding ancestors and accordingly, had their own bounded ancestral territories (*knua*). The hamlets were constituted within the larger administrative entity of the *suco*, which together

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5 A canon ship named *Pátria* from Macau was summoned to the south coast of Betano to attack Boaventura's stronghold (Jolliffe 1978: 35). The Portuguese infantry troops simultaneously launched an attack from inland. The rebellion had a large number of causalities on both the Timorese and Portuguese sides.

with several other villages, came under the administration of the sub-district (*posto* (P)) and district (*circunscrição* or *concelho* (P)).

At the lower administrative levels of the *povoação* (P) and *suco* (P), Timorese leaders were chosen by villagers with the approval of Portuguese authorities. The chief of hamlet (*chefe de povoação* (P)) reported to the chief of village (*chefe de suco* (P)), who subsequently reported to the sub-district administrator (*chefe de posto* (P)) for tax collection and the annual census count. The village chief effectively became the 'interface' of colonial and local governance (Cummins 2010). The *chefe de posto* was then responsible for making contact with the district administrator (*chefe de concelho* (P)). Hicks (1973, 1976), who conducted research in 1966-1967 in the eastern district of Viqueque amongst the Tetun people, writes of the melding of the traditional Timorese political organisation with the imported colonial administrative system:

> A headman (*chefe de povoação*) governs the village (*povoação*) which is usually a highly dispersed settlement of many compound groups, each containing up to about a dozen houses separated by tracts of jungle from one another. A ruler manages each compound. The chief, and to some extent the headman, are representatives of the Administration, and though elected by their villagers their appointment must be ratified by the Administration before they can assume office. This bureaucratic system and settlement pattern are common to all eastern Timor
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> Hicks (1973: 474-475)

Hicks highlights that the appointment of local chiefs required Portuguese approval, which meant that there were instances when a chief from an aristocratic lineage was unable to assume office and was instead replaced by an individual that had little local legitimacy. This colonial redefinition of local administrative powers had the adverse effect of creating new and ongoing forms of conflict within the village and within hamlets.

The evolving nature of the political administrative system in Portuguese Timor is traceable through several historical sources. During the Second World War (WWII), the Western Allied Forces that occupied the territory recorded six formal provinces (Allied Forces 1943). Almost a decade later, the Portuguese Overseas Ministry's 1952 publication of traditional Timorese authorities and their political domains revealed there were nine administrative districts in the post-war era (Sherlock 1983). In 1963, the number of districts had increased to eleven districts, and by 1968, the number again increased to twelve (Sherlock 1983: 74-76). These historical changes in territorial administration have caused confusion in the differentiation of traditional territorial boundaries from colonial-established ones. Historical sources further exacerbate the confusion of administrative boundaries and place names by using different spellings; for example, one location can be referred to by multiple place names depending

on the ethno-linguistic group and the subsequent transliteration. There are also cases where identical place names are found in multiple locations (Sherlock 1983: 8-11).

Establishing control over the socio-political organisation of East Timor was integral to the success of the proposed Portuguese economic measures. Insofar as the Portuguese intrusion into Timorese village life goes, this period marked the increasing role of the colonial state in local affairs which came to challenge *liurai* authority. Nevertheless, even when colonial-appointed local authorities were introduced, they tended to assume roles that merely superimposed onto the existing customary forms (Taylor 1999a). Customary authorities such as the *liurai*, elders of lineages (*katuas*), and ritual leaders (*lia nain*) retained legitimacy and power within Timorese society at large, and they continue to do so in contemporary times (McWilliam 2008; Cummins 2010). However, the authority of traditional leaders was compromised by the rising elites who had gained ranks through the colonial system (Dunn 1996). The four-tiered Portuguese model of local government remained unaltered during the Indonesian occupation, with only minor changes made to the official titles to complement the Indonesian system (see Chapter Three).

Increased State Territorial Control

The early years of the twentieth century marked an acceleration of state territorial control through state expropriation of land to expand the plantation economy. Dispossessed Timorese farmers had little alternative but to work as labourers on these estates. SAPT (*Sociedade Agrícola Pátria e Trabalho*), the biggest state-sponsored plantation estate during the time was co-founded by Governor da Silva and had taken over several thousand hectares of land for coffee plantations. The company planted approximately a million coffee bushes and exported 45.3 tonnes of coffee between 1906 and 1914 (Clarence-Smith 1992: 9). By dominating coffee exports, SAPT came to exert much political control over labour and land, to the extent that Clarence-Smith (1992: 9) likened it to 'a kind of state within the state'; an indication of the political dominance SAPT exerted.

The Companhia de Timor was the second largest company in operation, owning 5000 hectares of land in Ermera, but in comparison to SAPT, its export production was marginal, fetching just 6.2 tonnes from 1912 to 1914 (Clarence-Smith 1992: 10). Despite the push by the Portuguese to establish large plantation estates, Timorese smallholders were thought to have dominated the cash crop economy, producing nearly two-thirds to four-fifths of agricultural exports in the late 1920s (Clarence-Smith 1992: 15). Nevertheless, Portuguese authorities remained convinced that plantations were superior to smallholdings. Coffee

cultivation fetched a tax of 20 percent of the crop production, whereas rice cultivation was taxed at 10 percent of production (Gunn 1999: 160).

Continuing in the early twentieth century, state authority permeated spatially through the introduction of a formal legal framework on land. According to Gunn (1999: 195-196), the colonial state was reliant on foreign exchange and tax extracted from coffee export to keep Timor's economy viable. To attract foreign investment in cash crop production, thousands of hectares of land acquired by the colonial state were subjected to legal enforcement under a law on overseas land concessions introduced in the Portuguese colonies in 1901. The law came into effect in Portuguese Timor in 1910. An estimated 6000 hectares of land were granted to individual Portuguese planters during this time (Gunn 1999: 197). In 1910, a new decree on land, known as the *aforamento* (P) tenure, gave the Governor of Timor administrative control over land. The Governor had the right to grant land concessions up to 2,500 hectares; district administrators were likewise bestowed with the authority to grant up to 100 hectares of land to Portuguese and other nationalities (Gunn 1999: 196-197). The transfer of customary land was subject to the approval of the Governor.

Filomeno da Silva, the Governor at the time, favoured small land grants over large land concessions and giving full freehold tenure to Timorese peasants to weaken the political authority of indigenous chiefs (Clarence-Smith 1992: 13). Customary land was mapped under the *Carta de Lei* which showed land under the control of *liurai* and those 'without a master' (Soares 1989: 14, cited in Fitzpatrick 2002: 146). Unproductive customary land was nominally known as 'state land' and was then made available for land concessions. The East Timorese who did not want to lose their land had to demonstrate their claims by either cultivating or building on at least half of the land plot in possession; or provide evidence that they had possessed the plot for a number of years or had gained it through legal means (Gunn 1999: 197).

By establishing this new category of 'customary land' under statutory law, the East Timorese were forced to engage with the colonisers and recognise colonial authority over land despite the fact that the processes of asserting formal claims to 'customary land' were incompatible to the locally situated and diverse ways of establishing land claims. The colonial state required the demonstration of tangible ties through physical use and occupation. However, the East Timorese based their claims on oral history and cultural knowledge of the land and natural resources. Also, certain natural resources such as groves, forests and land have 'sacred' (*lulik*) qualities (Metzner 1977; McWilliam 2001), are often protected and have strict restrictions on their usage. Claims for such land were less likely to be successful.

In 1971, the Portuguese administration introduced a new system of land titles. The *Diploma Legislativo* No.865, based on the Regulation on Land Occupation and Concessions for Overseas Provinces No.43894 of 1961, declared three categories of land: state, private and empty (Soares 1989: 23-24 cited in Fitzpatrick 2002: 147). Customary land was nominally termed 'Class 2 empty land', which implied that the colonial state did not recognise customary claims as economically 'productive' land, and compensation was not paid for the expropriation of such land (Fitzpatrick 2002: 147).

In the following years, the colonial state expanded its legal definition of land into five main categories of land titles: freehold title (*propriedade perfeita* (P)); a 20-year leasehold from *perfeita* or state that could be converted into freehold after 40 years (*aforamento* (P)); a commercial lease for less than a 30-year term (*arrendamento* (P)); a right to build housing of up to 20,000 square metres on empty land (*venda* (P)); and, a short term occupation rights based on a lease agreement for less than five years or usufructuary customary rights (*occupacao* (P)) (Fitzpatrick 2002: 153). The dominant colonial thinking then was that private land titles would enable individuals to assert individualised rights and create an economic incentive for Timorese peasants to cultivate their land intensively. In theory privatised land implies the excision of state jurisdiction over land. However as a state territorialisation strategy, the recording and transfer of land remains under the purview of formal legislation, and thus, under state control (Peluso 2005: 4).

Only a low number of Portuguese land titles (2,843) were registered by 1974 (Fitzpatrick 2002: 148), which indicates that colonial hegemony was incomplete. The land parcels were concentrated where Portuguese communities had settled, in places such as Dili and Baucau, and plantation areas such as Ermera, Liquisa, and Aileu. There are no official Portuguese land records to verify the total rural land area covered under these titles (Fitzpatrick 2002: 148). A similar case resides with urban land. Despite the widespread perception that the majority of Portuguese titles issued for urban land are concentrated in the hands of a minority of Timorese elite families, particularly those of mixed Portuguese and Timorese heritage (*mestiço*), Fitzpatrick (2002: 150-151) demonstrates that there is no strong evidence to support such a claim. He suggests that apart from the Chinese-Timorese community, the biggest Portuguese title landowner is most likely the Catholic Church, which has land claims across the country allocated for various uses such as missions, church grounds, coffee and

rice fields, and schools. In total, the Church is thought to hold 278 parcels of land amounting to 4,000 hectares (Fitzpatrick 2002: 150).[6]

With precise data on the total land area covered by Portuguese titles in both the rural and urban areas lacking, Fitzpatrick (2002: 149) argues that the nature and numbers of land claims must first be clarified. Having established little evidence of the concentration of land by certain members or groups of society, he proceeds to put forward tenure reform, as opposed to land re-distribution, as a solution to resolving historical tensions over land. Although the number of Portuguese titles distributed was limited as compared to Indonesian-era titles, Fitzpatrick (2002: 141) maintains that large amounts of land covered by the Portuguese titles are of high market value.

Notwithstanding the largely unsuccessful nature of plantation estates, the cash crop sector thus heralded the beginning of colonial displacement and dispossession of the East Timorese. Local resistance to Portuguese authority triggered inter-clan and anti-colonial conflict, which was met with more violent means to reshape people's actions and their relations to land. As I describe below, notions of 'civilisation' and 'development' were implicit in the state territorial practices.

The Expansion of the 'Civilising Mission'

The Portuguese colonial state's attempt to expand its territorial control in the twentieth century was featured within a broader colonial orientation of 'civilisation', which considered the populations in its colonies 'backward'. Arguably, the Church played a significant role much earlier through its 'civilising mission' which brought literacy to a minority of the East Timorese. The Western discourse of 'civilisation' came with technological advances made in science and weaponry in Europe (Cooper and Stoler 1989; Harris 2004). To this end, 'civilised' people (i.e. the colonisers) had the scientific knowledge to overcome the constraints of environment and use the land to its full economic potential, while the 'savages' (i.e. the colonised) were ignorant of modern science and technology, and engaged in primitive subsistence agriculture (Harris 2004: 170-172). The 'civilised' and 'primitive' binary therefore provided the moral basis to modify pre-existing livelihoods.

The imposition of European scientific knowledge and worldview in the colonies was grounded in neoclassical economic rationality that assumed pre-existing social relations and economic structures were inadequate for modernity (Escobar 1992: 140-142). Hence, the introduction

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6 The Chinese-Timorese community appeared to have held large amounts of land and property as say compared to the Arabs; many of these parcels were consequently abandoned at the outset of the Indonesian invasion when the majority of the Chinese community fled overseas (Fitzpatrick 2002: 151).

of Portuguese land laws which deemed customary land as 'empty land', essentially equated customary land use as economically 'unproductive'; a view that can be argued to have stemmed from Western perception of productivity in the era of industrialisation.

The colonial view of East Timorese livelihoods and settlement patterns as 'backward' can be inferred from the various attempts by the Portuguese state to resettle the populations closer to the towns. The resettlement scheme known as *'aldeamentos indigenas'* (P) (indigenous villages) sought to bring remote and scattered populations onto lower grounds in the 1920s (Martinho 1944: 19-25). The scheme had good intentions of bringing the 'backward' populations closer to colonial ideas of 'civilisation'. Simultaneously, it attempted to ease head-tax collection and labour recruitment through a concentrated settlement pattern. The scheme however met with limited success as a result of insufficient administrative capabilities to enforce it (Lawson 1989: 16).

The scattered pattern of population settlement is in part a direct cause of Timor geology and geomorphology. East Timor is characterised by an extensive mountain range that stretches west-east in the interior of the island, producing a rugged terrain, accompanied by small narrow valleys, and low lying plains on the north and south coast.[7] Over forty percent of the land surface has a slope inclination of forty percent or greater, and erosion is commonplace particularly in the wet seasons (UNDP 2006: iv). The geology also influences Timorese settlement and livelihood patterns as soil type and fertility is controlled by underlying geology. While some geological units are conducive to fertile soils others produce soils with low fertility. This forces people to either concentrate in particular fertile areas or practice shifting cultivation in less fertile areas (Fox 1988: 261-262). Furthermore the mountains proved to be a crucial lifeline for the majority of the East Timorese who fled the advancing Indonesian military in the 1975 invasion. For nearly twenty years or longer, the mountains sheltered the Timorese resistance and forest products gave those in hiding continued basic sustenance.

The Bunak, Mambai and Kemak (Ema) speaking groups residing in the rugged interior highlands cultivated swidden gardens of maize, rice, sweet potato, cassava, taro and other root crops for subsistence (Clamagirand 1980; Friedberg 1980; Traube 1986). Foraging of wild forest plants for food was common to supplement food supplies during the dry season in the eastern districts (Metzner 1977). On the coastal lowlands, wet rice cultivation, both rain-fed and irrigated (Hicks 1976), was practised by the Makassae and Tetun people. Before the colonial introduction of maize and rice – crops that have since become staples for the

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7   The highest mountain peak is Mount Ramelau in Ainaro District which is an estimated 2,963 metres above sea level, followed by Mount Matebian in Baucau District at 2,373 metres.

East Timorese populations – taro was thought to have been the main food crop people cultivated (Metzner 1977).

Even though Timor is situated in the tropical climatic belt, temperatures in East Timor vary according to the altitudes due to the prominent mountain range. Timor has six main agro-climatic zones and has marked dry and wet seasons (Metzner 1977). The dry season is associated with the southeast monsoon, which occurs from May to October. In contrast, the wet season is associated with the northwest monsoon which arrives between November and March. The mountain range stops the rain from reaching the north coast, hence, mean annual rainfall is lowest on the north coast, while the interior and south coast receive higher mean annual precipitation, and typically two rainy seasons (Metzner 1977).[8] Rivers run to both north and south coasts from the mountains and while many swell in the rainy season overflowing banks many completely dry out in the driest months (Allied Forces 1943; Metzner 1977). Fox (1988: 262) suggests that the dry river beds have acted as 'pathways for the movement of populations'.

Because of the impact of the harsh ecological factors on Timorese livelihoods, the Portuguese and Dutch colonial administrations attempted to 'improve' local livelihoods in Timor through agricultural development programs. In the 1950s and 1960s, two seminal geographical studies examined the economic potential of agricultural development on the western half (Ormeling 1957) and eastern half of Timor (Metzner 1977). Comparatively speaking, the Portuguese authorities made only weak attempts to monitor and reconfigure local livelihoods. Their attempts were only a fraction of the profound changes brought about by Dutch intervention in the Dutch East Indies, and the other colonial powers in the region.

The Dutch systematically carried out a 'villagisation' project in West Timor, which sought to abolish shifting cultivation and increase surveillance of the populations by forcing upland hill groups who lived in a scattered fashion to concentrate on lowland settlements closer to military supply routes and along the main roads, sometimes even by torching the origin settlements to prevent people from returning (Ormeling 1957: 226-227).[9] Colonial directives did not work to plan in West Timor with Ormeling describing how the resettled West Timorese did not remain in their larger village units. They were compelled to spread further in search of cultivation land as the dominant mode of livelihood continued to be

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8   The rainfall ranges from as low as 565 millimetres in Manatuto on the north coast to 2525.8 millimetres in Letefoho in the western highlands (Metzner 1977: 63).

9   Resettlement was an integral instrument of social control used in Dutch colonial planning, and the same modernist rationale was readily employed later by the Indonesian 'New Order' state in their settlement plans across all its provinces, including East Timor.

shifting cultivation (*ladang* in Indonesian (I)). Ormeling (1957) held the view that the East Timorese lacked progress as they were hampered by a harsh semi-arid physical environment and primitive cultural ideas and practices. The traditional practice of shifting cultivation and animal grazing were identified as the underlying drivers of environmental degradation. From Ormeling's (1957: 20) perspective, the new dispersed settlements made administrative control difficult, particularly for the purposes of census and tax collection.

In his geo-ecological study of Baucau-Viqueque transact in Portuguese Timor between 1969 and 1971, Metzner (1977) observed the imbalance between 'man and his environment'. He found that Timorese subsistence agriculture was unable to cope with rapid population growth, and caused land degradation. Metzner (1977: 272, 292) writes that the traditional modes of production were 'little developed' and in urgent need of 'help from outside'. In reference to the observed scattered settlements, Metzner (1977: 19) argued that the Portuguese government's agricultural training would not be easily transferred to the East Timorese due to large distances between villages. For Metzner, the settlement pattern would need to be reconfigured to bring about any socio-economic development in Portuguese Timor. Citing Meneses (1968), he conceded that state-enforced resettlement would be a difficult feat to achieve since the East Timorese were emplaced at their ancestral domains:

> ...because of the strong ancestral ties which bind the Timorese peasantry to the burial grounds of their forefather – a place which is sacred (*lulik*) in the village compound – the Timorese are usually reluctant to abandon their hamlets (Meneses 1968: 71). The problem of dispersed settlement will not be easily overcome.
>
> Metzner (1977: 19)

Echoing Ormeling's thoughts of West Timor as 'a problem', Metzner (1977: 16) criticised that the dispersed settlement pattern was an additional hindrance to the transfer of agricultural knowledge. Metzner (1977: 140) noted that increased crop yields was foremost a result of introduced high yielding rice varieties as opposed to technological transfer. Traditional Timorese societies thus needed to be reassembled through this perception of deficiency, in order to achieve greater social and economic progress.

Both Ormeling and Metzner imposed their Western values and rational scientific outlook; 'modernity' was measured in tangible terms of economic efficiency and productivity. Escobar's description of the nature of state-planned interventions to modernise societies is relevant here:

> ...in the face of the imperatives of 'modern society', planning involved the overcoming or eradication of 'traditions', 'obstacles' and 'irrationalities', that is, the wholesale modification of existing human and social structures and their replacement with rational new ones'.
>
> Escobar (1992: 135)

Unlike Ormeling, Metzner advanced a reasonable solution to change the East Timorese attitudes towards agriculture and the environment by acknowledging that the success of any external interventions 'will thus be to win the population for the new ideas' (Metzner 1977: 292-294).

2.2   POST-WORLD WAR II: DEVELOPMENT REVISITED

The East Timorese endured Japanese occupation from 1942 to 1945 during WW II. An estimated 535 refugees fled to Australia between 1941 and 1942 (Ranck 1977: 140). Nearly 40,000 people perished during the occupation, entire villages were destroyed, and thousands of people were displaced and tortured, particularly those who assisted the Western Allied troops as *criados* (P)(servants) (Jolliffe 1978: 46-47). Japanese soldiers demanded food crops and livestock, and forced locals to meet their own subsistence by foraging for forest products. During the occupation, the Japanese were thought to have transferred their own 'double cropping' farming technique to the East Timorese. Aside from widespread loss of life and famine, the most devastating impact of the Japanese occupation was the gendered dimension of displacement. Timorese women and girls were forcibly removed from villages to serve Japanese soldiers as 'comfort women'. Many of these females were found not to have returned to their villages due to shame and discrimination. Yet their stories remain untold in most historical accounts (La'o Hamutuk 2006). In general, the sufferings of East Timorese during the war were not properly recognised for an extended period of time (Dunn 1996: 23; Taylor 1999a: 13-14).

The Return of the Portuguese

The Portuguese administration in Timor faced poor finances in the years following WWII. The Salazar corporative government in Lisbon was preoccupied with its own post-war reconstruction efforts, forcing Portuguese Timor to independently mobilise resources to repair damaged infrastructure. Most of the colony's revenue was derived from head-tax collection at 20 *patacas* per male per annum (Gunn 1999: 251).[10] The boom in world market commodity prices ensured that the colony gained additional revenue from its coffee exports (Clarence-Smith 1992: 16). Accordingly, the territory's physical infrastructure was repaired and expanded through forced labour recruited through the assistance of Timorese chiefs.

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10   The currency used in Portuguese Timor shifted from the *patacas* to the *escudos* in 1959 (one *pataca* was worth 5.6 *escudos*).

In the 1930's, the colonial community was mainly comprised of decommissioned soldiers (*deportados* (P)) who had opposed the Salazar's *Estado Novo* (new state) government.

Portuguese Timor's first five-year development plan came into effect between 1953 and 1958 (Portuguese Overseas Agency 1965: 101). Half of the funds were designated for the reconstruction of Dili and the other half was allocated to rehabilitating and expanding the agriculture sector (Dunn 1996: 25). The pace of development in the 1950s was slow due to post-war reconstruction, increasing in pace in the 1960s with the advent of better road transport and education facilities. Dunn (1996: 26) further witnessed the introduction of sealed roads and town electricity in 1963.

In 1965, the Portuguese Overseas Agency identified three major agricultural regions in the territory: the north coast, the south coast and the interior mountains. On the northern coast, the tributaries of Lois, Gleno, Laleia and Laclo were identified as having fertile soil for agriculture. Irrigated wet rice cultivation had developed in these areas even though the total rainfall was low and did not support rain-fed agriculture. The slopes of the Baucau plateau were also conducive for wet rice production. On the south coast, wet rice cultivation had developed on the extensive plains from Betano to Viqueque, while the mountain valley slopes of Ermera and Aileu where there were watercourses were prime sites of coffee (Portuguese Overseas Agency 1965: 66-70).

I was able to gain personal insights about the post-WWII time from two elderly men who served as village chief and assistant chief of Tekinomata village in the late Portuguese times. Mr Lius Baptista Belo and Mr Thomas da Costa described Portuguese rule as comparable to a dictatorship regime. The men recalled that the Portuguese presence was limited to Baucau town and that colonial contact was seldom made unless for taxation purposes. The men added that the colonial authorities sometimes demanded entire crop harvests and livestock from villagers. They further recalled that in the 1950s, the head-tax imposed locally was five *patacas* per annum, which they argued increased unreasonably to ninety-five *patacas* per annum by .1973. The main road that passes through Tekinomata (and now Mulia) was first constructed in the 1920s.

In Tekinomata, the chiefs stated that only the children of *liurai* were able to attend schools until the 1930s when the remainder of the population were given access to education. The primary school was constructed in 1923 and opened in 1930. This statement supports Dunn's (1996: 27) observations, as he notes that Catholic missions were mainly responsible for education before the colonial state began its own initiatives in the 1960s and 1970s.

Notwithstanding the tense relationship between the colonial state and Catholic Church in the past, Salazar's government incorporated the church into its political system as a conduit to transfer colonial values to the colonies (Taylor 1999a: 13). By 1973, there were 456 schools in the territory, but there were only a low number of secondary schools and no universities.

Despite the overall socio-economic progress, the main beneficiaries were the non-Timorese and Timorese aristocracy. By the 1970s, Dili had transformed into a cultural melting pot where Portuguese, Chinese, Arabs and East Timorese lived harmoniously. Portuguese settlers held all the major ranks in government and civil employment, whereas the Chinese dominated the business and commercial sectors (Dunn 1996: 31). Hence, the East Timorese resorted to low-wage employment. Timorese males typically worked as manual labourers, and females tended to be wives, concubines, slaves or servants of the Portuguese officials (Ranck 1977: 122-123).

Although the colonial administration held concerns over anti-colonial activities in the post war era, the East Timorese did not push for decolonisation. Dunn (1996: 24-25) remarks that this was surprising considering the ardent nationalist movements that swept through South-East Asia, and in particular, Indonesia. In 1959, an uprising that occurred in the eastern district of Viqueque heightened colonial concerns. Several Indonesian political asylum seekers that fled Sulawesi and had resettled in Viqueque began to harbour anti-Portuguese sentiments and managed to organise local residents into planning a coup against the colonial government. The planned uprising was quelled before it happened by the Timorese second line troops drawn from rival ancient kingdoms to Viqueque. An estimated 60 East Timorese were consequently exiled to Angola and Mozambique, and the Indonesian conspirers were deported from the territory (Dunn 1996: 29). Following this incident, the Portuguese secret police PIDE (*Policia Internacional e Defesa do Estado*) took on a more visible role in monitoring any subversive activities that potentially threatened the integrity of Salazar's government (Dunn 1996: 27-28). The PIDE extended their efforts to the close monitoring of information distributed via print and radio. Outside of Dili, the Portuguese made little headway in pacifying the territory. Inter-clan rebellions were thought to be the rule, with the East Timorese deeming it unsafe to travel far from their territories (Ranck 1977: 245).

There is no historical data to determine migration trends in the early periods of Portuguese Timor. Ranck (1977: 122-125) suggested that forced migration was most likely the dominant mode of movement until the late 1960s and early 1970s when colonial investment in education began to lure students to attend schools in the town centres and the capital. In the towns, the growing colonial settlements enticed the East Timorese to find employment

as low-waged functionaries, servants and manual labourers. In addition, official Portuguese colonial policy was imposed on Timorese mobility until 1972. He describes early migration as a result of coercion by the colonial state:

> Forced migration would account for many of the early arrivals. Slaves, soldiers, students, and workers, were all forced at various times to come to Dili. Other Timorese came as well of their own volition for trade, employment, and later education but notice was only taken of the Timorese when they were a cause of trouble to the Portuguese. Thus Dili's swampy areas were considered a criminal refuge in the nineteenth century (Martinho 1943: 1), an oft-heard complaint about squatter settlements.
>
> Ranck (1977: 122)

Inter-clan warfare would have additionally accounted for a proportion of migration prior to WWII. Post-war reconstruction would have had the positive effects of opening up employment opportunities for the East Timorese in Dili, encouraging labourers, carpenters and other trades to migrate for work. The subsequent expansion of education facilities would have later encouraged students to also migrate (Ranck 1977: 125).

Ranck (1977) provides a glimpse into the trend of rural-urban migration in the final years of colonial rule. Ranck carried out fieldwork in Dili from July 1974 to January 1975 to examine the kinship and social networks used by migrants who settled in the capital. Ranck (1977: 244-248) elaborates the majority of Timorese migrants moved from areas surrounding Dili rather than from further distances. Migrants settled in Dili typically described themselves as 'civilised' and 'urbanised' as compared to their rural kin. Ranck (1977: 248) suggests that the major obstacle for migrants in Dili was adapting to a colonial culture to become *assimilados* (P) (assimilated). He elaborates that being 'civilised' was judged not so much on attaining formal Portuguese education, rather, the parameters of civilisation were the ability to assimilate into the colonial urban environment, wear European clothes, speak Portuguese and Tetun-Dili, and earn cash income.

In Ranck's (1977: 250-252) opinion, kinship and social relations served as channels for social and economic mobility to Dili, and individuals embedded in wider social and economic networks (i.e. family, marriage, and friendship) were comparatively successful in carving out new livelihoods in Dili. It was commonplace for families in the districts, for instance, to rely on extended members of kin in Dili to sponsor their children's education. In return, the 'adopted' children provided companionship and took care of domestic duties in the new household. Friendship and marriage links to the Portuguese and Chinese additionally opened up employment opportunities in the capital, proving essential factors for internal migration.

Ranck (1977: 244) raises a final important point, arguing that the maintenance of kin and social ties worked both ways, such that rural ties were equally important for urban settlers to maintain for it kept open a channel to gain access to resources and the option to return to the districts. As this thesis will make clear, these qualities of Timorese kinship and social networks continue to be significant in the negotiation of displacement, land, and livelihoods in the post-independence years.

To summarise, Portuguese colonialism began to have an impact on Timorese society in the final century of its rule. The colonial failure to expand its authority throughout East Timor is particularly revealing on the religious front, with less than 30 percent of the population converting to Catholicism by the end of Portuguese rule in 1974 (Dunn 1996: 44). Of the few changes implemented, the colonial local government structure was the most enduring feature of Portuguese Timor. Yet this imported political model, at best, operated in parallel to the traditional modes that retained local legitimacy. Internal displacement was commonplace due to inter-clan warfare and later followed by anti-colonial resistance. Voluntary rural-urban migration is thought to have been a recent phenomenon, beginning with the post-WWII rebuilding of the colony. Timorese social organisation and its rich cultural practices were largely overlooked and regarded as 'backward' under the cultural discourse of 'civilisation' which justified the need for colonial intervention through land reform, resettlement and agricultural development.

2.3 TIMORESE SOCIAL ORGANISATION IN THE LATE PORTUGUESE TIMES

To become cognizant of the changes introduced during the late period of Portuguese colonialism, the following sections focus on the social, cultural, economic and political structures that characterised Timorese society as observed by anthropologists. I have placed more emphasis on the works of Forman (1980) and Traube (1986) for they detail the sociality of the Makassae and Mambai ethno-linguistic groups respectively – the predominant ethno-linguistic groups found in my field sites.

Ethno-linguistic Diversity

The diversity in ethnicity and language of East Timor is truly a remarkable feature for a small territory.[11] There are at least sixteen distinct ethno-linguistic groups, and the languages spoken may further be distinguished into local dialects. These indigenous languages are broadly classified as Austronesian and non-Austronesian languages (also referred to as the

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11 East Timor occupies a relatively small land mass (approximately 14,900 square kilometres). The enclave of Oecussi located on the north coast in West Timor, measures approximately 2,465 square kilometres.

Trans New Guinea family of Papuan languages) (Hull 1998). Austronesian languages include Mambai, Tetun, Kemak, Tokodede, Galoli, Idate, Kairui, Midiki, Lakalei, Waima'a, Habu, and Naueti (Fox 2003). Non-Austronesian languages are unrelated to the Austronesian family; they include Bunak, Makassae, Makalero, and Fataluku. The numbers of languages may vary depending on how they are classified (for example see Capell 1944a, 1944b; Hull 1998; Gordon 2005; Bowden and Hajek 2007).[12]

The Austronesian language groups generally occupy the western districts of East Timor, and the non-Austronesian groups are concentrated on the eastern end, with the exception of the Bunak people who reside in the central highlands of the interior of Timor. East Timor has a higher diversity of languages than that found in West Timor; the latter is dominated by the two ethno-linguistic groups of the Atoni Pah Meto people who speak Dawan, and the Tetun-Belu speakers of the central south coast (Fox 2003: 3-5). The languages found on Timor are closely related to those found in Roti, Wetar, Kisar, and to a lesser extent, Flores, Solor and Savu (Capell 1944a: 19). The closeness in languages is therefore indicative of the historical waves of migration to Timor. The similarities and variations of languages reflect the fact that Timor received historical migrations from the neighbouring eastern Indonesian islands, notably originating from the surrounding islands of Maluku (Moluccas) and Roti (Capell 1944a: 48).

Recent scholarly works have highlighted evidence of the expansion of several non-Austronesian language groups in East Timor, specifically the Fataluku and Bunak (McWilliam 2007; Schapper 2009, 2011). Tracing the movement of ethno-linguistic groups through language and cultural concepts, both McWilliam and Schapper's work highlight the long history of migration on the island due to population expansion and political turmoil. Their studies also highlight there can be shared linguistic and cultural codes between Austronesian and non-Austronesian people established through an extended history of social contact and interaction between the diverse populations.

Schapper (2011: 168-181) traced the historical Bunak migration linguistically by mapping the dispersal of the language from the Bunak 'homeland' in the central Bobonaro highlands westward along the West Timor border and eastward into Manufahi District as a result of

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12 For example, Tetun may be considered as one indigenous language. However, three variations of Tetun can be identified on the island as a whole. Firstly, Tetun-Terik is spoken on the central south coast in Suai and Betano. Secondly, Tetun-Belu is spoken on the south coast regency of Belu in West Timor. Thirdly, Tetun-Praça or Tetun-Dili is widely spoken in Dili and it is also the *lingua franca* of East Timor. Tetun-Praça is a simplified version of Tetun-Terik and contains Portuguese loan words. The Austronesian languages of Waima'a, Kairui-Midiki and Naueti on the north and south coasts, and interior of East Timor provide another useful example. These three languages were listed by Gordon (2005) as individual languages whilst they were identified as dialects of the same language by Hull (2004).

inter-group disputes, the setting up of colonial borders, WWII flights, and Indonesian-era resettlement. McWilliam's (2007) study of the Fataluku people in Lautem District conversely reveals the westward expansion of the language into areas once inhabited by the endangered Austronesian language group of Lovaia. Referring to Fataluku speakers as 'Austronesians in linguistic disguise', McWilliam's (2007: 361-363) study offers a striking example of how the broader Austronesian and non-Austronesian linguistic parameters can mask cultural similarities across linguistic boundaries.

Through my own research, the two field sites of Mulia and Simpang Tiga show evidence of an extended history of migration. In the first field site of Mulia, customary landowners along the Laga stretch of coast are Makassae speaking people. However, river names are distinctively Wai Ma'a derived names, indicating a westward influx of non-Austronesian populations. Whether the inward-migration was by feudal conquest, marriage ties or depopulation of the Wai Ma'a, the result has been the encroachment of Makassae into previously held Wai Ma'a territories. The second field site of Simpang Tiga has a similar if not more complicated history. I encountered self-identified Bunak speakers residing amongst Mambai and Tetun groups. Interlocutors demonstrated their ability to be conversant in the three languages as a result of long established intermarriage, exchange and alliance. Some interlocutors claimed that they had moved from Bobonaro at least three generations ago. One group on the contrary, named Um Leo Ai, claimed that they had 'risen from the ground' (*moris husi rai*) in Manufahi, which suggests that their ancestors had migrated much earlier in history, so much so that their oral history strongly emphasises their ties to land in Manufahi. They were moreover considered customary landowners in the local *aldeia* of Loti in Daisua village (see Chapter Five).

The linguistic distinction between Austronesian and non-Austronesian is overlaid with the Portuguese cultural-spatial stereotypes of *firaku* and *kaladi* together with the local regional categories of *lorosa'e-loromonu* (east-west). These stereotypes remain relevant in the contemporary times. Specifically, these categories were readily mobilised in the 2006 social unrest, which caused divisions in East Timorese society.[13] The term *Firaku* was associated with the inhabitants of the eastern districts of Baucau, Manatuto, Viqueque and Lautem

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13 The 2006 crisis occurred in April and May of that year. In March, nearly 600 soldiers or a third of the national military F-FDTL (FALINTIL-Forças de Defesa de Timor Leste) deserted their barracks on the basis of asserted discrimination within the institution. The soldiers were mainly junior ranked officials from the western districts and protested against the unequal treatment of the older generation soldiers who were higher ranked, and the majority of whom originated from the eastern districts and were previously FALINTIL resistance fighters. It has since been acknowledged that the root causes of the 2006 unrest were largely motivated by Indonesian-era grievances, rather than the widely perceived deep-rooted 'ethnic' divisions (Kingsbury and Leach 2007). The ensuing violence and mass displacement nevertheless serves as an important remainder of how 'ethnic' identities can be conveniently mobilised and politically manipulated as they are overlaid by longstanding tensions between members of society.

who were considered independent and rebellious. *Kaladi*, in contrast, referred to the Mambai mountain dwellers who were associated with taciturn and passive qualities (Babo-Soares 2003). The term is generally linked with inhabitants of the western districts of Dili, Aileu, Manufahi, Bobonaro, Ermera, Cova Lima, Ainaro, and Oecussi.[14] The diverse Timorese ethno-linguistic groups do not only share and borrow linguistic attributes, they exhibit fairly similar cultural norms and practices that prompt one to reconsider the notion of 'ethnicity' as distinct social and cultural groupings. Below, I outline the common characteristics of the different ethno-linguistic groups.

Emplaced Origins

Broadly, the East Timorese identify themselves in geographically-defined kin groups. These groups can be termed as 'origin' groups or 'houses' (*uma fukun*); they constitute agnatic kin members that trace descent to an apical founding ancestor. Origin groups are divided into family units who may establish subsidiary houses (*uma kain*). Origin groups are spatially oriented at the ancestral territory (*knua*) and rely on a house-based social structure, where the physical entity of an 'origin house', or 'cult house' or 'sacred house' (*uma lulik*) is associated with the group (Hicks 1976; Traube 1980). The 'house' (*uma*) social structure prevails across Timor and is at once a physical entity and cultural category that connects the origin group to its territory, ancestors and kin network (Hicks 1976; Forman 1980; Traube 1980; Fox 1993). The *uma kain* literally refers to the 'stalk of the house' which is regarded as derived from the branching out of the 'trunk' or 'base' (*hun*) of the house (Therik 2004: 133).

East Timorese identity is territorialised in the sense that group origin myths are embedded in the local landscape, giving special prominence to land and other natural entities in Timorese cosmology and social practice. As discussed above, Metzner (1977: 19) stressed that the East Timorese held strong ties to the ancestral burial grounds. Similarly, the Atoni Meto people in West Timor have been described as 'territorially localised' (Schulte-Nordholt 1971: 92). One or more related origin groups are clustered in an autochthonous domain or ancestral territory (*knua*), which is understood as the source of identity and origin.

Land is life in rural East Timorese societies. It is the main mode of gaining a livelihood, and cannot be separated from its social context. Accessing or acquiring of land is mainly mediated through traditional rules or mutual agreements between individuals. Land tenure systems are essentially 'relationships' of people, and ancestors. These relationships have a

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14 Origins of both terms remain unclear. The term *firaku* is thought to have derived from the Portuguese term *vira o cu* (to turn one's backside or 'my friend'). *Kaladi* is thought to be derived from the Portuguese term *calado* (quiet or silent), or from the Malay term *keladi* (taro) in reference to a staple food crop grown by the highlands people (Babo-Soares 2003: 269-270).

larger effect on society than just who has access to land and effectively define the power and social relationships within defined communities.

Families enjoy varying degrees of individualised and communal property rights under customary tenure (D'Andrea 2003). Members of a lineage or 'house' can gain access to inherited land and may enjoy use rights over general areas of land belonging to the group to cultivate gardens. As long as the garden is cultivated and maintained, the produce and land belong to the cultivator. However, once the garden is abandoned, the land reverts to communal land and may be used by another group member (Fitzpatrick 2002). As a result, the natural environment may be attributed with magical or sacred qualities (*lulik*), forming a tangible link to one's social and spatial origins. The local landscapes of Timor are therefore historicised and charged with meaning as the East Timorese make constant reference to the past to make sense of contemporary social relations and events (Fox 1996).

Geographical features shape the distribution of language, settlement, and livelihood. As Traube (1980) makes clear the local settlement pattern in her study site in Aileu District was physically dispersed from the central ritual domain. The domain itself formed the focus of ritual and social practice only when the scattered members of the origin group gathered periodically:

> The Mambai live in highly dispersed hamlets, ranging from one to five houses. There is nothing resembling a centralised village, though associations of hamlets called *pobsan* (from the Portuguese *povoacao*) are recognised and united under one headman (Ulun). Administratively, the *pobsan* are grouped into a number of *suco*, or districts, each headed by a functionary addressed as Koronel (or *Liurai* in Tetun). The *suco* division is essentially a European-imposed organisation; it was not part of the traditional system. ..The hamlet clusters themselves unite only for ritual or administrative purposes. Normal residence remains highly scattered. Each house (*fada*) is a localised patrilineage of two or three generations in depth, consisting of a man, his sons, and grandchildren, and their wives. Residence is thus ideally patrilocal, though often a man settles with his wife's kin and pays little or no bridewealth. Polygyny is common, and the wives, who often live in separate huts, tend their own gardens.

Traube (1980: 294)

Indeed, it is difficult to establish where people resided on a regular basis since they may move between the ancestral land, their everyday dwelling and the gardens. Cartographic materials of East Timor reveal a surprising number of recurring place names. They include duplicated administrative names of districts, sub-districts, villages and hamlets, places named in succession (e.g. 'upper', 'lower', 'new', 'old', 'two', 'three' etc.).[15] Recurring place names can

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15 To date, the boundaries of hamlets, presently known as *aldeia*, have never been officially mapped.

be inferred as an Austronesian trait, where places are assigned names strategically to spatialise memories and attach meaning to landscape. The recitation of an ordered sequence of place names, known as topogeny, is common practice (Fox 1997: 8-9). Place names, or toponyms, are thus frequently carried across landscapes through migration, linking old settlements to the new. Understanding the nature of place names can provide clues to the historical trends of population movement as the past is embedded into the landscape.[16]

Sacred House

As noted above, the sacred house (*uma lulik*) forms a physical residence but is also symbolic of group origin and identity. Thus, in Timor and elsewhere in Eastern Indonesia, the 'house' is imbued with utmost ritual and social significance (Fox 1993; Fox and Sather 1996). Sacred houses are thought to be a cultural repository where sacred objects and family heirlooms are stored (Forman 1980; Traube 1980; 1986). The house is also regarded as a moral compass where individuals who do not identify with a house can be considered as having lost their 'cultural roots' (*abut laiha*) (Trindade and Castro 2007: 38). In addition, early memories and ancestral knowledge are transmitted down through ritual ceremonies centred at the house.

The physical architecture of the sacred house differs among the diverse Timorese cultural groups, but this may also hold true for sacred houses within an established ancestral domain where the most ritually significant sacred houses are decorated more elaborately than others. A ritual altar or platform, made up of stacked piles of rocks with a post or beam erected on top, is commonly found adjacent to the sacred house. Depending on the significance of the ritual, which can extend for days, months or years, ceremonial rites typically entail animal sacrifice, ritual chants and elaborate feasts. Ancestor names and origin myths may be recounted in the chants, providing a corporeal sense of connection to the mythical ancestors that once inhabited the settlement. In Forman's essay on the Makassae people, he observed that the sacred house is built on practical architecture and religious significances:

> Such a lineage house – built high on piles and in which jointly held sacred objects, personal wealth, and harvested crops are stored out of the reach of rats – and its associated sacred rock, tree, and ancestral burial ground are the focal points of all rituals, save those agricultural rites specifically geared to the productive process, that are conducted in the gardens and rice fields by their individual 'owners'.

Forman (1980: 155)

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16   The names of origin groups and origin houses reveal another level of complexity not captured on maps. Origin group names frequently correspond to place names, and are sometimes found in a distant district, which hint to historical migration. Apart from Schapper's (2011) work that traced Bunak expansion, how origin house names and place names relate, and transform across space from one form to another, or conversely from place names to group names remain largely unexplored in the East Timor context.

The sacred house is of utmost ritual importance to the Makassae people. Observing the process of rebuilding the sacred house, which occurs once every decade or so, Forman states:

> Whereas all transfers of animals in marital and mortuary exchanges are made in the form of cooked food (save for the horses and buffalo brought to repay the labours of matrilateral kin), the exchange of cooked food during house-building ceremonies is expressly prohibited until the house is built and the cooking hearth, which gives life to the house, is placed inside.

> Forman (1980: 176)

Indeed, the sacred house inauguration I observed with the Makkasai people in Tekinomata village followed similar prescriptions. The cooking hearth was installed last, marking the final stage of rituals (see Chapter Seven). In the second field site of Daisua amongst the Mambai people, sacred houses are given due respect akin to living elders in the community. When people gathered at a sacred house, permission is sought from ancestors of the house (not the house custodian) prior to consuming food, drink, tobacco or chewing betel nut.

Alliance and Exchange

Marriage alliance underpins social reproduction in East Timor. Once an alliance is established upon the marriage of a Timorese couple, their respective families are assigned the roles of the wife-taking (*fetosaa*) and wife-giving (*umane*) groups. Because membership in origin groups is based on genealogical links, origin groups are exogamous. Strictly speaking, members must marry outside the same lineage house. Preserved through elaborate gift exchanges transacted at marriage and death, the series of exchanges sustains the relationship between the contracting parties and their affines (Traube 1986: 86-87).

The Makassae and Mambai people in general are patriarchal in character, and women marry out of their lineage to reside with their husband's lineage. The alliance between the wife-taking and wife-giving groups is characteristically an asymmetrical relationship, that is, once an alliance has been established, females from a wife-taking group may not marry into their wife-giving groups, and males from the wife-giving group may not marry into their wife-taking groups. Such prescriptive norms may not always be followed in practice. Comparatively, the direction of alliance can change over time as demonstrated elsewhere in eastern Indonesia (Reuters 2006; Vischer 2009).

The political organisation of Timorese society corresponds to origin groups and marriage alliance. Since settlements were founded by autochthonous settlers, political and ritual powers were vested within the domain. Nevertheless, political power is distinct to ritual power, and similar to other social categories, such as that of wife-takers and wife-givers, premise on a

'relational asymmetry' (Fox 1996: 131). The fractioning of alliances was commonplace, and often encouraged dissident groups to abandon the original domain, migrate, and establish new settlements elsewhere. Marrying into, and sharing political alliance with a resource rich group were foremost strategies to gain access to land for residence and agriculture (see Chapter Five).

Early Timorese polities constituted of chiefdoms and kingdoms (*reino*) with varying spheres of power. In particular, the Tetun speaking groups that straddle the south coast of the island reigned over large areas of the island until their slow demise caused by the arrival of the Dutch and Portuguese. The actual numbers of indigenous kingdoms and chiefdoms that once dominated Timor in the pre-colonial times remain difficult to establish, particularly because feuding warfare and power struggles caused these kingdoms to vary in importance at different time periods (Fox 2003: 17-18).

At the time when Dutch and Portuguese colonial administrations settled on Timor in the late eighteenth century, there were approximately 62 kingdoms on the island, 16 in the Dutch territory and 46 in the Portuguese (Dunn 1996: 14). The Tetun kingdom of Wehali found within the present day boundaries of West Timor was believed to have exerted its rule eastward across the island (Therik 2004). The eastern Portugese half of the island, by contrast, is thought to have been ruled by the Tetun kingdoms of south central Suai and Camnasa at some point in time (Fox 2003: 17).

Commonly, groups that lost their territories to rival groups migrated away permanently and sought land access through their extended marital networks. Domestic disputes within the origin group can similarly lead to the physical separation and relocation of kin members, and the origin house may splinter into two or more domains. The outcome is often the case that the departing group gains land entitlement in another territory by pledging political allegiance to a *liurai* from another origin group. The separation of group members can lead to the formation of new sacred houses in the new settlements. It is fairly common to find identical village and hamlet names across East Timor, which indicate the carrying over of place names through migration and alliance.

Interestingly, Traube (1986: 51-54) observed that the Mambai interpreted the arrival of the Portuguese colonialists through a lens of alliance and exchange. The Portuguese most likely came into contact with the Mambai when they first occupied Dili in the mid-eighteenth century. During this time, Dili was a Mambai-dominated territory. Traube explained that the Mambai regarded themselves as the original inhabitants of Timor but they did not violently

oppose European domination. Rather, they incorporated the presence of the Portuguese into their cosmology. By interpreting the Portuguese, or white Europeans (*Malaia-butin*) as their younger siblings, the Mambai regarded the Portuguese as 'returning younger sons of the land', and hence, legitimate rulers that have simply returned to rule their territory. Her view might substantiate why colonial alliance was formed with some indigenous rulers and not others.[17]

Marriage and Exchange Practices

The custom of bridewealth is practiced at marriage in varying ways by the East Timorese. Bridewealth (*folin*), also known as *barlaque* (in Mambai (Mb)), or *tufurae gi ira* (in Makassae (Mk)),[18] is a gift payment made by the husband and his lineage to the wife's lineage, and in return the wife's lineage presents counter gifts to her husband's lineage (Hicks 1976; Forman 1980; Traube 1986). The Makassae people distinguish their affines between real or immediate (*heto* (Mk)) and

classificatory (*ga'a uali* (Mk)) wife-givers and wife-takers (Forman 1980: 156). The nature of obligation to participate and contribute to marital and mortuary rituals is based on this distinction of alliance, where rituals linked to 'real' social relations require the contribution of more accumulated exchange items than compared to 'classificatory' affines.

Wife-givers are generally accorded higher status over the wife-takers because they are directly associated with reproduction and fertility, hence, they are the source of life (Traube 1986: 94). However, Timorese sociality (including the Mambai) draws on dualist notions; therefore, social reproduction is not possible without the complementary 'male blood' from the wife-takers. For the Bunak and Tetun populations who trace their descent through the maternal line, bridewealth does not have as much significance in marriage alliance, and the in-marrying males reside uxorilocally (Francillon 1967; Friedberg 1980).

Importantly, the bridewealth given to the wife-givers does not remain in the possession of the bride's parents.[19] Noting that each wife-taking group is also a wife-giving group in relation to another source house, the gift items do not remain in possession for a long duration of time.

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17 The Manufahi Rebellion of 1912 was led by an alliance between Mambai, Bunak and Tetun people, hence, Traube's contention of 'Mambai cosmology' in viewing the Portuguese presence as 'younger brother' might not entirely be shared by other Mambai groups across the country.

18 Bridewealth in Makassae language is also known as *bura gini* or *fadau* (da Costa et al. 2006: 143, 145).

19 Bridewealth negotiation processes can be demanding, time-consuming and sometimes quarrelsome. As resources have to be mobilised for exchange, tensions can arise between the contracting parties and even within the extended kin group. The burden of bridewealth increases with the social status of origin groups, such that marrying into *liurai* groups can demand more prestation items.

The items instead move along the long chain of affiliations connected to the female's kin to attend to another marriage or death (Forman 1980: 155-157). Despite popular perceptions that the bridewealth exchange is a one-time event, the payment merely marks the start of a steady cycle of elaborate gift exchanges that are also transacted at mortuary ceremonies and sacred house inaugurations.[20]

Exchange is the idiom of Makassae social life (Forman 1980). The gift items used in ritual exchanges at marriage and mortuary ceremonies seek to emphasis the continuity of life established between allied groups. Forman (1980: 153) found that wife-taking groups gave items associated with the means of livelihood production (and hence, a direct link to soil fertility and human fertility), such as 'water buffalo, horses, and swords used to till the soil and produce rice', whereas the wife-giving groups gave cooked food items such as rice and pork, to symbolise the basis of reproduction, for the cooked food represents what will become 'blood' and 'sperm' in the husband's and wife's body after consumption. In a similar fashion, Traube (1986: 88) observed that wife-takers provide the 'male gifts' of water buffalo, goats, horses, and metal disks, whilst wife-givers reciprocate with 'female gifts' of pigs, cloths, coral necklaces, and cooked rice. Traube (1986: 94-97) suggests that alliance is perceived by the Mambai as 'life giving, vitalising, sustaining', and in contrast to male descent, is perishable and must be renewed over time. Gift exchange between marital allies is transacted throughout the full extent of the marriage between the marriage partners and their families. Commonly, the exchange practice continues intergenerationally to ensure the flow of life is maintained. Allied groups tend to follow the same marriage paths for generations, particularly if the alliance is socio-politically prestigious since it provides a channel to gain resources and status.

The Order of Precedence

Another distinctive characteristic of East Timorese sociality is the use of the notion of precedence to inform social organisation and cosmology. Precedence has been widely drawn by anthropologists studying Austronesian societies as an analytical tool to explore a whole range of issues concerning asymmetric and complementary social relations (for example see Fox and Sather 1996; Vischer 2009). Social relations are differentiated by 'culturally pertinent and recursive events, such as births, marriages, migrations, or the foundation of houses and settlements' (Reuter 2006: 15). These cultural parameters in turn prescribe marriage and mortuary prescriptions, reciprocity and exchange, and leadership to create an 'order

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20 Forman (1980: 159-160) notes that there is a series of marital exchanges. After the first exchange of *tufurae gi ira* (Mk) (the value of the woman') by the wife-taking group, a ceremony of incorporation is held (*rai uara* (Mk)). This is followed by the wife-givers presenting the wife-takers with a roasted pig and cooked rice 'to cover her footsteps' (*ilu uai safe la'a* (Mk)). Following this, a second exchange is held, known as *bou gau boba gau* (Mk)(for the brother, for the father).

of precedence' in which social differentiation is established categorically, recursively and asymmetrically to one another as 'elder' > 'younger', 'first-born' > 'last born', or 'trunk' > 'tip' and so forth in a repeated fashion (Fox 2009: 1). Importantly, the 'order of precedence' connects across various scales and categories. The 'order of precedence' is both practice and discourse, and as such, competition for authority and legitimacy are implicit. The construction of the order is contestable, reversible and may even be reordered completely depending on the events and categories drawn (Fox 2008; Vischer 2009).

The 'order of precedence' is relevant in this study for it informs settlement formation, historical mobility, and inter-group alliances. For example, the first settler group of a domain – that is, the 'autochthonous' or 'origin' group – typically holds the highest rank of ritual authority, and groups that come to settle thereafter will be allocated land rights and associated powers in sequence of settlement by the first group, creating a local 'order of precedence'. In-migrating groups are incorporated into the domain through marriage or adoption, which leads to another category of precedence (Fox 1996a, 2008, 2009). As the settlement grows, it leads to recursive political and social changes.

Since the order of precedence strongly influences all matters related to social and status differentiation, it is a useful analytical concept to utilise in this thesis as it enables a nuanced understanding of the parameters that have come to shape the ability of resettled families and individuals to assert land claims in their situations of protracted displacement. As the ethnographic case studies will illustrate in the later chapters, the 'order of precedence' is chiefly established across four identifiable levels of intra-lineage relations; marriage alliance; inter-lineage relations; and inter-polity alliance. Together, they strongly influence who has rights to access land in the respective domains. In order to gain access to land and resources, resettled families strategically draw on what they perceive to be meaningful events and categories to situate themselves in relation to the pre-established 'order of precedence'. The above ideas and practices associated with social differentiation can illuminate how the East Timorese reassess their social relations in the face of socio-political adversity.

2.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter has traced the deep historical roots of movement and dispossession in East Timor. Beginning in the pre-colonial times, displacement was commonplace due to the country's ecology that compelled people to move periodically in search of cultivation land. Inter-clan warfare was also prevalent which led to displacement and dispossession of territory. Nevertheless, the social ordering of Timorese societies ranked as 'houses' further encourages subsidiary 'houses' to move away from the ancestral domain to establish themselves

independently elsewhere. As I have noted, Portuguese colonialism relied on 'divide and rule' to establish their authority indirectly through the assistance of loyal indigenous chiefs. The rise of colonial capitalism provided momentum for dispossession and displacement to make way for plantations. Colonial dispossession of land was entrenched through the import of the Portuguese legal system which dismissed historical claims to land and local land uses, replacing them with unfamiliar definitions and regulations. Later, the cultural discourse on 'civilisation' further provided the moral basis for improving 'primitive' Timorese livelihoods. The lower strata of society – peasant farmers who depended on access to land for subsistence – were most impacted by these state practices, of which land tax was a major issue.

This chapter also explored the main characteristics of Timorese sociality and cultural forms. Land is the cornerstone of Timorese livelihoods and cosmology; the local landscapes are embedded with mythical and ritual significance. Hence, the East Timorese actively responded to the colonial encroachment of their land and livelihoods through the staging of rebellions. The ancestral settlement and sacred house are significant markers of group origins and ancestry across the diverse Timorese ethno-linguistic groups. Extensive marriage networks pervade Timorese society and underpin social reproduction. Marriage (and political) alliances are maintained through elaborate gift exchanges and are effective channels to gain access to land and other resources. Colonial thinking however considered these emplaced social relations as emotional attachments to land which hindered 'development' and 'modernisation'.

The notion of precedence establishes a social ordering system within Timorese societies. Precedence can be expressed in several forms, namely in the orders of establishing settlement, birth, marriage, and migration. Because these events may overlap, the 'order of precedence' is typically contested and asserted in various means to achieve different agendas (as I will discuss in Chapter Five). These cultural ideas and practices are argued to be fundamental to frame any analysis of social continuity and change in East Timor. The next chapter continues to chart the intricate history of displacement in East Timor. Compared to 400 years of Portuguese rule, the two and a half decades of Indonesian occupation brought about profound changes to the Timorese society. Foregrounding the assemblages of these historical practices and processes of displacement and dispossession is necessary to expose their enduring effects that continue to shape contemporary Timorese livelihoods and sociality.

Chapter Three

Order and Development: A Period of Change from Indonesian Rule to National Independence

Linear settlements along the main roads of rural East Timor is now an everyday sight; its proliferation is a direct result of historical state territorialisation. As shown earlier, the Portuguese administration attempted resettlement to organise labour and tax collection, but was unsuccessful in its attempt. Resettlement under the Indonesian 'New Order' government was not only intensified in scale, it also served greater purposes.

In Chapter One, it was discussed how *conflict-induced* displacement and *development-induced* displacement are commonly conceptualised as two very distinct processes. However, the historical account of Portuguese Timor suggests the shortcomings of this conceptual binary. In this chapter, a historical analysis of the Indonesian invasion and occupation of East Timor will similarly indicate that the two phenomena are, to a certain degree, mutually constitutive. Forced displacement during the occupation started as a product of conflict but later became a pivotal entry point for carrying out 'New Order' development. Forced resettlement was a key dimension in reshaping local livelihoods and conduct to that prescribed by the terms of the Indonesian state. Hence, forced displacement began as an act of human rights violation (CAVR 2005a, 2006), but transformed into a disciplinary technique of governance that extended state power into Timorese village life in a violent manner to bring welfare services, and at the same time, reshape local conduct in line with 'New Order' thought and culture (cf. Ferguson 1994; Philpott 2000; Li 2007).

My main interest in this chapter is to analyse the Indonesian resettlement scheme as a disciplinary tool of the state which is associated with nation-building. The relocation of East Timorese communities from their traditional settlements into centralised lowland resettlement sites was more than a technical feat of reordering people and space; this spatial reworking expanded and entrenched state authority into the remote and rural terrains which the Portuguese administration did not cover. This increased presence of the state at the village level – practised elsewhere in the Indonesian Archipelago – enabled local livelihoods to be regulated in 'New Order' terms, and disparate groups to conform to a unified model of Indonesian citizenship (see, for example, Tsing 1993; Guinness 1994; Elmhirst 1999; Li

1999). By foregrounding the socio-political changes made to East Timorese society through forced resettlement, which were at first spatial alterations, it becomes possible to make sense of post-occupation rural livelihoods and sociality in the ethnographic chapters that follow (Chapters Four, Five and Seven).

Drawing on the extensive collection of political and strategic studies that have examined the Indonesian occupation of East Timor, I narrow my focus to examining New Order resettlement and its socio-political impacts, for it brought far-reaching consequences to the East Timorese. I marry this analysis with what happened 'on the ground' in my field sites of Mulia and Simpang Tiga, by engaging interlocutors' personal memories of invasion and resettlement. This foregrounding is necessary for two reasons; first it seeks to demystify New Order resettlement as not solely driven by malevolence to dominate, but steered by an unrelenting 'will to govern' (Philpott 2000; see also Li 2007). State-enforced resettlement can be argued to be a 'disciplinary technology' employed to guide and shape conduct of citizens (see Foucault 1991). Second, I seek to demonstrate that Indonesian era resettlement heralded an intensification of state-society engagement to an unprecedented extent not witnessed in the long history of Portuguese Timor. In the process, the seeds were sown to create loyal subjects of an abstract and larger territorial imaginary, that of a modern nation state. The concluding section briefly highlights the Timor-Leste state's struggle in its own nation building exercise in the post-independence years.

3.1 INDONESIAN OCCUPATION (1975 - 1999)

There is now a large body of literature that offers a critical analysis of East Timor's ordeal under Indonesian rule (Budiardjo and Liem 1984; Taylor 1991, 1999a; Aditjondro 1994, 2000; Dunn 1996; CAVR 2006). Indonesian state terror strategies that sought to pacify the East Timorese in the two and a half decades of occupation from 1975 to 1999 can be broadly delineated into physical terror, sexual and gender-based violence, symbolic violence, demonisation of the Timorese resistance fighters and 'demographic dilution' through enforced family planning (Aditjondro 2000). The studies discuss meticulously planned military campaigns, counter-insurgency techniques and widespread gross and systematic violations of basic human rights as strategies to establish control over the people and the territory (CAVR 2006). The general tenor of these analyses is that the Indonesian government led a regime of brutality, repression and domination.

After the formal integration of East Timor as the twenty seventh province of Indonesia, the state began to invest heavily in what they perceived was a neglected former Portuguese colony that had received minimal investment from the colonial state. Framed within a 'development'

discourse (Tsing 1993; Li 1999), the East Timorese, like ethnic minorities elsewhere in the Indonesian archipelago, were deemed marginalised, backward, and ignorant. In 1984, the Indonesian Department of Information (1984: 23) stated that the former Portuguese government had 'no policy to organise the scattered pattern of human settlements' that were spread across 1,717 villages in 64 sub-districts. Based on this assessment, the concentration of populations into newly established 'resettlement villages' with public amenities was legitimised on the moral grounds of improving population well-being. Some communities were relocated far from their original homes and away from areas of resistance, to strategic locations along service corridors (Kameo 1995; Jardine 1995).

Underlying these spatial transformations was the New Order's dual logic of order and development, which sought to protect national security as well as provide welfare for the population. The East Timorese were in turn restricted in their freedom of movement and forced to pursue specific modes of livelihoods that would contribute to national economic growth. By the 1990s, five-year development plans were implemented in East Timor to direct provincial economic policies in ways that would elevate the percieved lack in standards of living to similar levels experienced in the neighbouring Indonesian provinces (see, for example, Regional Investment Coordinating Board of East Timor 1990, 1993). Dramatic changes were made particularly to land transportation, increasing the mobility of goods and services, connecting industrial and agricultural areas to markets, and linking population settlements to administrative centres. Despite large scale state investment in developing the agricultural sector, East Timor remained one of the poorest Indonesian provinces.[1]

Decolonisation and Indonesian Invasion (1974 - 1975)

In April 1974, a military coup staged in Lisbon directly caused the collapse of Marcello Caetano's dictatorship.[2] The historic event came to be known as the Carnation Revolution, heralding the downfall of Europe's last colonial empire and a rapid decolonisation process for Portuguese colonies. East Timor was given the opportunity to form political parties for the first time in its history in preparation for decolonisation. The East Timorese were given options to remain under the Portuguese administration, to integrate with Indonesia, or to become an independent nation. Within weeks, three major parties were formed. The first party established was UDT (*União Democrática Timorense*), which supported independence after a transitional period under Portuguese rule. The second party was the ASDT (*Associação*

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1   In general, Eastern Indonesia (East Timor, Maluku, West Papua, and West and East Nusa Tenggara) recorded higher rates of poverty than the national average in the mid-1990s (Booth 2001: 242). Furthermore, East Timor had the highest percentage of population (36.1 percent) living below the national poverty line between 1993 and 1996 (Booth 2001: 242).

2   In the 1960s, numerous Portuguese colonies in Africa were at war and anti-colonial organisations had begun to emerge in the two largest colonies of Angola and Mozambique.

Social Democrática Timorense) that later became known as FRETILIN (*Frente Revolucionária de Timor Leste Independente*). FRETILIN supported national independence, meanwhile a third party known as APODETI (*Associação Popular Democrática Timorense*) pushed for integration with Indonesia.[3]

Political party membership mainly comprised Portuguese-educated and urban elites who shared some degree of anti-colonial sentiment. Some even held low ranking positions in the colonial administration. In February 1975, the three parties were invited to form a coalition under a decolonisation program, leading FRETILIN and UDT to entering an agreement that negotiated a transition to national independence under the colonial power (Jolliffe 1978: 74). Both parties consisted a number of urban elites and descendants of mixed Portuguese heritage (*metiço* (P)), but Jolliffe (1978) elaborates that there were clear differences between the parties' policies. While FRETILIN was in favour of 'emancipating the masses', UDT wanted to retain the class (and racial) differences established by the Portuguese under the *assimaldo* policy (Jolliffe 1978: 78-79). FRETILIN's transitional development plan upon decolonisation further set out that they had little desire for foreign investment and focused on social development through agriculture and land reform to liberate the rural populations (Jolliffe 1978: 74-75).

At the time, Cold War ideology prevailed in the Asia Pacific region with Indonesia and Australia (with support from the United States of America) concerned about 'communist' elements in East Timor's future leadership. The Indonesian intelligence service carried out destablisation operations from within the territory, in particular, members of UDT were warned of the dangers of communism in the independence movement, leading them to break their alliance with FRETILIN. A civil war erupted on 11 August 1975, where FRETILIN and APODETI followers joined alliances to counter UDT supporters. The new alliance had the physical and strategic advantage of members who were drawn from the colonial army, who proceeded to intimidate, torture, capture and kill other political parties' members and followers.[4]

FRETILIN eventually managed to gain control of the situation, forcing UDT members to flee across the border into West Timor. A small number of Portuguese government officers were also forced to relocate offshore to Atauro Island (Taylor 1999a). Across the border, UDT was supposedly met by Indonesian authorities and military who 'coerced' the refugees

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3 KOTA and Trabalhista were the other two political parties. For detailed discussions on the decolonisation period from 1974 to 1975, see Jolliffe 1978; Dunn 1996; Taylor 1999a)

4 The CAVR (2006) found that elements of the major East Timorese political parties committed human rights violations in the pre-invasion civil war.

to sign a petition supporting the annexation of East Timor by Indonesia. This was promptly followed by covert Indonesian military operations under *Operasi Komodo*. Suspicion, mistrust and division within East Timorese political parties had its roots planted from this early stage as a result of clashing political aspirations. As evidenced by communal violence and conflict in the post-independence years, particularly the 2006 crisis, these historical political tensions have become entrenched and are shown to resurface when overlaid with more current social and economic grievances.

In October 1975, Indonesian troops captured the border towns of Batugade and Balibo in East Timor. Along with thousands of East Timorese casualties were two British and three Australian journalists killed in Balibo (Jolliffe 1978). In an attempt to gain international support against the impending Indonesian invasion, FRETILIN declared national independence on 28 November 1975. The international community did not respond to East Timor's cause and on the 7 December 1975 Indonesia launched a full scale attack with a combined military, naval and airborne invasion of the territory, commencing with an assault on Dili. The Indonesian invasion was justified on the grounds that a decolonised East Timor was a hotbed for communism, and thus posed a substantive threat to Indonesia's national security.

Intense fighting against the Indonesian military *ABRI (Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia)* lasted four years with the western districts falling under Indonesian control before the eastern districts. The Indonesian military was known to have used chemical weapons and widespread torture, rape, imprisonment, and enforced disappearances.[5] Wives of guerrilla leaders and young females were intimidated and abused into gathering information on guerrilla activities for the Indonesian military (Aditjondro 2000).[6]

With continued annihilation and encirclement campaigns, the East Timorese resistance retreated eastward, with the easterners and others who retreated resisting determinedly against the annexation. Today, the question of which districts contributed most to the resistance struggle remains one of many vexed issues that divides East Timorese society, so much so that the 2006 crisis turned into an internalised 'regional' conflict divided along eastern (*loro sae*) and western (*loro monu*) lines.

Communities that straddled the base of Ramelau Mountain in the western districts and communities near Matebian Mountain in the eastern interior experienced the most drastic

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5 Chemical weapons and napalm bombs were used despite Indonesia having ratified the 1925 Geneva Protocol on Chemical Weapons in 1971 and the Biological Weapons Convention in 1972 (Aditjondro 2000).

6 Raped East Timorese females may regrettably be condemned in society as disloyal. Their children born of war maybe stigmatised as 'by-products of crime or sin' (Harris Rimmer 2007: 324).

disruptions to their lives under the Indonesian military's offensives (Aditjondro 1994). In the following years, high numbers of deaths from diminishing food supplies, disease and bombardment, resulted in the surrender of most East Timorese who were in hiding. A policy of population concentration or *Operasi Pembersihan* (I) (Operation Clean-up) had begun earlier in 1976 with professional killers, known as *nanggalas* (I), hired to intimidate people, carry out acts of terror, capture civilians and herd them into detention camps (Budiardjo and Liem 1984; Aditjondro 2000).

Surrendering from the Mountains

Following the encirclement campaign, detention camps to concentrate the Timorese population quickly sprang up along accessible and low-lying plains. As noted earlier, the number of internment camps established in the early years of Indonesian occupation is estimated to have been between 139 and 400 (Budiardjo and Liem 1984: 78; Taylor 1999a: 32; CAVR 2006: 61). With the aim of isolating civilians from making contact, and being influenced by FRETILIN, and FALINTIL (the military wing of FRETILIN), who remained in hiding, the East Timorese were concentrated into spaces where the Indonesian military could monitor and establish control over the movement of civilians. This strategy of confinement can be likened to the 'strategic hamlet' program, established by the American military during the Vietnam War in the late 1960s to isolate civilian populations from interaction with communist insurgents in South Vietnam (Taylor 1999a). The internment camp can be viewed similar to Malkki's (1995: 498) view of the refugee camp as a spatial technology of state power to manage social conduct.

The Indonesian military intensified its operations in 1977 to quell the East Timorese resistance. Most agricultural production areas and food sources were destroyed by biology warfare to deprive the East Timorese resistance of basic sustenance. In the camps, residents had no freedom of movement outside of their designated areas. Travelling beyond the camp boundary required a travel pass (*surat jalan* (I)) or the approval of military guards (Taylor 1999a). In most cases, families were frightened to return to cultivate land in the abandoned villages. Consequently, the death toll resulting from starvation and disease rose significantly between 1977 and 1979 (CAVR 2005a).

An estimated 84,200 to 183,000 East Timorese perished in the period from 1974 to 1999 (CAVR 2005b: 73). The pre-invasion population in East Timor was estimated at 688,771 in 1974, and in the invasion years, nearly 40,000 people fled over the border into West Timor and a further 4000 fled to Portugal and Australia (Dunn 1996; Taylor 1999a). Food aid was prevented from entering the territory for the first few months after invasion. By December

1978 some 372,921 East Timorese had been forcibly concentrated into 'strategic hamlets' (Taylor 1999a: 90). Not counting casualties of war and refugees that fled across national borders, these figures suggest the majority of East Timorese were removed from their origin villages and concentrated into strategically located internment camps. Men, women, and children not captured or surrendered to the Indonesian military ran to the safety of the mountains in the deep interior, such as the Cablaki, Ramelau and Matebian mountains. Many civilians were also coerced by FALINTIL to concentrate in the mountains for their own safety.

The CAVR (2005a: 5) has dubbed the years between 1977 and 1979 as the 'great famine period'. The food situation reached dire conditions in 1979, with the influx of surrendered East Timorese causing water shortages, widespread famine and death. From 1979 to 1980, over 62,650 people were in need of humanitarian assistance (Indonesian Department of Information 1980). During this time, members of the resistance were similarly faced with restricted movement and reduced food supplies in the mountains, as sweet potatoes, cassava, and other mainstay crops gathered from abandoned fields for consumption dwindled in supply Cox and Carey 1995: 34-35). They resorted to foraging forest food products.

People concentrated in the camps received international emergency relief aid. The International Red Cross (IRC) along with the Indonesian Red Cross Society (ICRC) distributed food, clothing, and medicine in eight sub-districts of Fatubesi, Hotalia, Laclubar, Natarbora, Dilor, Uatulari, Iliomar, and Luro. In general, state assistance was minimal, however, official Indonesian reports claimed to have provided health care for widows, orphans, the disabled and former combatants. The Indonesian government and ICRC later initiated a refugee repatriation programme in 1981 to reunite family members separated at the outset of the invasion (Indonesian Department of Information 1984).

Subsequently, camp residents opened small gardens on plots of land surrounding their dwellings or in close vicinity to Indonesian-controlled camps. The capacities of ordinary East Timorese were demonstrated in their organisation of clandestine networks in these camps despite heavy military surveillance, supplying the East Timorese resistance members in the jungle with food, medicine and strategic information. Taylor (1999a: 114-115) attributes the clandestine success to the East Timorese 'traditional' social networks based on trust and kinship, but his study glosses over how these 'traditional' ties played out at the local level. More importantly, these networks were essential not only in reshaping support for FRETILIN fighters, but for preserving East Timorese livelihoods as a whole.

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By 1981, FRETILIN had revised their strategies, abandoning fixed bases in favour of highly 'mobile units' that were constantly on the move and co-ordinating attacks based on 'traditional structures' (Cox and Carey 1995: 35; Taylor 1999a: 116). More significantly, FRETILIN shifted their focus from armed resistance to clandestine civilian resistance. With high death tolls among FRETILIN's leadership and FALINTIL soldiers, accompanied by the loss of more than 90 per cent of its weapons, a network of clandestine organisations started operating inside internment camps and in towns controlled by Indonesian forces (Budiardjo and Liem 1984: 67-68). Hence, when Indonesian troops seized control of the last areas occupied by guerrilla fighters in the eastern districts, they wrongly assumed they had defeated the independence struggle. On the contrary, contact between resistance fighters and clandestine networks improved under the reorganisation known as *nucleos de resistencia popular* (P) (nucleus of popular resistance) or *nurep* (Budiardjo and Liem 1984: 69). In this respect, the dynamic of the resistance movement involved the participation of a large proportion of the East Timorese population.

Below, I sketch the initial phase of displacement that led to resettlement in Mulia and Simpang Tiga. Each site had its own unique set of social, political, economic, and ecological characteristics, which provided a window to explore situated struggles and responses to the experience of displacement. Every person I spoke with had a poignant story to share about the invasion years, often involving the death of a child, sibling, or parent. Some of them were traumatised from having had to leave behind or having lost their relatives when they fled from advancing troops. Yet in the long run, they exhibit resilience and independence to transcend such immense human suffering.

Mulia Camp

The eastern districts witnessed intense guerrilla activities and were the last resistance stronghold during the Indonesian invasion (Budiardjo and Liem 1984: 70; Aditjondro 1994: 30). In particular, the Matebian Mountains which border Baucau, Viqueque, and Lautem districts was the last resistance stronghold. Matebian proved to be a challenging environment for the invading forces to penetrate, and FRETILIN had earlier brought fertile land into production, which secured food supplies for some time. Interlocutors relayed that they foraged for wild food in the forests and stole crops from abandoned food gardens in the night when there was a lower risk of enemy capture. To continue sustaining themselves, some interlocutors even secretly cultivated gardens in the night.

Budiardjo and Liem (1984: 66) write that Matebian was the ideal place to launch defensive operations against the occupying troops. However, the enemy's tactics proved overwhelming

as FRETILIN was bombarded with a 'scorched earth' operation, with air and sea attacks leading to the fall of Matebian in late 1978.

The majority of residents in the Mulia camp originate from the highland village of Waitame in the Quelicai Sub-District in the foothills of Matebian (see Fig. 4.1). During the intense encirclement campaign between 1977 and 1978, a large proportion of those in hiding were driven out of the mountains by intense air raids, napalm bombings, and diminished food supplies. A high death toll rapidly followed. During the attacks on Matebian, an interlocutor from Mulia recalled leaving his injured relative behind as they tried to avoid capture by the advancing enemies:

> At least six people I knew died each day from starvation, sickness, or killed in conflict... My uncle injured his leg badly and he could barely walk after that. We were all hungry and exhausted running away from the [attacking] forces day after day. We did not have the capacity to carry him, so we had no choice but to leave him in a small cave in Matebian. We don't know if he survived but we will conduct a ritual to find him soon.

Upon surrendering to advancing Indonesian troops and the local pro-integration East Timorese militias known as *Tim Saka*, interlocutors were initially held close to the town centre of Quelicai in Lawaliu before they were later ordered to relocate to the north coast of Laga to ease population pressure in the camps. The fact that Quelicai was located at the base of Matebian further meant that the area was the frontier of FALINTIL-held territory. A former FALINTIL combatant from Waitame recalled surrendering from Matebian after a hard-fought battle:

> We came down from Matebian in October 1977. The population of Quelicai were ordered to reside in Lawaliu, near Quelicai town. The Indonesians moved the population twice. For the people from Waitame village, most of us were later relocated to Mulia. The remainder of the residents [from Waitame] were only captured and held in Lawaliu, together with people from Afasa, Gurusa, Namanè, Lakuliu, Letemumu, Makalaku, Abu, Laiso Rulai, Maluru, Lelalae, Bualale, and Baagia. I still remember the military killed two persons in Laga because they were suspected of being part of FRETILIN and GPK (Security Disturbance Movement). They were killed on 8th January 1978.
>
> I fought for FRETILIN in the forests. I was shot in the arm...[he rolls up his sleeve to show me a scar on his left arm]. I treated it first with traditional medicine and the wound healed. But the bullet was not removed. After two years, an Indonesian marine officer assisted to help me and I was sent to Jakarta for an operation. I stayed there for two years and eight months to receive physiotherapy. I then returned to settle in Mulia in 1982. ABRI asked me to join the military intelligence but I refused because I was still loyal to FRETILIN.

Escorted by Indonesian troops and local militants, interlocutors walked or were taken on trucks down to the Laga camp. The populations concentrated in the Laga camp sites included locals from Laga, Baucau, Quelicai, Lautem, Bagia, and as far as the south coast of Viqueque. Referring to the 1983 FRETILIN report on the conditions in the camps compiled by their *nurep* networks, Budiardjo and Liem write:

> The Laga-Saelari-Atelari corridor is dotted with camps. People living near the coast at the Laga end of the corridor who gave themselves up in 1976 are better provided with land for the cultivation of food. Those who surrendered in 1979 have a much harder time. Formerly this was rice-growing country; corn and cassava were only supplementary foods. Today even these are in short supply and people rely largely on wild roots. About 70% of the territory is in guerrilla hands and is not therefore available for food production to those living in the camps. With so much land held by Falintil, restrictions on movement for those in the camps is even tighter than elsewhere.
>
> Budiardjo and Liem (1984: 88)

The views of interlocutors were similar to those espoused by the above report. Interlocutors recalled arriving at the camp with only the clothes on their backs. The camp area was unoccupied; the land was described as covered with wildly overgrown grass (*rai fuik*). Interlocutors were confined to the camp grounds, forced to clear the land to construct shelters and scavenge for whatever food (such as sago or tamarind) they could find in the immediate area in order to survive.

As more people surrendered from the mountains, camp conditions worsened with the limited humanitarian efforts stretched to maximum capacity. Famine, disease and death were rife among camp residents who were confined to an unfamiliar coastal environment and forced to survive with minimal resources at hand. One elderly woman recalled receiving international relief aid in Mulia camp:

> The Red Cross gave us maize meal, clothes and medicine. Each Sunday, the sisters and priests from the church in Baucau and Laga would visit Mulia to treat the sick. They brought coconut, papaya, breadfruit and other kinds of food. They also gave rice to the elderly and sick to make porridge. We were not given authorisation to make gardens or cultivate rice because East Timor was in the process of being integrated into Indonesia, and the situation was still unstable.

Indonesian authorities did not permit international relief and humanitarian aid for several months even though there were clear signs of imminent famine. The Laga camp site was heavily guarded and under constant military watch. Indonesian soldiers were stationed on the hill behind the camp, which enabled them to closely monitor interlocutors' activities.

Military patrols began early in the mornings, at 7am or sometimes as early as 5am. At night, interlocutors who were forcibly recruited as members of *hansip* (I.) – a civilian defence unit that worked under the Indonesian authorities – were put on rotational neighbourhood guard duties to monitor for potential dissident activities within and outside the camp. After the fall of Matebian, the security situation gradually improved. Camp detainees were eventually permitted to engage in wet rice cultivation in the rice fields of Tekinomata village, however, they had to follow strict curfews. Any travel beyond the camp grounds required a *surat jalan* and the approval of Indonesian guards.

Simpang Tiga Camp

A similar set of events ensued in the second field site of Simpang Tiga (see Fig. 5.1). The main town of Samé in Manufahi District was seized by the invading Indonesian troops during 1976 and 1977. The magnitude of violence and dispossession that took place was akin to that in the eastern districts, with the majority of highland settlements destroyed by the Indonesian military with assistance from local East Timorese militias called *Tim ABLAI*.[7] The 1983 FRETILIN report on camps suggested there were at least eleven camps in the area (Budiardjo and Liem 1984: 91-92). Interlocutors originated from the highland village of Daisua. Those from the hamlets of Riatu, Lesuai and Lesulau in particular were not permitted to return to their places of origin until 1991 and 1992 because FRETILIN maintained a presence in the hills.[8]

During the invasion, interlocutors sought refuge in the surrounding Carblaki mountain range, where limestone caves gave shelter from the intense air raids. Interlocutors hid in the mountains for two to three years, foraging wild foods before repeated aerial bombings forced them to surrender in resettlement camps set up in Samé, Holarua and Foho Ailicu. A ritual elder from Riatu hamlet described the unsettled period in the invasion years when he was forced to relocate from one place to another:

> We fled to Carblaki in 1975 when we heard that the Indonesians invaded Timor. The military entered from Holarua and surrounded all the villages so we climbed up the mountain to hide...When we surrendered in 1977, my family and I were ordered to reside in Letefoho because the camp in Samé was overcrowded. Following, we moved to Beikala for four to six months to reunite with our

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7 The Serious Crimes Unit (SEU) formed under the United Nations Transitional Authority in East Timor (UNTAET) in 2000 issued indictment charges against the founders and top commanders of the Ablai militia group who organised militia violence in Manufahi District during the Indonesian occupation. They were charged with crimes against humanity, including murdering of civilians, detentions of villagers, widespread property destruction in the district and the forced removal of population into West Timor. Office of the Deputy General Prosecutor for Serious Crimes Timor Leste (2004).

8 Forty-four villagers of Lesuai were imprisoned in Samé, Dili and the island of Atauro under suspicion of supporting the resistance movement.

relatives. Then, the military decided that the populations should be resettled closer to their origin village. So we were asked to move to Simpang Tiga. We were only permitted to return to our original settlement after 1990 because they were still searching for FRETILIN in the forests.

Most interlocutors had similar experiences of being moved at least twice; first to Samé and then to the Simpang Tiga camp. In contrast to Mulia, the populations concentrated in Simpang Tiga were resettled from close distances, such as Daisua village and the neighbouring highland villages of Gurotu and Rotutu. Hence, displacement in this area was relatively less disruptive as the communities were concentrated in close proximity to their origin settlements. Local accounts also suggest populations from Alas Sub-District on the southeast coast and Suai Sub-District on the southwest coast were previously concentrated in Simpang Tiga. Presumably, these families returned to their original homes after the Indonesian military eased surveillance measures.

Approximately 120 settlers from Daisua moved of their own accord away from Simpang Tiga to access land belonging to distant relatives. The crowded conditions meant that families were unable to cultivate sufficient crops for subsistence and market production. An interlocutor from Lesuai hamlet explained that he left Simpang Tiga because he was gifted land by a relative and promptly resettled in Boifu in Foho Ailicu where he opened up large gardens and raised cattle:

> The Indonesians entered Lesuai in 1976 and burned all the houses and destroyed everything. We [wife and five children] surrendered immediately, and were pushed down to Loti hamlet…My family was more important so I did not participate in the fighting. We stayed in the camp for several months before I came into contact with my uncle [married to his aunt from Riatu hamlet] who was a hamlet chief in Foho Ailicu. He said we could move onto his land where we will have more space.

Survival was the priority for most interlocutors. Specifically, the main issue faced by interlocutors was gaining access to land for subsistence cultivation. The 1983 FRETILIN report supports this prevailing issue at the time:

> Conditions here are far worse than before the war. The only ones who still own some property – land and livestock – are government employees, policemen, school-heads and traditional chiefs. Most people produce only cassava and potatoes, plus a little corn which they sell for cash to buy other things. The crops they grow last no more than six months

<p align="right">Budiardjo and Liem (1984: 91)</p>

The dire food situation in the camps was therefore made worse by the concentration of property in the hands of a small number of landowners.

The stories that emerge from Mulia and Simpang Tiga provoke the need for a thoughtful consideration of how to address local 'displaced' realities in terms of restitution processes concerning land, housing, livelihoods, and psychological and social assistance. As noted above, the resolute determination to pacify the East Timorese at the outset of invasion meant that resettlement sites were often poorly planned and sometimes situated in inhospitable environments. Families relocated to Mulia and Simpang Tiga faced the challenge of shortages of land required for subsistence cultivation. Forced to devise alternative ways to secure access to land, many engaged in new economic partnerships with customary landowners, others relied on kin networks to acquire land, and still others returned to the villages of origin to reclaim family inherited land and property.

What is clear is that the Indonesian government did not follow a strict model of resettlement. Mulia was transformed into an independent village while Simpang Tiga was incorporated into the pre-existing village of Daisua. In all cases, settlers were faced with varying degrees of challenges associated with livelihoods, land, and host-settler relationships away from their former homes. Ultimately, they had to rely on their own capabilities and resourcefulness to transcend displacement. To date, no study has examined the micro-politics of forced displacement and resettlement. This gap in knowledge of the settlers' livelihoods at resettlement areas has perpetuated a lasting image of victimhood. In the following chapters, I examine the multiple strands of livelihood strategies settlers have employed in the resettlement sites to illustrate their agency in the long term.

3.2 INDONESIAN RULE: ORDER AND DEVELOPMENT

Previous experiences of establishing order and development in the ethnically-diverse Indonesian archipelago gave the New Order state an upper hand to readily exercise its power over East Timor at the outset of annexation in 1976. Since the East Timorese share numerous socio-cultural traits with their Austronesian neighbours in the Lesser Sunda Islands, the state was further able to easily reshape East Timorese cultural practices.

The New Order government came into power in 1965 following a *coup d'état* that replaced the first president of the Republic of Indonesia, General Sukarno, with General Suharto. The period when Suharto's administration acceded office was marked by a weak economy and growing ethnic and social tensions. From October 1965 to early 1966, national security was threatened by outbreaks of internal violence as Islamic, communist, and nationalist

Fig. 3.1 An aged stone column imprinted with the five principles of the Indonesian state ideology (*Pancasila*), Ainaro District.

groups clashed with one another and the military (Ramage 1993). To diffuse religious, ethnic, regional, and class tensions, Suharto's government poured large amounts of investment into developing the economy. Indonesia opened up to the global capitalist economy, which in turn created a consumer society and a relatively wealthy middle class in both the urban and rural areas (Guinness 1994). The impressive economic growth in the 1980s brought about social and economic development, which in turn, brought internal stability.

Entering into the political arena at the height of internal conflicts and economic uncertainty, the New Order rhetoric proceeded to place great emphasis on development (*pembangunan* (I)), equity (*pemerataan* (I)) and stability (*stabilitas* (I)) (Hill and Mackie 1994). Specifically, the military was bestowed a prominent role in the New Order era, serving the dual functions of securing national unification and working as development agents to strengthen the economy. The pursuit of order alongside development was thus institutionalised and legitimated (Vatikotis 1998; Philpott 2000). Indonesia furthermore remained politically stable as the heavy-handedness of the authoritarian regime did not tolerate subversive activities.

Suharto's government sought to distinguish itself from the previous Sukarno's government by putting an emphasis on upholding the state ideology known as *Pancasila* (I) – even though

these principles were originally conceived by Sukarno and other predecessors in the early independence years of Indonesia. As the fourth most populous country in the world, with a diverse population consisting of over 300 ethnic groups spread across 17,500 islands, nation building in post-colonial Indonesia relied heavily on cultivating national unity across vastly diverse local societies (Anderson 1983). *Pancasila* came to regulate the everyday lives of Indonesian citizens by setting out five principles to abide by: belief in the one and only God; a just and civilised humanity; the unity of Indonesia; democracy; and social justice for the people of Indonesia. These universalistic social values were inculcated in every Indonesian citizen, including the East Timorese (Fig. 3.1). The spatial expansion of the Indonesian state presence can also be read as Indonesian cultural expansion (Guterres 2003: 99).

Uniformity was a major characteristic of New Order technocratic planning and extended across all Indonesian provinces, regencies and the remote outer territories of Timor, Aceh and West Papua. The central government assumed a key role in defining which modes of local livelihoods would best generate national economic growth (Guinness 1994). The standardisation of livelihood modes concentrated on promoting intensified wet rice cultivation. Agriculture and cash crop production were commercialised but depended heavily on government subsidies for inputs and the introduction of high-yield crop varieties (Vaitikotis 1998: 35). Economists Hill and Mackie (1994: xxiv-xxv) remarked that Indonesia became self-sufficient in rice production in 1985 with an almost doubling of rice yields. Overall, the Indonesian economy had grown over 450 percent under New Order economic reforms.

Vatikiotis (1998: 53) argues that the Suharto administration blended the two incompatible goals of economic growth and social justice. Hence, it was no surprise that as the Indonesian economy experienced impressive growth, the state bureaucracy grew bigger, as did the mismanagement of state funds and corruption (Vatikiotis 1998: 37).[9] Sharing similar sentiments, Heryanto and Mandal (2003) concluded in their comparative analysis of authoritarianism in Indonesia and Malaysia that the Indonesian state was much less transparent and accountable than the Malaysian state during the reign of Suharto. Unlike Malaysia, 'fear, violence and corruption prevailed in Indonesia *in tandem* with the official rhetoric of social harmony, consensus, religious virtues, and familial values' (Heryanto and Mandal 2003: 5, emphasis added by author).

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9 The Indonesian catch phrase of KKN, an abbreviation of '*korupsi, kolusi, nepotisme*' (corruption, collusion, nepotism) was popularised during the New Order period (Ramage 1993; Hill and Mackie 1994). More recently, KKN has also been widely used by the Timorese public to criticise the post-independence Timor-Leste government.

3.3 FORCED RESETTLEMENT AS A DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The Indonesian administration officially began to integrate the annexed territory of *Timor Timur* (as East Timor was known at the time) in the early 1980s through various socio-economic welfare policies. In this endeavour, socio-economic development took precedence over security measures. Agricultural intensification and basic infrastructure improvement, the hallmarks of New Order nation building, were imported into the territory. Under the national government's Village Community Development scheme, forced resettlement was designed to bring better standards of living for the local populaitons.

Forced resettlement was systematically introduced across the Indonesian archipelago as a measure to relieve population growth pressures in certain overcrowded localities and simultaneously bring regional development to less crowded, remote outer provinces. Under the New Order government, resettlement took the forms of transmigration (*transmigrasi* (I)), translocation (*translok* (I)), and relocation (*relokasi* (I)). Transmigration largely resettled landless farmers from the overcrowded islands of Java and Sumatra to the outer, less populated islands, such as Sulawesi. Translocation and relocation by contrast involved moving local/ indigenous populations to more accessible sites within the province itself (see, for example, Elmhirst 1999; McGibbon 2004).

Among these schemes, transmigration has been an iconic national 'development' scheme with the mobilisation of large infrastructure and international donor funding (see, for example, Fearnside 1997; Guinness 1994). Promoted in the greater interest of bringing social welfare to the poor and landless, transmigration can equally be considered as a spatial extension of state power, from the 'centre' in Jakarta into 'out-of-the-way' provinces and remote 'margins', to integrate disparate minority groups, such as the East Timorese, into the mainstream 'Indonesian' narrative (Tsing 1993; Gunn 1994; Elmhirst 1999; Li 1999).

Historical accounts of Dutch colonialism in the Indonesian islands reveal that the contemporary resettlement models have their roots in colonial territorialisation projects (see, for example, Ormeling 1957). I have described in the previous chapter that Dutch pacification of West Timor at the start of the twentieth century relied on village formation to resettle upland populations onto the lowlands along newly opened trunk roads. These centralised settlements facilitated the annual tax collection and recruitment of labour by increasing state surveillance over the West Timorese. A colonial welfare policy ran parallel that gave the concentrated population free medicine, vaccination and immunisation. In comparison, the Portuguese carried out a less extensive and intrusive program in the eastern part of the island due to limited physical and financial capacity.

The Dutch resettlement plan failed miserably in West Timor. After resettling on the lowlands, the West Timorese dispersed across vast distances in search of arable land and water sources to re-establish shifting cultivation (*ladang*) (Ormeling 1957). A scattered settlement pattern re-developed, the complete opposite to what authorities had envisaged. This failure served to reinforce the image that the West Timorese were less adaptable to change than compared to the Rotinese on Roti Island, leading Ormeling to name his book *The Timor Problem*. Despite his critique of the West Timorese, Ormeling (1957: 228-229) faulted the poor implementation of the resettlement program, where the designated sites for settlement were neither conducive to West Timorese agricultural livelihood, nor their physical well being as many suffered from malaria.

The colonial perception of rural inhabitants in the outer Indonesian islands as under-developed and their inhabitants unreceptive to change came to influence the New Order government's development approach. Forced resettlement was widely implemented throughout the 1970s and 1990s and was largely successful. Arguably, the Indonesian government's relative success compared to the Dutch can be attributed to the use of coercive strategies and international legitimacy gained through the support of donors such as the World Bank that supported poverty alleviation through neo-classical economic development. Contemporary studies have nonetheless reported adverse social, economic and environmental impacts of resettlement in the long term (Elmhirst 1999; Li 1999; Fearnside 1997), demonstrating the shortcomings of the scheme.

Forced Resettlement in Timor Timur

Both translocation and transmigration were carried out in *Timor Timur* in the 1980s and 1990s. Forced resettlement shifted from a tool of security to one of governance to improve the deficient living conditions of the rural Timorese constituency. While some internment camps effectively transformed into resettlement sites – that is, nodes of New Order rural development – other camps were dismantled and their residents returned to their ancestral villages or resettled informally elsewhere. Nevertheless, those who left the camps were similarly subjected to New Order development efforts.

Peering through the lens of deficiency, the resettlement sites were intended to bring the impoverished East Timorese living on the nation's 'margins' closer to modernity and state welfare. Timorese subsistence livelihoods were considered backward by the Indonesian authorities, who readily attributed the basic living conditions to the neglect of the former Portuguese colonial rulers. In the *East Timor Potentials Profile 1990* report, the government highlighted its development plan to 'raise the standard of living and improve the intelligence

of all the people in a more equitable fair manner' (Regional Investment Coordinating Board of East Timor 1990: 9). Indeed, historically, Portuguese Timor was largely excluded from regional and global economies and had closer ties to their distant colonial counterparts in Mozambique, Angola and Maucau. The Portuguese administration only accelerated its development programs after their return to the colony in the post-World War II period, focusing on improving agricultural production (see Chapter Two).

This semi-planned transformation of camps into resettlement sites has made it difficult to discern which rural settlements systematically came under the scheme. Nevertheless, the remapping of territory by the new political regime remains evident. It is very common to encounter Indonesian place names or place names attached with the Indonesian terms *baru* (new) or *lama* (old) in rural districts, which serves to distinguish newly established settlements from settlements of an earlier presence. The reorganisation and recategorisation of the rural landscape was clearly carried out to erase an old order of things and make clear that a new social, economic and political order had arrived.

Notwithstanding the bias inherent in the Indonesian government reports, its Department of Information (1984) claimed that approximately 4,382,886,000 Rupiah (equivalent to USD 4,272,943 at the time) was spent on the resettlement program and village community development in *Timor Timur*. The sites where the East Timorese were confined are variously referred in the literature as 'concentration camps', 'detention camps', 'strategic hamlets', 'resettlement villages', 'model villages', and 'translocation areas' (Indonesian Department of Information 1980, 1984; Taylor 1999a; Gunn 1994; Cox and Carey 1995; Nixon 2007). A minor but important point is to distinguish these resettlement sites from transmigration sites as the former accommodated only East Timorese families, and the latter accommodated both East Timorese and migrant Indonesian farmers. To avoid conflation between the two, I refer to the former in this thesis as 'resettlement sites'. Although the existing literature that outlines the Indonesian resettlement sites equate them to administrative villages, I wish to highlight that not all sites were village-like; some sites were small and incorporated into pre-existing hamlets (sub-villages), and others became new hamlets in pre-existing village boundaries.

Administrative villages (*desa* (I)) during the Indonesian occupation typically contained a village meeting hall, primary school, church, water pumps or wells, and housing for Indonesian civil servants. Villages were usually situated in close proximity to community health centre (*puskesma* (I)). In the newly established resettlement sites, families were supposedly given at least 0.25 hectares of land for cultivation. The Indonesian Department of Information (1980) further

claimed that resettlement sites were concentrated on fertile agricultural areas accessible to markets, and that farmers were assisted with agricultural equipment and carpentry tools. The 1993 Agricultural Census estimated that the average East Timorese household had 1.56 hectares of land, higher than the national average of 0.87 hectares (Booth 2001: 246). These figures were most likely inflated by customary landowners who had access to larger plots of cultivation land than those resettled. My field observations together with testimonies from survivors of war and refugees however suggest that not all areas that came under the scheme were appropriate for settlement or agriculture (see, for example, CAVR 2005a).

In sum, the seeminly mundane rural districts characterised by linear settlements lined along main roads spatialise a major period of change in East Timor's history when the population's conduct were directed to align with New Order nation-building. The East Timorese were futher subject to extensive social planning as described below. These nation-building processes served the purpose of homogenising the vastly diverse local cultural forms into a single and desired model of Indonesian citizenship (Guinness 1994; cf. Rae 2002). Nevertheless, the blatant use of excessive military force to pacify the local populations cannot be discounted as a side issue to national development.

3.4   LOCAL SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CHANGES

The New Order state was able to extend its presence into the everyday life of the East Timorese through military surveillance, education, health care, and employment established through the resettlement sites. As discussed earlier, the Portuguese colonial reach barely intruded on Timorese village life until the early 20th century and post-WWII reconstruction in the 1960s. With the implementation of the first development plan, the Portuguese government embarked on expanding the road network, schools and commercial agriculture. Still, Dunn (1996: 25) contends that most of the development was aimed at improving the administration rather than local livelihoods. The presence of the New Order, on the other hand, penetrated right into the heart of village life in East Timor (as it did elsewhere in Indonesia), particularly with the implementation of the 1979 Village Law (Vatikiotis 1998: 110).

Although the state ideology of *Pancasila* advocated unity in diversity, Javanese cultural norms and practices were advanced as the preferred national identity instead of harmonising disparate local identities (Guinness 1994; Vatikiotis 1998). Under the 1979 Village Law, Suharto's government attempted to homogenise the diverse local societies by modelling administrative villages (*desa*) on Javanese architecture and socio-cultural norms (Vatikiotis 1998: 110-111). Typical of Javanese villages, resettlement villages and transmigration areas

Fig. 3.2 A settlement in Lautem District in Portuguese Timor, 1974 (Source: Briere 2004: 16).

across Indonesia were designed to be densely populated and self-contained (see, for example, Elmhirst 1999: 824-825). This model was a striking contrast to the pre-existing East Timorese settlement pattern.

The physical linear layout of Indonesian established resettlement sites bears no resemblance to the traditional scattered clusters of Timorese ancestral settlements observed by scholars such as Hicks (1976), Metzner (1977), Forman (1980) and Traube (1986) in the late Portuguese era. As discussed previously, the colonial desire for a concentrated settlement pattern was already evident in the late 1960s. Notably, Metzner's (1977) assessment of local agricultural systems and livelihoods stressed that the East Timorese cultural disposition would pose an obstacle to development. French photographer Elaine Briere visited Portuguese Timor in April 1974 and took rare images of Timorese village life (Fig. 3.2) in the final days of Portuguese rule (Briere 2004). Her images were utilised by international solidarity movements to raise public awareness of the unlawful Indonesian occupation and have now become important visual records of pre-invasion East Timor.

The encroachment of the state into local village life led Guinness (1994: 273) to remark that the Javanese socio-political practices were frequently 'at variance with local expressions of community, identity and autonomy'. A notable example is the Javanese cultural practice of community-based mutual assistance (*gotong royong* (I)), which was quickly adopted by the Indonesian state as a nationally accepted cultural practice (Elmhirst 1999: 824). Civil servants were similarly required to participate in recreational activities and foster collegial social relations, otherwise, they risked being labelled as communists (Vatikiotis 1998). In other instances, local culture forms that were perceived to be backward or outdated were

frowned upon, such as the elaborate harvest feasts in Kalimantan, which the state perceived as economically unproductive (Guinness 1994: 279-280).

Interlocutors in Mulia were similarly urged by the Indonesian military to practise *gotong royong*. An interlocutor explained:

> We all contributed to build the village hall, school, and church. When a family builds a house, we help out. We also formed cooperatives (*kelompok* (I)) to cultivate rice. The members would take turns to monitor the crop and repair the irrigation. We then shared the harvest equally.

Cooperation in groups actually helped interlocutors to rebuild their lives completely anew in a socially and physically unfamiliar environment. A sense of 'community' was also created in Mulia between residents that originated from four independent highland villages.[10] Furthermore, recruitment of labour for state infrastructure projects, often coerced rather than voluntary, was easily drawn from resettlement sites. Interlocutors in Mulia stated that they had opened up the road from Mulia to Quelicai with their own efforts (*kolè*).

By restructuring the layout of East Timorese settlements, forced resettlement effectively disrupted an East Timorese society traditionally organised along emplaced kin-based affiliations. Despite cultural and linguistic diversity amongst the East Timorese, the ancestral settlement (*knua*) holds great significance in symbolising aspects of local identity, autonomy, and ritual life. With the onset of Indonesian invasion, the ancestral settlements were forcibly abandoned, and in turn, rendered peripheral in the 'new order' of Timorese village life.

In contrast to local social changes, the imported model of local government was not a radical shift from the Portuguese structure. The administrative levels remained intact, and the little power vested in colonial secular Timorese leaders was reconsolidated in this process. The position of village chief (*chefe de suco*) transformed into *kepala desa* (I), the sub-district administrator (*chefe de posto*) transformed into *camat* (I), and the district administrator (*chefe de distrito*) became *bupati* (I).

Rural Economy and Land

In 1982 and 1983, the Indonesian government liberalised its trade and imports economy in response to declining global oil prices that threatened state revenues (Vatikiotis 1998: 37-38). Economic reforms also took effect in *Timor Timur*, where the state apparatus embarked

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10   Interlocutors nevertheless had a customary Makassae work ethic practice similar to *gotong royong*, known as *tawali* (Mk) (work cooperatively) and *fuli keta gini/fuli ama gini* (Mk)(work cooperatively in rice field/corn field) (see da Costa et al.2006: 140-161).

on an ambitious technocratic plan to develop export-oriented wet rice cultivation. Over 85 percent of the East Timorese were engaged in agricultural activities during the 1990s (Regional Investement Coordinating Board of East Timor 1993: 44). The resettlement and transmigration sites were vital entry points to implement this major undertaking. High-yielding rice varieties and tractors were introduced to villagers to increase local production, however, optimal yields proved difficult as there was a lack of labour and the physical geography of heavy rainfall in the wet season and clayey soil posed hurdles to maintaining the tractors and irrigation systems (Fox 2001: 165-166).

Accompanying the distribution of improved rice varieties and agricultural tools, large areas of land were opened up for wet rice cultivation in the western districts, beginning in Bobonaro where the Indonesian authorities had better control of internal security. By the late 1990s, major irrigated rice production centres were found on both the north and south coasts in the western and eastern districts; namely, these sites were concentrated in Manatuto, Baucau, Viqueque, Bobonaro, Covalima and Oecussi. The north coast became more populous as the mountainous populations were forcibly transferred onto coastal lowlands to provide the labour required to bring more available land into cultivation (Fox 2001: 166). An estimated 28,000 hectares of irrigated land can be found throughout the territory with over half (16,000 hectares) usable and the remainder in need of repair and rehabilitation (Fox 2001: 166). The focus on rice inevitably resulted in the neglect of the domestic subsistence cultivation of maize, cassava, and other staple food crops (Taylor 1999a).

Furthermore, East Timor became a destination for the state-sponsored transmigration programme. In 1992, landless Indonesian farmers were sent to the territory to alleviate population pressures on Bali and East Java, and in the process, transfer 'sophisticated' agricultural skills to the Timorese (Taylor 1999a). An estimated 600 to 1047 families from Java and Bali were thought to have resettled in at least 20 transmigration sites to convert land in Ermera, Maliana, Covalima, Bobonaro, Betano, Baucau and Viqueque into large scale irrigated rice fields (Taylor 1999a: 123; Guterres 2003: 94; Meitzner Yoder 2003: 15). Taylor established that the transmigrant farmers were integrated into local villages, while numerous Timorese families were forcefully displaced from their places of origin either due to state expropriation of land, or to work in the newly opened rice production areas (Taylor 1999a: 124-125).

With the opening up of East Timor's economy, the restrictions imposed on internal movement were slowly eroded, leading to increased spatial and socio-economic mobility, both internal and external of East Timor (Gunn 1994: 227; Cox and Carey 1995: 42-48). Nonetheless,

Guterres (2003: 92) suggests that improved rural livelihoods served to reduce out-migration to the urban centres. Skilled and unskilled migrants arrived from Sulawesi, Surabaya and East Java, including entrepreneurial Indonesian-Chinese merchants, which caused Dili to become dotted with squatters (Gunn 1994: 224-225). Out of a total population of 750,000, there were 150,000 to 200,000 Indonesian migrants in East Timor in the 1990s (Taylor 1999a: 32). In this process, the remote former colonial outpost became economically and socially integrated to the neighbouring Indonesian islands.

Major land use conversions associated with cash crop production further took place in East Timor. Land was secured by the Indonesian state to grow coffee, clove, sugar cane, coconut, cinnamon, rubber, betel nut and candlenut. Between 1977 and 1983, plantation crops and cash crop production rose dramatically from 78,004 to 144,234 hectares and yielded between 18,584 and 30,766 tonnes respectively (for further detail, see Budiardjo and Liem 1984: 106-107). During this period, P.T. Denok Hernandes International, a company run by Indonesian-Chinese businessmen, operated under the auspice of the provincial military administration. Like the Portuguese sponsored SAPT company, which dominated coffee export in the late nineteenth century, P.T. Denok had a monopoly over the export of coffee and other cash crops in exchange for supplying the army based in *Timor Timur* with equipment and consumer goods (Budiardjo and Liem 1984: 103). Increased state expenditure on road building and restoration enabled coffee to be transported from the major coffee planting areas of Ermera, Aileu, Ainaro and Samé, to Dili where it was then exported overseas.

The relative wealth accumulated during this period was mainly concentrated in the hands of Indonesian and East Timorese government bureaucrats rather than local peasants (Guterres 2003: 99). The New Order state moreover gifted land to reward its East Timorese and Indonesian political supporters and cronies with logging concessions and business contracts (Jardine 1995; Fitzpatrick 2002). State control over land and natural resources changed significantly under the New Order government. The legislation of SKEP 40 (*surat keputusan pangliam*) accorded the Indonesian military to grant temporary rights to public and abandoned properties for a long while before the role was taken over by a civilian administration. Under Indonesian Law No.7 of 1976, all Indonesian laws were applicable in East Timor, except 'Portuguese legal products' such as Portuguese titles over land and property remained valid until 1991 (Fitzpatrick 2002: 93). Out of 14,213 hectares of state forest land, nearly 13,616 hectares was established during the occupation. Only one out of twenty forestry sites is under dispute, which indicates that the Indonesian state did not violently dispossess people (Nixon 2007: 106).

A series of land title programs were carried out in the territory, which according to Fitzpatrick (2002: 94-95) awarded land titles to East Timorese and other Indonesian nationals. Indonesian land certificates were discernable to ownership (*hak milik* (I)), right of building (*hak guna bangunan* (I)), right of use (*hak pakai* (I)), management right (*hak pengelolaan* (I)), and commercial right of use (*hak guna usaha* (I)). By 1999, there were an estimated 44,091 Indonesian titles issued in East Timor (Fitzpatrick 2002:95).

Education

East Timorese were also indoctrinated in the Indonesian state ideology of *Pancasila*. Education was actively used to inculcate New Order tenets into school children with the systematic teaching of *Pancasila. Bahasa Indonesia* was further implemented as the national language and the use of Tetun and Portuguese languages was officially banned beyond that of Catholic schools and the liturgy – which contributed to the position of the Church as a refuge and institution of resistance (Taylor 1999a).[11] Students recited the *Pancasila* and were trained to march in physical education classes to instil discipline and order (Taylor 1999a). The curriculum followed the Indonesian based content such as colonial Indonesian history, rather than that of colonial East Timor (Anderson 1993).

Historically, access to education in Portuguese Timor was limited. Elite families and their children had exclusive education until post-World War II when the late expansion of the colonial state brought literacy to a wider population. Nearly 17,000 students were enrolled in 165 primary schools in 1964, which increased to 60,000 students in 456 schools by 1974 (Dunn 1996: 6-7). Dunn regards this increase in education levels as being fundamental to the emergence of politically conscious youths that went on to lead the decolonisation process.

In this respect, a positive aspect of the New Order legacy was providing access to education to the general population across different levels - even though literacy was mainly limited to Indonesian language. Most resettlement villages had at least an elementary and a primary school, and each sub-district had a secondary school. The creation of elementary schools (*sekolah dasar* (I)), junior high schools (*sekolah menengah pertama* (I)), and senior high schools (*sekolah menengah atas/sekolah menengah kejuruan* (I)) effectively helped to increase access to education even though literacy rates were not impressive. Retention rates of students dropped significantly at secondary levels with less than 23 percent of males and nine percent of females completing secondary education (Taylor-Leech 2009: 34).

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11 Uniformed students had to sing the national anthem and memorise patriotic songs which were performed for official visits by Indonesian authorities to schools.

Religion

The recognition of monotheism enshrined in the *Pancasila* extended the state's reach into the 'sacred' realm of East Timorese lives (Guinness 1994). The *Pancasila* stipulates that all Indonesian citizens had to be affiliated to one of five official religions; these were Catholicism, Protestantism, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism. This principle was created in the late 1960's to 1970's when Indonesia faced the threat of communism. Hence, any person that did not profess to a religion was deemed to be communist by default. Individuals and groups suspected of communist links or who subscribed to such ideology were considered dissident and harassed by the military on the grounds that they posed imminent threats to national unity. The misuse of military force was therefore frequently justified in upholding *Pancasila* tenets.

Monotheism was not confined to Islam, and in this sense, it promoted tolerance amongst vastly diverse societies (Guinness 1994). Indonesian citizens were nonetheless discouraged, and in some cases forbidden, from practising their traditional beliefs. The East Timorese placed great value on animistic practices concerned with marriage, death, sickness, and agriculture. Towards the end of Portuguese rule in 1974, only 30 percent (210,000) of the population were nominal Catholics, 2800 (0.4 percent) professed to be Protestants, and 910 (0.1 percent) were Muslims, suggesting that the majority of the East Timorese continued to follow customary beliefs and practices (Jolliffe 1978: 16). Under Indonesian rule, they were consequently forced to subscribe to one of the five religions. By the 1990s, the percentage of East Timorese who professed to be Catholics rose dramatically.

This increase in the number of Catholics may have been motivated by fear that affiliation to none of the five official religions would have incriminated people with communist links. The jump in figures might alternatively reflect the political and cultural resistance of the East Timorese in identifying themselves within Indonesia that had a predominantly Muslim population (Anderson 1993).[12] During this period, the Catholic Church of East Timor became a beacon for the Timorese independence struggle. As the Vatican did not recognise the Indonesian annexation, the East Timorese Church did not report directly under the Indonesian diocese, and had more freedom of expression, including adopting Tetun as the liturgical language. The Church was additionally seen to have suffered with the East Timorese by acting as a safe haven from the brutalities of the Indonesian regime. In particular, Bishop

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12 There was a significant rise in the number of Protestants and Muslims who arrived in East Timor to work from other Indonesian provinces, but the majority departed in 1999.

Carlos Belo played a key role in speaking out to the international community on human right violations committed by the Indonesian regime.[13]

In summary, the policies and practices applied by the Indonesian state to integrate East Timor into the geographical imaginary of 'Indonesia' directly encouraged the intensification of internal displacement. As a spatial-social technology of government, the resettlement site made significant alterations to the physical and social landscape of East Timor. The territory was brought from an impoverished Portuguese colonial backwater into a developed agricultural economy. Rather than being motivated by the mere goal of domination, forced resettlement served the underlying motive of creating governable citizen-subjects out of the East Timorese, which in turn, enabled the Indonesian state to bring much needed socio-economic development to the supposedly deprived population, in a self-fashioned legitimate and rational manner.

3.5 GAINING NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE (1999 - 2002)

The Santa Cruz massacre in Dili on 12 November 1991 was a major event that garnered international sympathy for East Timor's independence struggle. The violent clash between pro-democracy protestors and the Indonesian military erupted on the grounds of the Santa Cruz cemetery, claiming 271 lives and injuring several hundred (many also disappeared). Most of the casualties were students. The tragedy was captured on film by a British journalist, which was smuggled out of the territory and distributed across the world to inform the international community of the forms of human rights violations committed by the Indonesian regime.

The independence movement gained further momentum during the 1997 Asian financial crisis which caused the Indonesian economy to collapse. The national Rupiah currency depreciated in value during the crisis from 2400 Rupiah which traded to one US dollar in July 1997 to 5400 Rupiah which traded to one US dollar in December 1997 (Vatikiotis 1998: 220). The combined effects of President Suharto's inability to shelter the Indonesian economy, and his continued poor health, forced him to resign in May 1998, allowing Vice President B.J. Habibie to take over the presidency.

The post-Suharto years marked an optimist transition to democratisation with major political reforms taking effect. Significantly, military representation in the government was reduced in favour of a civil administration. Increased activism from the previously repressed Indonesian civil society raised international awareness of separatist movements in areas such

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13 Bishop Belo and Jose Ramos Horta shared the Nobel Peace Prize in 1996 for their work to bring peace and end human rights abuses in East Timor.

as East Timor, West Papua and Aceh. Succumbing to mounting international pressure over Indonesia's continued repression of the peoples, the Habibie transitional government gave the East Timorese the opportunity to decide between special autonomy within Indonesia and self-determination.

On 30 August 1999, the East Timorese went to the polls under the United Nations (UN) -supervised popular consultative vote. With a 98.6 percent voter turnout, the majority of the population (78.5 percent) voted in favour of self-determination. The monumental achievement did not come without a final encounter with violence and displacement after the votes were announced on 4 September 1999. Pro-Indonesia groups had already begun a destabilisation campaign in the lead up to the polls, intimidating local populations and committing acts of violence, cumulating to the Liquiça Church massacre on 6 April 1999, internal displacement of nearly 54,000 people and 36,000 refugees in West Timor (Taylor 1999b: 32-33). After the polls, Indonesian security forces and Timorese militia carried out a 'scorched earth' campaign and destroyed nearly 80 percent of all the physical infrastructures the Indonesian state had invested in over the span of twenty-four years. An estimated 250,000 East Timorese refugees were forced across the border into West Timor.

The United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET)[14] was established on 25 October 1999 and served as the interim government whilst supporting the creation of East Timor's sovereign government. Approximately 223,000 refugees returned between 1999 and 2002. In general, housing was in short supply, and the bulk of the refugees requested to be resettled in Dili and occupied abandoned Indonesian-owned land and housing to set themselves up with better economic and employment opportunities. Several thousands of refugees are thought to remain at present in West Timor due to economic reasons or social and political fears of returning 'home' (ICG 2011: 2-3).[15] The UNTAET interim government attempted to address the colonial-inherited land and property issues through its Land and Property Unit (LPU), however the LPU was under-resourced, and the draft land policies were rejected by the national cabinet (Wright 2006).

3.6 POST-INDEPENDENCE PERIOD (2002 - PRESENT): STATE AND NATION BUILDING

East Timor formally restored national independence on 20 May 2002. The first constitutional government led by FRETILIN took over administrative responsibility from UNTAET. A

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14   UNTAET held a unique mandate as a civil administration that exercised legislative and executive powers in addition to running a peace keeping mission.

15   The UN established the Declaration of Cessation in 2002 in recognition that East Timor was politically stable and that the remaining refugees were no longer in need of international protection.

large development and aid industry has developed, including the proliferation of local NGOs, to assist the Timor-Leste government in post-conflict reconstruction and development (McGregor 2007: 160-161). Physical infrastructure, particularly rural roads and bridges, are gradually repaired and connecting the remote districts to the administrative capital. The country's economy, mainly reliant on its petroleum sector, has also attracted foreign private investments. Together, the post-independence era is bringing new socio-economic opportunities for the East Timorese. Despite what was initially hailed as a UN success in post-conflict reconstruction and democracy building efforts, the social unrest of 2006 was highly criticised by political commentators and scholars for importing a Western model of state building (Kingsbury and Leach 2007; Trindade 2008). The internal crisis raised further doubts over the viability of East Timor as a sovereign nation-state as it signalled historical lines of divide among the East Timorese. Notably, the selection of Portuguese as an official national language alongside Tetun is suggested to privilege the views of the older generation that grew up under Portuguese rule, and by extension, neglect the attitudes of the younger generation who have grown up under Indonesian rule, and who are proficient in Indonesian language (Taylor-Leech 2009). Furthermore, the national Constitution valorises the resistance movement against the Indonesian regime, which selectively honours certain members of the society over others (Leach 2002).

In addition, Trindade (2008) maintains the view that the UN state building model failed to correspond with East Timorese worldviews on authority and governance. Hence, the crisis in Trindade's opinion was due to the poor state-society relationship on the part of the newly installed state. In a similar vein, McWilliam (2008) argues that the issue at hand is not so much that the idea of the state is abstract, as the East Timorese have for centuries been exposed to external ideas and practices of governance. Rather, the important questions are what governance structures command legitimacy within everyday local politics, and how these structures can be recognised, supported and strengthened. Echoing Trindade's views, McWilliam considers existing customary forms of authority to be pertinent elements that can contribute to state and nation building.

Furthermore, the troubles were blamed on the failure of the newly installed Timor-Leste state to effectively engage with the East Timorese population and slow development progress that left citizens frustrated with the lack of trickle down benefits. It became evident that a large youth population and high unemployment rates were two elements in need of attention along with numerous other development challenges (Kingsbury and Leach 2007). The state's inability to deliver social welfare and give due benefits to the population who

struggled for national independence was put forward as another factor that readily caused disenfranchisement among large sections of society (Traube 2007).

As the Timor-Leste government attempts to carry out its own nation building exercise, lessons can be drawn from steps taken previously by Indonesia to integrate East Timor. In Benedict Anderson's (1983) seminal work *Imagined Communities*, he argues that the nation is a modern social construct made up of abstract members that together constitute an imagined political community. The integrity of the 'nation' hinges on cultivating a set of common values, beliefs, and practices amongst its political community, which Anderson contends the New Order state failed to achieve in its attempt to incorporate the East Timorese (Anderson 1993). First, the Indonesian state failed to formulate a common historical thread that went beyond Dutch colonialism. Secondly, the relationship between the New Order state and the East Timorese more resembled one between 'civilised' colonialists and 'barbaric' natives, which cultivated sentiments of 'othering' on both sides. The implemented nationalist projects, Anderson added, resembled colonial projects, thus the direct expansion of the Indonesian state into East Timorese village life had the adverse effect of raising East Timorese consciousness (Anderson 1993: 26-27). Indeed, the first decade of East Timor independence has met with a number of contentious nation building issues that have the potential of dividing the society. The Timor-Leste state will need to create a unifying national identity that can transcend its tumultuous history of occupation, displacement and division.

3.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter has examined the Indonesian occupation of East Timor as characterised by more than a mere pursuit of domination. Internal displacement, and by extension, forced displacement, was one of the devastating impacts of the occupation. The East Timorese were physically and socially fragmented on an unprecedented scale. In the invasion years, the invocation of *tabula rasa* on the lowlands of rural East Timor deemed the land abandoned by those who fled as having no socio-cultural history. Indonesian officials promptly converted customary land into high density residential spaces. Initially these spaces were militarised; surveillance and order operated inside, and demarcated Timorese resistance frontiers. Later, these sites transformed into nodes of rural development and social welfare where New Order ideology had actualised. Camp conditions improved over the years as the Indonesian authorities set their sights on winning the hearts and minds of the East Timorese through investing in education, health care, market and communication technologies. The 'resettlement sites' were therefore a powerful disciplinary device of the Indonesian state, used not only to quell the East Timorese independence movement, but more importantly, to reconfigure local socio-cultural practices in line with the ideas of Indonesian nationhood and citizenship.

Accordingly, the period of occupation was marked by intense social, political, economic and environmental changes with the New Order state intruding into all aspects of life.

The post-independence era is marked by an ever-evolving political and economic context. Development processes are no longer single-handedly directed by the state. Although the Timor-Leste state and non-state agencies and actors have not strongly asserted their presence in the rural districts, rural livelihoods are indirectly influenced by the increased circular mobility and information exchange with family members and friends in the urban areas and overseas.

In the following chapters based on ethnographic case studies, I explore the micro-politics of displacement by examining how people have worked around the constraints of dispossession, disruption to family and kin networks, and negotiate land access for livelihoods in their current place of residence. New modes of livelihoods were adopted in the occupation years, and in the post-independence years, these livelihoods are being re-worked and re-negotiated. The social effects of the Portuguese and Indonesian development aspirations have moreover not disppeared, and continue to assert a strong influence on rural livelihoods.

Chapter Four

'Stealing Bananas' in the 'Honourable' Village of Mulia

As I have described thus far, the colonial pursuit of reshaping East Timorese livelihoods was insatiable. The application of violent military tactics was justified as a pre-condition to establish stability and order ahead of bringing improved welfare to the population. Both the Portuguese and Indonesian regimes attempted to carry out some kind of a national accounting of the East Timorese but failed on most accounts; in essence, the more the state understood its local subjects, the easier it was to expand and strengthen its power to further regulate society (Ferguson 1994; Vandergeest and Peluso 1995; Scott 1998).

In the major undertaking to integrate the East Timorese into the Indonesian nation, detention camps became nodes of New Order rural development interventions. These Indonesian-era resettlement sites provide a glimpse of the full extent of government investment that thrived in the occupation years, even though the East Timorese were not swayed to turn their allegiance to Indonesia. Mulia and Simpang Tiga were introduced in the earlier chapters as prime examples of New Order resettlement sites; this chapter takes an ethnographic approach to examine the everyday livelihood practices of settlers in Mulia. Focussing on the situated impacts of displacement will reveal how local Timorese subjects challenged and manoeuvred within the constraints of New Order regulation to rebuild new livelihoods away from their familiar physical and social environments. An earlier version of this chapter was published as a chapter (Thu 2008) in the edited volume *Democratic Governance in Timor-Leste: Reconciling the Local and the National.*

In the three decades of resettlement in Mulia, settlers have engaged in the sharecropping of rice as a mode of subsistence to overcome land shortages at the site. The rice fields are owned by the residents of the neighbouring village of Tekinomata, who are also customary landowners of the land area on which Mulia is situated. Despite long term economic engagement in the rice fields, tensions persist over the rightful claims to land in Mulia. Furthermore, the long term presence of settlers has not translated into closer social ties with the hosts, and there is little intermarriage between the two groups. The lack of social relations has consequently

limited the settlers' land tenure security. In this chapter, I explore the land struggles in this site by engaging with the multiple perspectives of landowners and settlers.

In response to the constant risk of losing access to land and livelihoods in Mulia, settlers have been able to seize new forms of freedom in the post-independence years. Freedom of movement has enabled settlers to pursue multi-local livelihoods. Some entrepreneurial settlers work as sharecroppers during the rice growing season, and return to their ancestral settlement to cultivate food gardens on family-inherited land in the alternative months. Others have expanded into non-farm employment to become less reliant on land access. This recent adoption of multi-local and diverse livelihood practices illustrates the agency of displaced people to respond effectively to the constant changes in circumstances. But with freedom gained through Independence, settlers' rights to land in Mulia have been compromised as a result of the lack of legal frameworks on land. I return to examine the continuing land tensions between settlers and customary landowners in the concluding section of this chapter.

4.1 THE 'HONOURABLE' VILLAGE OF MULIA

Mulia has five hamlets, Gugulai, Sialimu, Karanu, Gamana and Saibere (Fig. 4.1). The population of Mulia stood at 1067 in 2007. In its days as a detention camp, it accommodated populations from the sub-districts of Quelicai, Baucau, Laga, Viqueque and Los Palos (Chapter Three). All except for the populations drawn from Quelicai steadily returned to their original land. Settlers from Quelicai comprised populations from the mountainous villages of Waitame, Afasa, Baagia, and Gurusa. Families from Waitame village constituted the majority of Mulia's residents, and as such, the names of the hamlets were derived from the original hamlet names in Waitame, with the exception of Saibere, which is named after a hamlet in Gurusa village (and comprises its original members).

As the population from Waitame dominates, the 'democratically' elected village chief in Mulia has consecutively been descendents of the *liurai* lineage in Waitame. This 'interface' between customary authority and an imported system of governance (Cummins 2010), suggests that local socio-political forms have persisted and retained local legitimacy. Not all residents of Waitame village were resettled in Mulia. Those who emerged late from Matebian Mountains were not relocated to the north coast. Families were instead concentrated in Quelicai town centre (*vila* (P)) until 1980 and subsequently permitted to return to Waitame. Therefore residents of Waitame have been geographically dispersed for three decades or longer. This group of settlers forms the focus of this chapter.
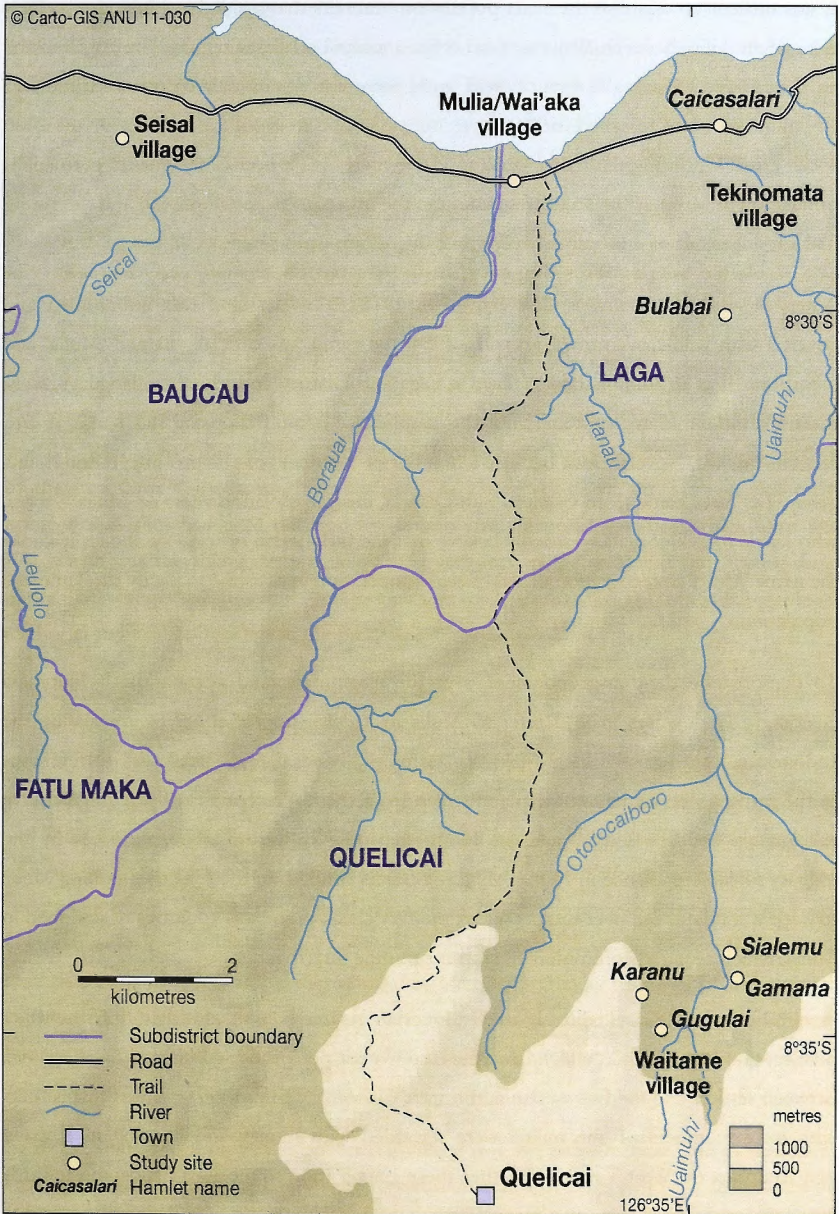
Fig. 4.1 Locality map of Mulia. Also featured are the neighbouring villages of Seisal, Tekinomata and the origin village of Waitame.

It was difficult to establish the exact population numbers that resided in Mulia due to high rates of mobility between Waitame (and other ancestral settlements), and the larger towns of Baucau and Dili. At the time of field work, there was an anomaly of increased number of youths who had returned for an indeterminate period to avoid the troubles of the 2006 social crisis. Upon my return to Mulia in 2009, there was a noticeably smaller permanent population in Mulia as the security situation in the urban areas had improved and the young had left in pursuit of educational and employment opportunities.

When the displaced families first arrived in 1978/1979, the land was unoccupied and covered with wildly overgrown grass. In 1984, the camp was officially named 'Mulia' and incorporated as an administrative village in Laga Sub-District. In Indonesian language, *mulia* means 'honourable' or 'supreme', but the significance behind choosing this name, if any, remains unclear. Nevertheless, because a number of members of the pro-integration militia group *Tim Saka* came from Quelicai Sub-District, customary landowners of Mulia – those who reside in Tekinomata – strongly believe that the Indonesian officials symbolically chose the name 'Mulia' in recognition of *Tim Saka's* cooperation in assisting to pacify the Timorese population.

To demonstrate their disgruntlement over the illegitimate land occupation, Tekinomata customary landowners instead refer to Mulia in a derogatory manner by translating the Indonesian term into the local Makassae terms of 'banana' (*mu*) 'steal' (*lia*), in reference to the settlers who are residing on land stolen from them. Perceptions of a strong positive relationship between settlers and the Indonesian military were further reinforced by the military's visible presence in Mulia. Military officers resided on the hills overlooking Mulia to keep a watchful eye over the people. A military check-point was additionally stationed in Mulia, which required commuters to stop for routine interrogation.

A number of settlers fled with the Indonesian regime in the aftermath of the 1999 post-referendum violence, which from the landowners' perspective confirmed the allegiance between settlers and the Indonesian authorities. Customary landowners claimed that settlers who were members of the militia were rewarded with money and housing in Kupang and Atambua (in West Timor). Whether these East Timorese received handsome rewards remains unconfirmed, however, many of those who fled left behind family members, and as a consequence, families were further fragmented.

Traditional Claims to Land

The area where Mulia is established is known by its traditional name of Wai'aka. The land is customarily claimed by three origin groups from Tekinomata village, namely Racolo, Oma Tameda, and Oma Ina Wai. A senior male elder of Racolo explained that his grandfathers had given land access to the families of Oma Tameda and Oma Ina Wai to raise buffaloes and goats on the plains of Wai'aka/Mulia:

> Racolo was like a member of parliament that followed the leaders of Oma Ina Wai and Oma Tameda. Racolo gave them space in Wai'aka to raise buffaloes and goats because they did not have sufficient land to keep the animals. In the Portuguese times, only a small number of families resided in Wai'aka, maybe twenty families. They were mostly from Racolo and Oma Tameda.

The three groups occasionally argued among themselves over the customary claims to Wai'aka. Racolo has the strongest claims to land as their ancestors were founder-settlers of the area. Oma Tameda, on the other hand, lay claim to land on the basis of long term occupation – they had used the land for at least three generations. Meanwhile, Oma Ina Wai, which was the ruling customary political authority in the area, and later turned *liurai* under the Portuguese jurisdiction, lays its claim on the basis that Wai'aka/Mulia fell within its territorial-political boundaries in the past.

Three brothers from Oma Tameda, Senor Lito, Senor Jamie and Senor Edo continued to use the valleys and hills as grazing grounds during the Indonesian occupation to the present. The three brothers were particularly vocal in petitioning for the settlers to return permanently to their places of origin. They were dissatisfied that the grazing ground they and their forefathers utilised had been transformed into a village, and their former place of residence near the beach continued to be occupied by settlers after the departure of the Indonesian regime. During the time of research in 2007, an estimated fifteen families from Tekinomata resided in Mulia. They were physically separated from the settlers by a narrow road that leads to Quelicai. Furthermore, they were registered as residents of Tekinomata village even though they resided outside the cartographic boundaries of Tekinomata. These families were affiliated to Oma Tameda, Oma Ina Wai, Mandarba, Racolo, and Loidu'a, and came to resettle the area in Indonesian times.

In 2003, Mulia was removed as an official village in Laga Sub-District. Due to persistent tensions with the traditional landowners, the administrator of Laga (who is a descendent of Oma Ina Wai) relinquished all administrative responsibilities of the village to Quelicai, the sub-district where the majority of settlers originate. Subsequently, Mulia was relegated the

status of a 'provisional' village (*suco provisorio* (P)) in Quelicai Sub-District. With this official decision from district and sub-district officials, Mulia's name reverted to its customary name of Wai'aka. These administrative changes are potentially politically significant for future land claims, and are considered unjust by the settlers, particularly since the administrator of Laga was a member of Oma Ina Wai. To date, Mulia remains a 'provisional' village of Quelicai and the contention over land ownership remains unresolved.

4.2   OVERCOMING LAND SHORTAGES THROUGH DIVERSE LIVELI-HOOD PRACTICES

A major concern for all Mulia settlers has been land availability (Fig. 4.2 to 4.4). Mulia is crowded with housing and there is little arable land. Families had small garden plots (*kintal*) (less than 25 squared metres) surrounding their dwelling compared with the average Timorese household that has access to just less than 1 hectares of farm land. The hot coastal conditions and relatively low rainfall have led to frequent crop failure. Most settlers have not planted fruit trees or built cement 'white' houses (*uma mutin*) as they are high investments and markers of land ownership under customary tenure. Previously in the highlands, families commonly held a *kintal* in addition to fruit trees and one or two bigger plots of garden (*to'os*), measuring up to 2 hectares in total, further away from their dwellings. In the late Portuguese times, non-irrigated rice cultivation became more prevalent in Waitame and some interlocutors were engaged in it. However, yield was highly dependent on rain. Metzner (1977) observed that the high population density of Quelicai Sub-District induced residents to work in the rice paddies in Viqueque District.

To transcend the lack of cultivation land, most families in Mulia engage in subsistence sharecropping in the rice paddies (*natar*) owned by the customary landowners (Fig. 4.5). Settlers were initially forced by Indonesian authorities to work in Tekinomata *natar* as Mulia was overcrowded and had little land suitable for cultivation. Landowners were similarly forced by authorities to give land access to the settlers. Settlers had to form farming co-operatives (*kelompok*), comprised of five or six members, that worked together in the *natar*. Harvested rice was distributed amongst settlers and the Indonesian soldiers stationed in Mulia. Most of the co-operatives disbanded after the departure of the regime and instead, families now engaged in sharecropping as a working unit. Over the years, the forced relationship between settlers and hosts has grown into a mutually benefiting labour-for-land exchange.

Settlers, moreover, display entrepreneurship and the capacity to diversify their livelihood strategies to include non-farm activities. Working as extended, family units, each household typically engages in a range of agricultural activities including rearing livestock such

Fig. 4.2 Crowded housing conditions and little garden space in Mulia.

Fig. 4.3 Soccer field in the middle of the village and housing in the background, Mulia.

Fig. 4.4 Animal pens on the hills behind Mulia.

as chickens, pigs, goats and buffaloes. Fishing is practised by some men, and fish is sold according to size rather than by exact weight. Smaller fish are threaded on a palm leaf and sold in bundles. Two road-side stalls sell char-grilled fish and ketupat rice dumplings. These stalls have become a popular rest stop for passing commuters (Fig. 4.6). Some individuals also benefit from selling palm wine along the road (*tua mutin*, USD 0.25 per 1.5 litres). Palm sap is collected daily from the abundant coastal palm trees that border Mulia.

Several families quarried rock from the hills where the Indonesian military was once stationed. Families additionally quarried rock from the parched Wai'mua river bed during the dry season. Quarried rocks are broken up and sold according to size; smaller rocks fetched higher prices as more labour is required to break rocks into smaller pieces (Fig. 4.7). Prices ranged from USD 4.50 per cubic metre to USD 15 per cubic metre. Sales are dependent on the occasional construction trucks that pass through the village. With major reconstruction and development efforts taking place throughout the country, there has been no shortage of demand for such building materials. Young men are typically spotted on the dried out river
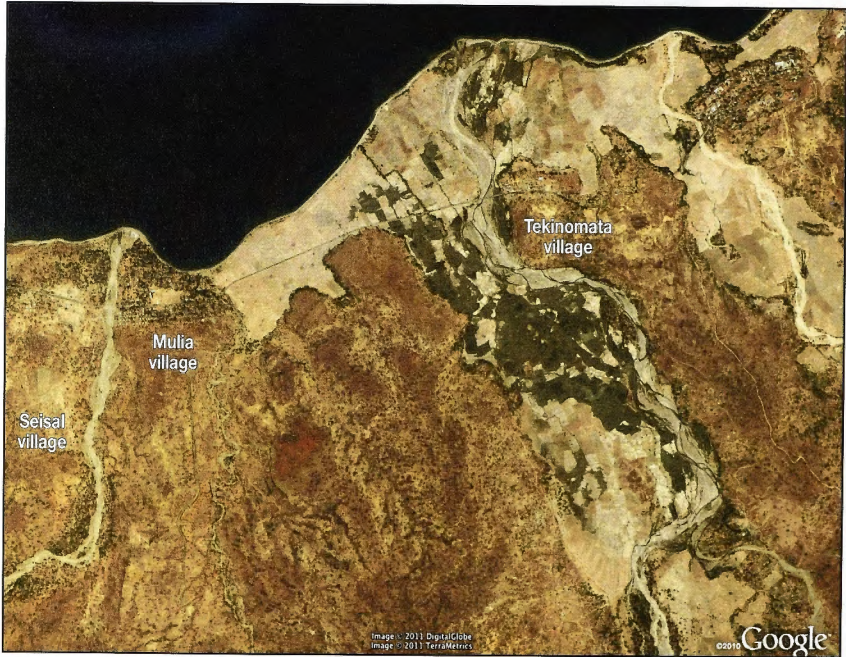
Fig. 4.5 Aerial map of Mulia. Also featured are the rice fields (during the dry season) owned by the neighbouring village of Tekinomata where settlers work as sharecroppers.

bed loading quarried rock or sand onto construction trucks that are destined for the district centres. This casual employment lasts for two or three days at a time, and pays USD 2.00 to USD 3.00 per person each day. In addition, there are two timber trading companies of which one is owned by the village chief, who also works as a full-time primary school teacher.[1] The local companies were established under Indonesian rule as East Timor's economy became integrated with the other provincial economies that exported timber (Fig. 4.8). At the time of conducting fieldwork, Indonesian traders arrived every one to two months by boat from the islands of Alor, Wetar and Sulawesi. Orders for timber mainly came from Timorese carpentry and construction companies in Dili and other district centres.

Following the pacification period, the Indonesian state's pursuit of nation building enabled families to strategically situate themselves in two or more localities, making the most of the resources available to them. Some settlers have been denied work as sharecroppers, especially in Tekinomata because of their strained relationships with landowners. Many therefore became sharecroppers in the neighbouring village of Seisal after they were permitted to move outside of Mulia. Settlers working as sharecroppers in Seisal explained there was less resentment towards them by their Seisal hosts than they had experienced in Tekinomata. These interlocutors also perceived that the rice paddies in Seisal had better irrigation and higher production than those in Tekinomata.

Finally, settlers' insecure access to land has prompted a small proportion of individuals and families to return to Waitame to re-establish staple food gardens and reclaim family fruit groves of citrus and betel nut. The interior highland and north coast are in different agro-ecological zones, allowing settlers to exploit readily available land in Waitame to cultivate large food gardens of vegetables on land that would otherwise be left fallow due to lack of a permanent population base to utilise the land. These settlers then move back to Mulia during the rice growing season to work either as sharecroppers or assist relatives with additional labour in the paddies. The trade-off is between productive food gardens in Waitame and the high yielding rice fields of Tekinomata and Seisal. I examine below sharecropping arrangements in detail as it formed the main source of livelihood of settlers.

Residents of Tekinomata are highly dependent on rice as their main source of subsistence. Many of the richer families, particularly descendants of Oma Ina Wai, own between two and six parcels (*ulun*) of paddy field (*natar*) suitable for wet rice cultivation. In addition,

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1 Village chiefs (*chefe de suco*) and hamlet chiefs (*chefe de aldeia*) did not receive a government wage at the time of fieldwork. They were given small allowances for transport and basic needs. At the time of research, the chiefs were each given a motorbike by the Timor-Leste government. It was therefore not uncommon for chiefs to engage in agriculture and additional sources of work to earn a living.

Fig. 4.6 One of the food stalls set up along the main road that passes through Mulia.

Fig. 4.7 Quarried rock from the hills hammered down into smaller pieces.

Fig. 4.8 Timber shipped from the neighbouring Indonesian islands. Pictured here next to the beach.

landowning families tended to have at least one family member engaged in wage employment due to their educated status. Landowners further raised large herds of cattle, leaving them unable to devote the time and effort to bring all of their rice paddies into production. The settlers were able to meet this labour shortfall through sharecropping. Both the landowners and settlers are Makassae speaking groups and they share numerous socio-cultural traits which translate into good working relationships in the rice fields. Land-rich families across East Timor tend to be descendants of elites and indigenous royalty (*liurai*) who have inherited large parcels of land from the pre-colonial years. In the Portuguese era, these families had exclusive access to education, and today, these families have benefited from colonial privileges to take on government positions and wage employment. Not surprisingly, these families were a common source of social jealousy and easy targets when the local politico-economic environment became unstable.

4.3   WET RICE CULTIVATION IN TEKINOMATA

In Tekinomata, wet rice cultivation season on the north coast begins as early as March and ends in August as water availability declines by then. By July, green and gold terraces of rice stalks line the entire stretch of road between Tekinomata and Mulia. From land preparation to harvesting, labour is performed by numerous actors and remunerated mainly as in-kind payment. Specifically, men and women have gendered roles in the different stages of production. Men are responsible for constructing paddy terraces and repairing irrigation streams. Women take over most of the planting, transplanting and weeding. Harvest is generally undertaken as a family unit (including children). Post-harvest activities are equally labour demanding, and the men take on most of these tasks, such as stock piling rice stalks into large bundles tied with palm leaves, which are subsequently threshed by diesel-run machines. Harvest and post-harvest activities tend to be part of broader reciprocal exchange labour systems, where the cooperating households are expected to return the favour in equal measure.

Generally, landowners do not state the area of rice paddies they own in hectares, instead, they refer to the area in a local measurement known as *da'eu* (Mk), which can vary from less than a hectare to just over a hectare. A *da'eu* of land typically requires four *kaleng* of seeds. The terraces of the rice paddies are known as *iba* (Mk) and the process of constructing a terrace is called *taka-kabubu*. Rice is mainly a subsistence crop and any surplus generated is sold in the markets. Additionally, both surplus and subsistence rice circulates within the larger community in the form of food and as a ceremonial exchange item in the field site.

In the host village of Tekinomata, descendents of the *liurai* of Oma Ina Wai and the noble groups of Oma Tameda and Racolo have inherited large parcels of land from the feudal and colonial years making them land rich families. The *liurai* of Oma Ina Wai recounted that during his rule in the 1950s, the Portuguese had forced the population to open up rice paddies on what was previously food gardens and grazing land. The *liurai* reflected on the past:

> After World War II, my family moved to the road. All the people in Tekinomata lived on the hills, I was asked to move down to watch over the population. Oma Ina Wai's political authority stretched eastwards to as far as Luro in Lautem. In the past, families migrated seasonally to work in the rice paddies. A portion of the year's harvest had to be given to the foreigners. A community feast was held at the end of the season to reciprocate the people for their labour... the women would gather under the tamarind trees and hold onto the branches while trampling on the harvested rice to remove the stalks. Such traditions stopped during the Indonesian times, and families in Lautem no longer come here to participate in rice cultivation.

As the *liurai* elaborated, wet rice cultivation was a recent Portuguese introduction. Furthermore, rice was manually threshed by stamping with feet (*resa gia* (Mk)) in the colonial period – a traditional practice that remains prevalent but changing in rice growing Timorese communities. This tradition has altered in Tekinomata, with most families opting to thresh rice with Indonesian era diesel-run machines.

As the previous chapter emphasised, there was strong pressure for local populations to conform to New Order ideals. Pressures of state directives extended into desirable modes of livelihood, and irrigated rice production was perceived as the key national economic driver of agricultural growth. In 1985, the Indonesian government began an agricultural extension programme in Tekinomata to train farmers in intensified wet rice cultivation. An interlocutor elucidated:

> In the past, we used to just throw the seeds onto the ploughed field randomly and let it grow. But the Indonesians taught us to transplant the seedlings from one field to another. The yield is much bigger using this introduced method. But it is hard work.

Adopting the method of transplanting (*tanam padi* (I)), a good yield could reach three to four tonnes of rice per hectare as compared to the traditional method of random seed scattering which yielded approximately one tonne per hectare.

Landowners who participated in this study grow a local rice variety (*fos timor/fos rai*) which has a pinkish tinge and is believed to taste sweeter than Indonesian and other imported varieties (*mutin*). The local variety is highly prized and seldom sold unless there is monetary need. At the Baucau market, the local variety sells at about double the price of imported varieties (USD 0.35 per kilogram). Most families do not travel to the larger sub-district or district

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Another Form of Displacement

I met Senor Abel when I conducted a general household survey in Samagia hamlet in Tekinomata. He and his family lived in a modest 'modern' house with cement floor, thatched walls and corrugated iron roof. He had three children who were all attending school. When I probed into his livelihood activities, Senor Abel became quite distressed. I re-emphasised that participating in the survey was voluntary and that he could choose to withdraw at any time. But Senor Abel turned defensive and insisted on asking why exactly I had come to his house.

I discontinued the interview and discussed more broadly the main aims of my study: to understand the impacts of displacement on local land relations and livelihoods. With further elaboration, Senor Abel finally relaxed and confided that he has been ostracised by the wider community since he converted to the Protestant faith in 1991. He was the first interviewee I met to have professed to another religion other than Catholicism and animist beliefs.

His religious beliefs have come to impact upon his livelihood. Senor Abel pointed out he had stopped working as a sharecropper after his conversion to Protestantism. With this process, he stopped believing and practising *adat* (I) (local customs) altogether. Senor Abel had not inherited rice paddies, hence he had relied on sharecropping the rice paddies in Tekinomata. Nevertheless, he was consequently denied access to customary land after he persistently refused to perform *adat* and sacrifice animals as prescribed in the traditional harvest ceremonies. He remarked, *adat* is a waste of money. 'Why sacrifice an animal and feast when you can sell the animal and pay for your children's education?' Senor Abel added that he has been beaten up by community members in the past because of his religious beliefs and he no longer ventured too far out of his house. For the past 14 years, Senor Abel has relied solely on vegetable produce which he grows in the garden that surrounds his house for subsistence and cash income. He also rears small livestock which he sells for larger household expenditure. Senor Abel's situation was upsetting and drew my attention to another form of 'othering' – based on religion – that can occur in East Timorese societies.

Similar to the exclusion of settlers in the social world of customary landowners, differing religious beliefs and practices can serve to exclude members of society. As discussed above, Rural Timorese livelihoods are integrated in a moral economy centred on animist sensibilities. Reciprocity between humans and spirits is understood to secure generational fertility and prosperity. I did not ask Senor Abel if the Protestant Church, which arrived with the increased presence of Indonesian migrants in the occupation years, actively deplored animist practices. Elsewhere in Indonesia, the colonial Protestant Church and New Order development were known to have denounced *adat* as wasteful and backward (see, for example, Guinness 1994; Aragon 2000).

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markets to sell rice due to relatively high rice-milling and transport costs. Household income from rice is normally spent on everyday small staple goods items such as soap, cooking oil, salt, kerosene, sugar and clothing. Larger expenditures such as marriage and mortuary payments and children's school fees are met from selling livestock.

The intersection between the road leading to Quelicai and Baucau in Mulia transforms into a bi-weekly market on Mondays and Wednesdays (Fig. 4.9) where the local variety of rice was sold at USD 0.50 per milk can (700 grams) while the imported variety was half the price. Most families do not travel to the larger sub-district or district markets to sell rice due to related costs arising from rice-milling (USD 0.10 per milk can) and transport (USD 0.50 - 1.00 return trip). In 2009, interlocutors relayed that their crops were increasingly vulnerable to heavy rainfall which was more frequent than in previous years. Two interlocutors reported that they had begun to grow rice twice a year due to the adoption of an improved rice variety called *nakroma* introduced by an Australian aid funded food security program.

Since the gaining of Independence, rural East Timorese farmers are faced with a new set of challenges. Once again, farmers have had to adapt their livelihoods to the uncertain broader political and economical conditions. A landowner shared his view:

> In the past, I used to work on my own rice field because I had access to a tractor given to the village by the Indonesian government. These days I call my relative to assist in the field because fuel price has gone up and it is expensive to use a tractor. My relative has a buffalo, so he is responsible for ploughing the field. We used to have many buffaloes but the militias killed them all in 1999. So we are starting [to raise cattle] again.

Thus, both settlers and landowners have experienced successive changes to their livelihoods since the late Portuguese times. They have also adapted continually, relying on kinship mechanisms to respond to the broader structural conditions; conditions which they have little control over. The New Order state funnelled large amounts of resources to increase domestic agricultural production. In the late 1990s, residents in Mulia and Tekinomata invested in household white goods. Many interlocutors expressed nostalgia for the occupation, stating that there was more work opportunities, especially as civil servants, for the rural masses back then.

The main road passing through the two villages was properly laid in the 1980s. Electricity was then connected along this road, giving residents at least twelve hours of electricity each day. During my residence in Tekinomata, power was frequently cut by heavy rains, and took several days to be restored. Residents in Tekinomata were suspicious of these frequent power

shortages, blaming Mulia settlers for deliberately cutting off the electricity supply; the main electrical grid starts in Baucau District town and travels down a single power line into Laga Sub-District.

Sharecropping Arrangements

Prior to resettlement, settlers did not grow irrigated rice in Waitame. The highlands of Quelicai Sub-District had productive soils which bore abundant fruits such as tangerines, apples and melons, and vegetable gardens. The livelihoods of settlers were thus drawn from the garden cultivation of maize, vegetables and tubers. Families owned several fruit trees. Non-irrigated rice was grown in small quantities. Hence, resettlement brought about radical changes to livelihoods with the adoption of irrigated wet rice cultivation.

Settlers entered into sharecropping arrangements with customary landowners to gain access to customary land for livelihood means. The majority of interlocutors were engaged in long-term sharecropping relations spanning over ten years with landowners. What is remarkable about these informal arrangements is that they are grounded in pre-existing customary land use principles. That is, despite the Indonesian regime's relentless efforts to reshape East Timorese socio-cultural expressions, customary practices have persisted and evolved to incorporate non-kin members of society (cf. Koczberski et al. 2009; Cramb and Sujang 2011).

Traditional sharecropping arrangements (known as *fuli keta gini* (Mk)) are usually undertaken amongst members of the extended kinship group. Sharecropping was commonplace in the pre-colonial times when local chiefs forced slaves and commoners to contribute labour in their rice fields. In contemporary times, large landowners in Tekinomata, and Seisal alike, are regularly approached by family and friends when irrigation systems in their own rice fields fail, or when they experience food shortages and other forms of economic difficulties. Sharecropping is practised for several reasons: extra labour may be required to cultivate larger paddies; family members may not be available to contribute labour due to illness or absence; they may be unable to repair irrigation streams; low rainfall may force landowners to farm elsewhere; and women and the poor who may inherit less quality, or no land at all, may engage in sharecropping to gain access to customary land. Such labour-land exchange relationships are traceable to the underlying kin-based orientation of East Timorese societies.

Sharecropping arrangements take two forms in Tekinomata. Under both arrangements, the landowner provides access to the paddy field and rice seeds for planting. In the first arrangement, the sharecropper (sometimes as a family unit) provides most of the labour by

ploughing the paddy to prepare the field for planting (*resa sauna* (Mk)) and also maintains the terraces and irrigation channels (Fig. 4.10). Depending on the size of the paddy, the land may be ploughed by buffaloes or tilling equipment inherited from the Indonesian times. The seeds are then planted in a terraced field, and later transplanted into other terraces, a farming technique learned from the Indonesians. The sharecropper is responsible for monitoring the crop and weeding. Harvesting (*resa se'i* (Mk)) is generally a shared task between sharecropper and landowner. In most instances, sharecroppers griped that landowners seldom contributed equal labour in the harvest, but they have no authority over the situation. Nevertheless, the harvested rice is divided equally between the landowner and sharecropper.

The second type of arrangement usually takes place in larger paddy fields where the labour is supplied by two sharecroppers who tend to be related or acquaintances. One of the sharecroppers typically owns buffaloes or has access to a mechanical tractor and takes responsibility for ploughing the land. The second sharecropper has responsibility for planting. The two sharecroppers take turns weeding. Like the first arrangement, the landowner provides access to the land and seed. In both scenarios, the landowner and family members may participate in the harvest and contribute food in exchange for the sharecropper's labour input. Once the rice has been harvested the stalks are removed by threshing and the owner of the threshing machine gets a tenth of the total amount of rice in exchange for machine-hire and fuel costs (Fig. 4.11). Young men who may be relatives assist in the threshing and packing phases, they may be receive in-kind payment of a small proportion of the rice or provided with meals, or are engaged in reciprocal labour exchange. The cleaned rice is piled on a plastic sheet under a temporary thatched shelter in the centre of the field and is not distributed until a traditional animistic sacrificial ceremony (*lisan*) is performed (see below). The remainder of the rice harvest is then distributed equally amongst the three actors.

Interviews with landowners and sharecroppers alike revealed that if individuals encounter social or economic difficulties, they do not seek assistance from each other. Nor do they engage in shared social activities beyond the rice fields. Instead, people enlist their family and kin group as 'social capital'. These engagements suggest host-settler relations are multi-layered and not entirely one of hostility. Instead, they are considerably beneficial to landowners who are highly dependent on rice as their main source of subsistence. In the late Portuguese times, Metzner (1977: 192) observed sharecropping in wet rice cultivation in Viqueque District. He described a similar arrangement to that operating between Tekinomata and Mulia:

> In Uato Lari farmers had to offer 50 per cent of the crop to the labourers, while the remaining 50 per cent went to the owners of the paddy field and the buffaloes (needed for tramping the soil (*sama natar*) in preparation of sowing.

Fig. 4.9 Bi-weekly bazaar at the road intersection in Mulia. Sellers from Quelicai also come down from the highlands to sell their garden produce here. Road to the left heads to Quelicai.

Fig. 4.10 Sharecropper ploughing the paddy with buffaloes.

Fig. 4.11 Rice is threshed with a diesel-fuelled machine. Young men tend to contribute in-kind labour during this phase.

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As there was a shortage of buffaloes in Uato Lari, these were brought in from Viqueque-sede which had similar climatic conditions to the sucos of Uato Lari. If not under socio contract (sharing part of the harvest) the buffaloes were rented out for cash).

Metzner's observation suggests that sharecropping has been practiced since at least the Portugese times. Metzner's observations further show that the present forms of sharecropping arrangements in the Tekinomata paddy fields have not radically altered from the historical ones found in Viqueque. Comparatively, research has shown that sharecropping is an ancient tradition widely practised in many countries as a risk-sharing venture (see, for example, Brookfield and Parson 2007).

With the expansion of educational and employment opportunities in the post-independence years, wealthy landowners in Tekinomata require extra labour to work their land because they are either engaged in waged employment or their children have moved away to school in Baucau, Dili or overseas. Sharecropping has allowed landowners to benefit from the labour input of settlers, which importantly enables them to cultivate rice fields which would otherwise have been left unused. The Indonesian resettlement scheme has therefore disrupted and re-shaped traditional livelihood systems for the host community and settlers alike. Sharecropping arrangements demonstrate the inclusivity and adaptive nature of Timorese exchange practices, which in the case of Tekinomata has extended to include non-kin members into the pre-existing system.

Youth Entrepreneurs

During the time of fieldwork, there was an exceptionally large presence of idle second-generation settlers in Mulia. These second-generation settlers were mostly youth studying or working in Dili (and Baucau) and had returned to Mulia to escape the violence that occurred during the 2006 crisis. As the political situation was not showing signs of improvement, especially with the pending Parliamentary elections to be held in July 2007, they were indefinitely 'displaced' from returning to study and work.

A number of youths who had earlier formed a village-based youth group named MAKLAM, decided to establish an informal agricultural co-operative in Mulia. The name MAKLAM is an abbreviation of *mate klamar* (souls of the dead), as Zelia, an eighteen year old senior high school student explained. She elaborated on the origins of MAKLAM:

The group was formed in 2001. We have grown up together and we attend the same church, so we know one another well. There are about 60 members at present. We decided on the name MAKLAM because we were inspired by the

souls of important figures all around the world. Anyone that did good things but they are now deceased. We can learn to follow them to lead a good path in life, so it is like having their spirits guide us in life.

Like their parents who had no choice but to re-establish new livelihoods in Mulia at the outset of the Indonesian occupation, the youth group expressed enthusiasm for entrepreneurship. Adopting a co-operative model akin to the *kelompok* established during the occupation, MAKLAM members rotate working in the rice paddies. They take on sharecropping roles but share the labour between several members. This economic strategy has enabled the group to get access to capital, and simultaneously, fill the otherwise unoccupied days with some kind of activity. Virgilio, an unemployed sixteen year old stated:

> We are cultivating three hectares of rice this year in Seisal. When we get the harvest, we will sell it to get money. The money can then be used to assist members who have difficulties in paying school fees, transport, or other problems. We can also use rice as credit. If people do not have sufficient rice, they can obtain some from us and in the end, they will return double the amount as interest. We already have farmers who ask us to help them in the fields because they do not have sufficient labour. In terms of the harvest, if they get 300 *kaleng* and there are two sharecroppers, each will get 100 *kaleng*. The sharecropper whom we help will give us 50 *kaleng*.

The MAKLAM agricultural co-operative cleverly draws on the existing models of sharecropping arrangements that the parents of group members are engaged in with customary landowners. By working as a group, they are able to bring a larger area of land (3 hectares) under cultivation. A proportion of the rice harvest is then sold for cash income and the remainder is reserved for use as credit or consumption – should group members (and their family) not have sufficient resources to maintain a livelihood for a short duration of time. The creation of an informal agricultural co-operative during a time of political turmoil demonstrates that the settlers and the second-generation settlers are not defeated by the imposing broader circumstances.

Access and Control of Land

Sharecroppers must expend sufficient effort in rice production for landowners to maintain reasonable yields. Otherwise, sharecroppers may be denied access to the land in the next season. Sharecroppers must also partake in the animistic ceremony at the completion of the main harvest, and are obligated to bring either a chicken or a goat for sacrificial offering, depending on the specifications of the landowner (Fig. 4.12 to 4.14). The process is led by the landowner or ritual expert who has historical and ritual knowledge of the particular rice paddy. The ceremonial space turns into a male-dominated space. Females are not permitted

to enter this ritual area for it is believed that females interrupt communications with the spiritual realm. Male relatives will consequently partake in the ceremony on behalf of females who have inherited rice fields. The harvest ritual is conducted to appease the ancestral spirits and spirits that inhabit the land; the appeased spirits, in turn, restore fertility into the barren paddies for the next year's agricultural cycle (see Appendix One for ritual excerpt).

The reciprocal exchange between the living and the spiritual realm forms an instrumental aspect of Timorese agricultural livelihoods. At the heart of this relationship is the belief in the spiritual potency (*lulik*) of inanimate objects and natural entities such as land, rock, trees, and water bodies (Forman 1980; McWilliam 2001). The moral economy established between landowners and the spirits of ancestors and land draws in the sharecroppers, who are consequently obligated to participate in the reciprocal relationship by contributing sacrificial animals. Both the landowners and settlers are of the Makassae ethno-linguistic group and share similar cultural traits. As noted in Forman's (1980: 175) essay detailing Makassae life-cycle rituals, 'continuity in life is a major collective concern and serves, in the end, to orient both economic and social behaviour'. The continuity of life is therefore sought through ritual acts of the sort mentioned above to enrich the soil that nourishes and secures human fertility. Consequently, to refuse to contribute to the harvest ritual is viewed as undermining the social reproduction of landowners.

Landowners stressed that any individual who puts in labour will get their due reward, hence, access to rice fields can be readily gained and maintained. Nonetheless, it is common for sharecroppers to work in several fields with other individuals, or to combine non-land based livelihood activities to minimise the risks of loss of access to land. But the lack of employment opportunities in rural districts means that non-land based activities in Mulia are limited to selling fish, running small kiosk-businesses or turning to unsustainable extraction of the commons (such as quarrying river bed rock).

In the aftermath of displacement, land-labour exchange relationships customarily practised within kinship groups have extended beyond these kinship networks to include unrelated members of the society. The different land relations that are at play between *access* and *control* are clearly discernible, and both are equally important in terms of securing shelter and livelihood. The landowner may retain *control* of access to land and the rules of engagement pertaining to labour and resource inputs, however, they do not have absolute control over the means of production, or the ability to derive benefits from land without the labour put in by settlers since their own children often reside in the district towns or Dili. Landowners and settlers are therefore mutually benefiting from this economic arrangement, but the power

Fig. 4.12 Threshed rice is cleaned and piled up on a mat, ready to be divided. A thorny branch is placed above the rice to shield it from evil spirits that threaten to inhabit the rice.

Fig. 4.13 Betel nut, betel pepper and ginger are placed at the front of the mat where the rice awaits distribution.
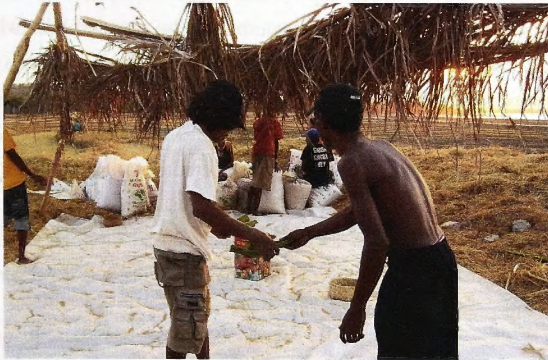
Fig. 4.14 After the harvest ceremony, rice is divided equally between landowner and sharecropper and transferred into rice sacks. The two men are removing palm leaves with the sacrificial food offered to the spirits preceding the division process.

Fig. 4.15 Gugulai hamlet, Waitame.

relation between them is unstable, and will continue to change with the introduction of formal land laws, market penetration and rapid social, political and economic transformation in the coming years.

4.4   MULTI-LOCAL LIVELIHOODS

Freedom of movement gained at Independence is matched by pragmatism on the part of settlers. Specifically, multi-local livelihoods have become a common practice among settlers. Most of the settlers have chosen to remain in Mulia, but they have diversified their livelihood practices to become less dependent on land access through sharecropping. This section explores the various livelihood strategies settlers have drawn on to meet their own goals.

The Returnees

With an unsurpassed view of Matebian Mountains, the landscape in Waitame contrasts spectacularly to that in Mulia. It is picturesque, marked by terraced hills, which are broken up by footpaths created in undulating orange soil (Fig. 4.15). Waitame is one of the 13 administrative villages in Quelicai Sub-District, and the village is nearly 30 kilometres from Mulia. Houses in Waitame are built with palm stalks and thatched roofing. Wealthy families lived in cement houses with corrugated roofs. Scattered across the hill country are maize fields, and groves of banana, papaya and betel nut. In contrast to the infertile land and sparse vegetation that characterise Mulia, Waitame has fertile soil that supports staple food gardens. Much of the land available for cultivation in the ancestral village is however left fallow due to a small permanent population.

Elderly men and women make up the majority of people who returned permanently to Waitame. Poor access to markets, clean water and communication technologies have not discouraged these families and individuals from going 'home'. The elderly interlocutors

stressed that they had neglected the spirits of their ancestors when they were residing in Mulia, which consequently brought misfortune and sickness to family members. To address these problems, the elderly have taken up the duty of custodians of their lineage's sacred house (*oma falu* (Mk)) to secure well-being for their family members. As a scared house custodian explained:

> The sacred house is where the ancestor spirits are sheltered. It is where we were born. If we neglect it, the entire group will suffer because our grandfathers will be unhappy that we forgot about them... Custom makes the relationship within the family tight because every member has to participate in ritual practices. Even if individuals live far away, they must return to attend to these matters. Otherwise, they must send money or contribute some items, like animals, rice, oil and others.

Appeasing the neglected ancestral spirits (*oma rae* (Mk)) is of utmost priority to secure family well-being. The custodian's thoughts were strongly echoed by other elderly people. Furthermore, the elderly expressed their desires to return to their place of origin (*wa'a* (Mk)) because they were in the final phase of their lives and preferred to spend their remaining years where they were born and raised.

Although in the Portuguese colonial times families used to cultivate non-irrigated rice, they have not returned to this agricultural practice. Non-irrigated rice yields are significantly lower than the yields of irrigated rice in Tekinomata and Seisal. Being aware of the differences in the agricultural productivity of land in the two localities, numerous families have purposively converted their fields to cultivate staple crops such as cassava, sweet potato, and peanuts. The production of root crops and vegetables is then supplemented by seasonal migration to Mulia in the wet rice cultivation season. Families stay temporarily with their kin who remain in Mulia during the rice growing season to work as sharecroppers in Tekinomata and Seisal. Since the highland and the north coast have distinct agricultural cycles, settlers are able to exploit family-inherited land in Waitame and then return to Mulia.

This group of returnees to Waitame can be considered as no longer 'displaced'. But the experience of displacement has clearly left some enduring effects, for families have changed their livelihood practices. They have further brought back ideas associated with 'modernity'. Compared to the lifestyle in Mulia, where the evenings usually centred on watching Indonesian soap dramas on satellite television in the houses of wealthy families, families residing in Waitame still relied on kerosene lamps and radios. Mobile phone reception was almost non-existent in the highlands. These everyday inconveniences have prompted the *chefe de suco* of Waitame to write a petition requesting the Quelicai Sub-District administrator to

connect the village to electricity. Clean piped water was an additional request by returnees who previously had water wells only a few metres from their dwellings in Mulia. Now they were dependent on spring water, and villagers had improvised a water pipe from the spring using bamboo stalks.

The Non-Returned

The majority of interlocutors were reluctant to return to Waitame. Primarily, families do not wish to abandon their now well-established livelihoods created over the past three decades in Mulia. A frequent remark by settlers goes that, 'this land did not come with food or gardens. We worked with our hands to survive and make a living'. Compared to the highland ancestral villages, Mulia is better linked to 'modern' facilities, cash income, and district towns. Access to school, market, and employment are within easy reach of the village, especially Baucau District town, where many residents were employed.

Return is additionally hindered by the fact that settlers are subsistence farmers and do not have the financial means to relocate back to Waitame. With state assistance for repatriation, settlers would need to save money to hire vehicles to move their possessions and property. They would also need to build a new shelter and start their livelihoods afresh. Families with children who are schooled in Mulia, Laga and Baucau are particularly reluctant to return, insisting that there is a lack of schools and teachers in the mountains. Indeed, during my trips to Waitame residents often complained that it was difficult to retain and attract teachers to such a remote place.

Young families preferred to remain in Mulia. With a strong labour force, these families can easily take up sharecropping roles in the neighbouring villages. These differences in demographic structure amongst the returned and non-returned families allude to the varying degrees of 'emplacement' and notions of belonging held by the different generations of settlers. This is not to imply that non-returned families have not re-connected with their relatives in Waitame. There is ongoing mobility between the two localities for socio-cultural purposes, such as birth, marriage, and death ceremonies that require the attendance of family and extended kin members.

Ba-Mai: Moving between Mulia and Waitame

There is a group of residents that remains 'between' (*ba-mai*) Mulia and Waitame, which raises the complex reality of return. Return or repatriation is often regarded as the ideal durable solution for the internally displaced and refugees by humanitarian organisations (Chapter One). However, a mobile mode of livelihoods seems to be the preferred choice

these individuals and families have taken to reduce livelihood risks (cf. Stepputat 2004). An illustrative example of mobile livelihoods is evident in garden cultivation. Vegetable gardens tend to fail by mid-growing season in Mulia due to an unreliable and short wet monsoon from November to March. Taking advantage of fertile soils and family-inherited land in Waitame, settlers undertake seasonal migration to take the garden produce from Waitame to Mulia to sell at the weekly bazaar. The predicament of displacement, has here in a positive manner, provided settlers with a wider choice of livelihood opportunities. The trade-off is therefore between productive gardens in Waitame and high yielding rice fields in Tekinomata and Seisal. Below are narratives of five settlers who have pursued their own livelihood trajectories within the existing structural constraints.

Maun Belo

Maun Belo is a long term resident of Mulia. His ancestral settlement is the village of Baagia in Quelicai. Maun Belo became a *microlet*[2] mini-van driver in 1997, driving between Baucau and Quelicai town centres. In 2002, he finally saved up to purchase his own *microlet* through a micro-credit loan. He named his vehicle *Kenangan* – which translates more or less to 'remembrance of the past' in the Indonesian language, a name he chose to symbolise the hardship of the Indonesian occupation.

Maun Belo only works along the Baucau-Quelicai route because it is his familiar social environment. There are twelve *microlets* in total that run along this route and four *anguna* trucks. Hence, there is a demand for transport, particularly to the remote villages of Quelicai. The busiest days are Saturday, Monday and Wednesday when the markets (*bazaar*) in Quelicai and Baucau open, attracting both sellers and buyers to these locations. There is also high demand for transport during school holidays and on public holidays such as Easter and Christmas. The days leading up to *Loron Matebian/Finadu* (All Souls' Day) are however the busiest, where the local populations make an annual pilgrimage to a sacred spring and a statue of Christ on Matebian Mountains. Maun Belo highlighted some of the things he transports:

> There are always fruits and vegetables being sent from Quelicai to Mulia, such as potatoes and pomelo... Sometimes people send letters and urgent family news, such as a death. From Mulia, people usually send rice and letters to Quelicai. If the items are heavy or take up too much space, people pay an extra USD 0.50 to USD 1.00.

The *microlet* has played a significant role in connecting people, goods and information between Mulia and Waitame for the last decade or more since the opening of the road. As

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2 A *microlet* is a small van that can carry up to fifteen passengers. They were introduced during the Indonesian occupation and are similar to the *bemo* mini-van found in Indonesia.

there is no public transport in East Timor, these privately owned vehicles have made remote and rural areas more accessible. In this example, displacement has created a livelihood niche for Maun Belo and other drivers who have seized on the high demand for transport between the ancestral settlements and Mulia to make a reasonable living.

Senor Moreira

Senor Moreira moved back to Waitame in 1983 when the Indonesians deemed the security situation was no longer threatened by the Timorese independence resistance. Senor Moreira does not have good memories of the period he lived in Mulia as he arrived in 1978 to an inhospitable environment with no assistance provided to families to recover their livelihoods. He later joined the village *hansip*, a civilian defence unit created under the Indonesian system to conduct neighbourhood patrols to ensure people did not make contact with the resistance. Working in the *hansip* gave him a regular wage and he did not have to work in the rice fields.

Upon his return to Waitame, he became the deputy chief of the village before he was subsequently appointed to the position of village chief from 1989 to 1995 and he had then a reasonable income to support his family. Since national independence, Senor Moreira has resorted to sharecropping in Seisal. Due to the increasingly heavy rainfall in the wet seasons for the past few years, his cultivation field in Waitame has been damaged by repeated erosion. With no resources or labour to repair the damaged field terraces, Senor Moreira decided to engage in sharecropping with a family relative in the rice fields of Seisal. During the rice cultivation season, he migrates temporarily to Mulia, relying on his relatives for accommodation, while he works in Seisal. Senor Moreira prepares the rice terraces, while his relative prepares the paddy with buffaloes. At the end of the rice season, Senor Moreira returns to Waitame with his share of the harvest. Senor Moreira's share of the harvest for the 2007 season was 50 *kaleng*[3] of unmilled rice (equivalent to approximately 750 kilograms). He said that in a good year with abundant rain, each sharecropper obtained between 100 to 140 *kaleng* of unmilled rice (1.5 to 2 tonnes).

Mana Anita

Mana Anita, her husband, and their six children, provide another example of a family that resides between the two localities. They headed for Waitame in 2005 after her husband left his primary school teaching position in Mulia in favour of a teaching position in the Waitame village primary school. She stated their decision to return permanently was based on several factors. Although her husband was offered a similar wage which he had received for teaching

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3 A *kaleng* refers to a metal barrel or cylinder that holds approximately 15 kilograms of unmilled rice.

in Mulia, they did not have gardens or rice fields there, which meant that his employment was the only source of regular income.

Mana Anita previously worked as a sharecropper in Seisal, about which she expressed discontent at receiving only a third of the rice harvest for her hard work: 'it was not fair, the landowner did not contribute anything except the seeds. It was physically too demanding'. Her role included planting, weeding, and harvesting, while a second individual was responsible for ploughing the land with his buffaloes. The landowner, by contrast, hardly assisted in the field. In addition, Anita tried to grow vegetables in Mulia but the land was 'dry and everything died'. In Waitame, they are residing on land her husband has inherited from his parents, and the fertile soil allows her to grow a variety of vegetables and fruits, which she states is sufficient to feed her children and the surplus is sold at the market in the Quelicai market (Fig. 4.16).

Jon

Jon's parents had strategically planned where the family should reside after the security measures were reduced in Mulia. His parents left Mulia in the early 1990s because the low population density in Waitame provided an ideal environment to rear goats. Mulia was overcrowded and conflicts would erupt when livestock wandered into neighbouring properties. Also Mulia is situated beside the road and a number of animals were killed by passing vehicles. In Waitame, they were further able to reclaim their abandoned fields and gained access to use their non-returned relatives' fields. Both of Jon's sisters live with the parents, helping out in agriculture activities, as they have not yet begun any schooling. On the other hand, Jon and his wife remain in Mulia with their newborn son, along with Jon's two teenage brothers whose education and welfare are their responsibility. Jon has taken over the house his father had built, and independently supports his own family and siblings by renting out the rice threshing machine he had inherited from his father – who received the machine through an Indonesian agricultural extension programme.

The machine operates well despite its age, and is hired by landowners in Tekinomata and Seisal. He is paid a percentage of the rice harvest (one *lata* for every ten *lata* of unmilled rice[4]), which his wife sells in the bazaars when they need to pay school fees and buy basic necessities for the house. In a few years time, Jon's sisters will be joining his household to start their education in Mulia. Jon's family has clearly made the most advantage out of having access to land in Waitame and Mulia to cater for their livelihood needs. Parallels can be

4 A *lata* is a customary measurement unit, which is equivalent to 12.5 kilograms of unmilled rice, or 16 kilograms of milled rice.

drawn here with Wise's (2006: 168-174) example of East Timorese 'split families' who move between Australia and East Timor. Wise argued that families strategically 'fragmented' in order to take advantage of available opportunities and at the same time stake a claim in both countries. In this approach, families can easily return to East Timor when the socio-political and economic climate improves, or return to Australia if the circumstances deteriorate. Jon's family have in a similar vein returned to Waitame to reclaim their private land, which might otherwise be claimed by others, while retaining a presence in Mulia is an incentive for the younger family members.

Mana Regina

Mana Regina, a single mother, is another example of individuals whose personal mobility has expanded as a result of forced resettlement to Mulia. Regina's partner, an Indonesian military officer, had abandoned her when she was pregnant with their daughter in the late 1990s. Since his abandonment, she has been supporting herself and her daughter by delving in all sorts of income generating opportunities.

In 2006, when her daughter started pre-primary school, Regina left her in the care of Regina's unmarried elder sister and returned to reside in Waitame. When her daughter was younger, Regina assisted other sharecropping families in the rice fields of Tekinomata, but she did not get her fair share of the crop. In addition, most sharecroppers work as family units and she did not have enough family members who were willing to form their own sharecropping unit. Thus when her daughter started school, Regina had more freedom to diversify her livelihood strategies.

Regina decided to return permanently to live in Waitame with a second elder sister and her husband, and their two daughters. Through her brother-in-law, she was able to access his land and cultivate it as she desires with the help of her sister and nieces. Regina earned a living by selling peanuts and other vegetables she cultivates in the gardens (Fig. 4.17). Regina also seizes the opportunity to sell such fresh food produce in Mulia as there is a high demand due to the long periods of dry season damaging the stable food crops. The monthly trips to Mulia moreover allow her to visit her daughter and sibling. In 2007, she was preparing two gardens, at least one and a half hectares in total, to grow peanuts and other tuberous crops. When she has accumulated a reasonable level of savings, she goes to Dili to buy large bales (approximately 20 kilograms) of second-hand clothes (*obrala*) from wholesalers for USD 10 each, and brings them back to Baucau, Mulia and Quelicai to resell each item of clothing for one to two US dollars.

Fig. 4.16 Mana Anita's garden in Modulu hamlet, Waitame.

Fig. 4.17 Cleared land to open Mana Regina's garden in Waitame.

Regina relayed that she was content to travel back and forth between Waitame and Mulia because she gains access to both markets. Her efforts in working two gardens are fully remunerated, unlike in previous labour arrangements where she helped others in the rice fields but in return was given a share of the harvest that she deemed was not equivalent to the labour she invested. Regina's livelihood strategies exemplify the expansion of the geographical and economic mobility of entrepreneurial individuals. By basing themselves at two localities, they draw on the available land and family networks in their former settlements and take advantage of the greater accessibility, education and cash income opportunities at the resettlement site.

The above short narratives illustrate the capacities of settlers in overcoming their traumatic experiences of war and resettlement to carve out a means of living. They demonstrate

landlessness is commonly not the most important problem facing displaced people. The *quality* of land also plays a crucial role in supporting subsistence agricultural livelihoods. Many settlers, like Regina, choose to be mobile between the two localities, exploiting the available resources in Mulia and Waitame. The pursuit of multi-local livelihoods is motivated by the lack of *control* over land in Mulia. I examine the politics of land brought about by forced displacement in Chapter Six. I argue that the narrow attention given to land *ownership* overlooks the diverse informal land tenure arrangements that have emerged in post-independence East Timor. Instead, I put forward that land matters must be examined in terms of *access*, *maintenance,* and *control* to understand the vast approaches settlers have created to secure land in an uncertain legal context and without the end goal of *ownership*. Return journeys to the ancestral land are equally motivated by local socio-cultural beliefs and practices, a research thread I examine more thoroughly in Chapter Seven.

4.5 LAND TENSIONS

Despite successfully re-establishing new livelihoods in Mulia, settlers are conscious of their lack of land security. A formal land dispute claim was filed by landowners with the Land and Property Department in 2003. With the filing of the dispute claim, Mulia was no longer an official administrative village (*suco*). Settlers are thus reminded daily in their attempts to secure livelihoods that Mulia is a 'provisional' village. Legally, the settlers are 'claimants' in long term possession of land, however, the government will refrain from any intervention in the matter until the legislation of the transitional land law, which will then subsequently determine if the settlers have legal rights to remain in Mulia.

Some settlers have been unable to work as sharecroppers in Tekinomata because of the ongoing land tensions. Landowners see it as timely that the settlers returned to their original settlements once the oppressive threats that pushed them to live in Mulia were no longer present. A settler revealed some of the frustrations they faced on a daily basis:

> If we don't know how to look for money we cannot survive here. The rice paddies belong to them [Tekinomata and Seisal]. If you try to [open food] gardens people say the land is theirs. If you rear livestock such as goats or buffaloes, they could enter into the neighbours' properties, [who then become] enraged.

This statement suggests tensions over land availability and land use are rife in Mulia, prompting those who rear livestock to cage their animals in small thatched pens along the beach, on the foothills behind the village, and next to the river bank (see Fig. 4.4). Because Mulia is situated between the customary landholding villages of Tekinomata and Seisal, there

is little space for expansion should Mulia's population increase in the future. Consequently some settlers are prompted to return to Waitame to re-claim family inherited land.

As I witnessed during fieldwork, the long term volatility in political conditions particularly when overlaid with contemporary social and economic deprivations tended to make the underlying tensions over land re-surface. Communal violence between Tekinomata and Mulia happened at least twice during my six months residence. The most frightening outbreak of violence came a few days after the 2007 Parliamentary elections results were announced. The incident that started the brawl involved a young man from Caicasalari hamlet in Tekinomata who was drunk one evening. Dissatisfied with the election results, the youth hurled rocks at passing vehicles. One of the rocks injured a driver who incidentally was a settler from Mulia. The next day, youths in Mulia retaliated by threatening to burn rice fields and houses in Tekinomata.

Over night, numerous families in Tekinomata, particularly those from Caicasalari hamlet, prepared themselves by shutting up their houses. Others, including my host parents, hid their possessions up on the hill in their sacred house. The mob did not attack Tekinomata until late next morning. Young men equipped with sticks and machetes ran across the main road, over Wai'mua river bridge, and into Caicasalari hamlet.[5] The violence was eventually brought under control by the United Nations Police (UNPOL) and the district police officers (PNTL). In the following days, the village council of Tekinomata organised a community-based reconciliation (*juramentu*) for the youth in both villages. Youths from Mulia declined to participate in the event for several days.

Landowner Perspectives

'Some of them were members of *Tim Saka*, they are now in NTT [Nusa Tenggara Timur], but their family members are still living in Mulia. They should leave!' remarked a landowner who was a former FRETILIN resistance combatant. The historical tension over land between Tekinomata and Mulia is multi-layered. First, landowners asserted that the settlers supported the Indonesian military regime. Several older interlocutors in Tekinomata even refused to walk through Mulia as they did not wish to encounter settlers. Second, notwithstanding the economic ties in wet rice cultivation, the lack of pre-existing social links has greatly limited settlers' ability to negotiate their customary land rights. Third, the two groups had different historical political allegiances.

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5 I witnessed the fight unfold from the hill above Caicasalari hamlet. My host family along with several others attempted to avoid the violence by taking refuge in the sacred houses. I was reluctant to vacate the house I was residing in, however, I was finally persuaded by the wise words of my host father who reasoned, 'you may not be their target, but the rocks will not recognise that you are a foreigner'.

There is a general consensus among landowners that settlers were not 'displaced' or victims of war. Interlocutors, for example, described the settlers as land occupants (*okupados*) instead of refugees (*refujiados* (P)) or internally displaced people (*ema dislokado*), insisting that the settlers were occupying other peoples' land not out of danger or desperation. One interlocutor proudly declared that his family participated in the Security Disturbance Movement or GPK (*Gerakan Pengacau Keamanan* (I)), a label for dissident groups given by the Indonesians, and emphasised that unlike residents of Tekinomata who remained loyal to the independence cause, the settlers had collaborated with the Indonesian army (TNI) as spies and militants.

Landowners clearly disassociated themselves from settlers by referring to them as *ema Quelicai* or 'Quelicai people', which emphasises the settlers' origin and continued 'outsider' status. Senor Jamie, a landowner, described how as a child, he and his brothers would accompany their father to drive their buffaloes and goats for a drink along the Wai'mua river bank and to graze on the communal grazing ground at Mulia. Senor Jamie feels that the settlers should return to their own land because the landowners are increasing in population. He pointed out:

> Those from Quelicai were the first to raise the red and white flag to welcome the Indonesians. Where will our grandchildren live? They have their own land. They promised when the Indonesian flag comes down, they will return. We are afraid of them because their numbers are larger than Tekinomata.

Senor Jamie argued that more space will inevitably be required for future generations for residential and livelihood purposes, and that the Quelicai people had abundant land in the mountains. He added that land was an important livelihood safety net even for landowners who do not make a living solely from agriculture, 'they may be working for the government, but they return to agriculture when they get older and retire'.

Another interlocutor agreed with Senor Jamie that a constant source of conflict between the two communities is competition for land. He highlighted that as the population in both communities grow, there is more pressure for space, 'if in the future our children work as civil servants, then no problems, but if they cannot find work, what will be their livelihoods?' He also highlighted that the destruction of gardens by livestock is a sore point. As grazing land is increasingly converted to residential space, goats in particular have limited space to roam, consequently straying into food gardens. The garden owners in return harm or slaughter the livestock. In 1984, a goat leapt into a Mulia garden, the trespassing incident then escalated into community-level violence between landowners and settlers. The incident landed the former chief of Tekinomata's middle son in jail for several days.

Marriage is a strong indicator of the strength of social ties forged between social groupings in any society. The traditional marriage between a male and female in East Timor seals a kinship bond of what becomes the wife-taking (*fetosaa*) and wife-giving (*umane*) groups. The bond involves gift exchanges at marriage and death rituals (including that of their extended families) (Lazarowitz 1980: 104–141). This process then sets up a tight alliance between the two groups that endures throughout the extent of the couple's life cycle and the generations that follow. The long physical distance between the sub-districts of Quelicai and Laga meant that there had been no inter-marriage or strong trade networks between the two communities in the past.

Marriage and political alliances are inextricably linked in East Timorese sociality, and may translate into land entitlements. Landowners in Tekinomata evidently adhered to past political loyalties to orient their present-day situation. Tekinomata had been loyal subjects of the Laleia kingdom which flourished in the Manatuto District, while Waitame was part of the Luca kingdom in the Viqueque District. These former kingdoms gradually lost their influence in the late nineteenth century when the Portuguese introduced a parallel system of governance drawing on the indigenous *liurai* political structure (Ospina and Hohe 2002). Landowners therefore disassociate themselves from the settlers by stressing a lack of common political affiliation.

Finally, historical accounts of Tekinomata suggest that the administrative land boundaries changed several times in the colonial and Indonesian eras. In 1914, 'Oma Ina Wai was said to have won a war against the kingdom of Quelicai, winning over the territories occupied by Abafala, Gurusa, Namane, and Mumana villages. Subsequently in 1949, after the departure of the Japanese, the Portuguese returned and consolidated their rule by establishing sub-districts to make taxation easier to manage. With this introduction, Afasa was considered the centre of sub-district Quelicai, and Tekinomata was incorporated into Quelicai due to its closeness in distance. This marked an important point in the village's history because the population in Mulia who do not wish to return to their land in Quelicai argue that Mulia and Tekinomata were historically within the boundaries of Quelicai.

The boundaries changed after a couple years, and Tekinomata became included in Baucau Sub-District. During this latter period, the *liurai* of Tekinomata commanded control over the areas of Lavatari, Abafala, Gurusa, Waitame and Namane (which fall within Quelicai's administrative boundaries at the present time). In 1956, the Portuguese restructured East Timor's land boundaries again, incorporating Tekinomata into the sub-district of Laga. For these reasons outlined above, settlers have been unsuccessful in negotiating customary land

rights. Despite three decades of resettlement, the lack of socio-political links may explain the active hostility between landowners and settlers.

There are signs of improved social contact between the two groups. The second generation settlers are marrying into landowning families, which has reduced the 'social distance' between the two groups and landowner perceptions of settlers have begun to shift. Senor Gaspar from Oma Ina Wai, whose son recently married a woman from Gurusa commented:

> Wai'aka is our land and they promised to leave. In the past, we used to have clashes. But now, my son has married a girl from there [Mulia]. So we are now family. We are also independent. All land in East Timor is for us to live on.

Mana Floro, a landowner's wife, who is originally from Abafala village in Quelicai, similarly reflected on the changing nature of the protracted tensions between the two groups:

> Quelicai people residing in Mulia are not 'refugees' anymore. They have been living there for a long time. It was the Indonesians who forced them to live there. The land was purchased by the Indonesians and given to Quelicai because they had a good relationship with one another. In addition, Tekinomata people are now starting to form family relationships with those from Quelicai.

The lack of success of the settlers in negotiating customary land rights is a product of limited kinship, marriage and political ties. Intermarriage between the two communities may see an end to the continued antagonism over competing land claims.

Settler Narratives

In reaction to the negative perceptions held by landowners, settlers in Mulia have tried to assert their land claims by drawing on popular victimhood discourses of displaced people. They claim that they were powerless victims of the Indonesian state's attempt to dominate and produce a manageable population, stressing that they were compelled to resettle in Mulia against their will. Furthermore, they remind landowners that on their initial arrival at Mulia, the land was wild (*fuik*), which in customary practice signals unclaimed or uncultivated land. As one interlocutor reasoned:

> What did Teiknomata people do? The land here was not cultivated. It was full of weeds and thorns. We opened up gardens, built houses, road, and made all these transformations. This is why they want it back now.

By creating an identity centred on victimhood, the settlers see it as only proper that if the present government orders them to return to their former villages, they will expect full compensation for the loss of their livelihoods upon repatriation. Most settlers also stressed

that the land has increased in value because they have invested labour in creating food gardens. On the other hand, if the settlers are given ownership of land in Mulia, they would like the government to appropriate rice fields, and create employment opportunities to enable them to sustain their livelihoods. A member of the village council stated:

> We were brought here under the obligation of the Indonesian military. Yes, we have the capacity to return to the hills. But we are living well here. We are not illegal occupants. The Indonesian government made a formal declaration that this is a legal village. There is a declaration. The sub-district and district governments signed this declaration.

However, a more pressing matter seems to be the government's lack of interest in addressing such land dispute claims. Most residents in Mulia were left frustrated that the government has not made a decision over their case and that their lives are in limbo. As an interlocutor remarked:

> We don't mind returning to Waitame provided that the government pays for the relocation. We have electricity, water, school, so we demand Waitame be fitted with such facilities. The problem is not whether we return or not, the problem is the government has not made a decision. It has been over four years since they [Tekinomata] lodged the petition.

The above statement about the question of ownership rights to land in Mulia shows that people are waiting for *le'e* (law) to be legislated by the Timor-Leste government to determine their fate. Other common responses such as, 'law will determine', or 'government will decide', similarly beg the question that will legal processes be able to resolve cases of forced displacement on customary land. I delve deeper into the uncertain status of land in formal law and its potential impacts on resettled families in Chapter Six.

The settlers acknowledged that the land may be traditionally owned by others, but they have laid down 'roots' in Mulia over the decades. Most of the younger generation described their sense of emplacement by referring to themselves as 'Mulia people' (*ema Mulia*). One interlocutor expressed that Mulia felt like 'home' because her family and friends from Quelicai died on this land and were buried in the cemetery behind Mulia. Interlocutors also described themselves as being one village and not distinguishing themselves as coming from Waitame, Afasa, Gurusa, and Baagia. Nonetheless, if there are communal tensions, interlocutors reportedly side with families from the same origin village.

4.6   CONCLUSION

Settlers in Mulia form a geographically dispersed and extended community. Individuals and families pursue multi-local livelihoods: exploiting available resources in Waitame such as inherited family land to open food gardens, while taking advantage of labour demand in Tekinomata, good access to markets, and technologies in Mulia. It is apparent that for some families their children's education is of priority and the desire for a more regular income determines the strategies used by each household to reap the greatest benefits from their dislocation. Depending on their priorities, resettled families choose specific places to situate themselves; to return 'home', to separate temporarily, or to remain in their imposed resettlement locations.

The determination and self-reliance displayed by the settlers of Mulia masks their traumas of war and displacement. They have re-created livelihoods in the absence of humanitarian assistance – in both situations of resettlement in Mulia and return to Waitame. In Mulia, they created important economic links with customary landowners, particularly in the form of land-labour exchanges. Interestingly, the economic cooperation between landowners and settlers is limited to, and does not extend outside of the rice fields. Tensions persist over the rightful ownership of Mulia/Wai'aka, particularly due to the lack of social ties, and past and present political alliances. In recent years, landowners have become concerned with the scarcity of land as the population of Mulia and Tekinomata continues to increase. I explore further in Chapter Six how settler narratives in Mulia can better inform formal land governance in post-conflict East Timor. Certainly in Mulia's case, having *access* to, but lacking *control* over land presents a major constraint on livelihoods, which necessitates a need to broaden the scope of national land debates, which are currently limited to *ownership*, to reflect locally relevant concerns confronting displaced people and their livelihoods.

What is indisputable is that the gaining of freedom of movement has enabled settlers to selectively appropriate their predicament of displacement to meet their own ends. I take up a detailed discussion in Chapter Seven on the production of translocal spaces created by these spatially-extended resettled families. My objective there is to problematise the displaced-emplaced dialectic through which the East Timorese's relationship with their ancestral settlement is understood. The enduring significance of ancestral settlements in contemporary Timorese sociality is explored by examining how this symbolic locality is reproduced in the material, embodied and social manners.

Chapter Five

Origin, Precedence and Alliance on the 'Sacred Land' of Southern Manufahi

This chapter presents a case study of settlers from Daisua village in the southern central highlands of Manufahi District that stands in contrast to the previous case study of Mulia. Unlike settlers in Mulia who were resettled across large physical and social distances, settlers from Daisua were moved within an existing administrative village boundary to a lowland site in close proximity to their ancestral settlements. As described earlier, the local populations here were erratically displaced at least twice upon surrendering from the mountains before they were systematically resettled in the site known as Simpang Tiga (Fig. 5.1). Faced with a shortage of land suitable for cultivation at the site, resettled families tactically mobilised wider kin networks to gain access to customary land through landowners and earlier settlers with whom they share well-established kin-based affiliations. Landowners, early settlers and new settlers construct their relationship on the basis of marriage and political alliance, and less on blood and direct descent. Embedded within the localised socio-political order, the notion of *rai lulik* (sacred land) is invoked by the residing groups to access communal customary land in the neighbouring village of Foho Ailicu.

My approach in this chapter is twofold. First, I focus on the contemporary articulation of expansive kin-based networks in an area I term as Southern Manufahi – which is inclusive of the villages of Daisua, Babulu, Foho Ailicu, Leo Lima, and Betano. I outline how these networks are constructed and employed in adverse circumstances. These networks are constitutive of kin-based relations established outside the lineage or 'house' group, and are based on marriage and inter-lineage and inter-domain alliances. They open up additional channels of land access for Daisua settlers who were otherwise limited to accessing family- and 'house'- inherited land and resources. Southern Manufahi is a meeting point of languages and cultures. Occupied by Mambai, Bunak and Tetun-Terik speaking groups, many of the community residents are conversational in two or three languages. The region's history is rich in narratives of enduring social alliances, ancient group rivalries and anti-colonial rebellions. The networks have enabled successive waves of settlers – that have migrated for reasons associated with clan warfare, population growth and environmental change – to be incorporated into the local social order and gain land for shelter and livelihood purposes.

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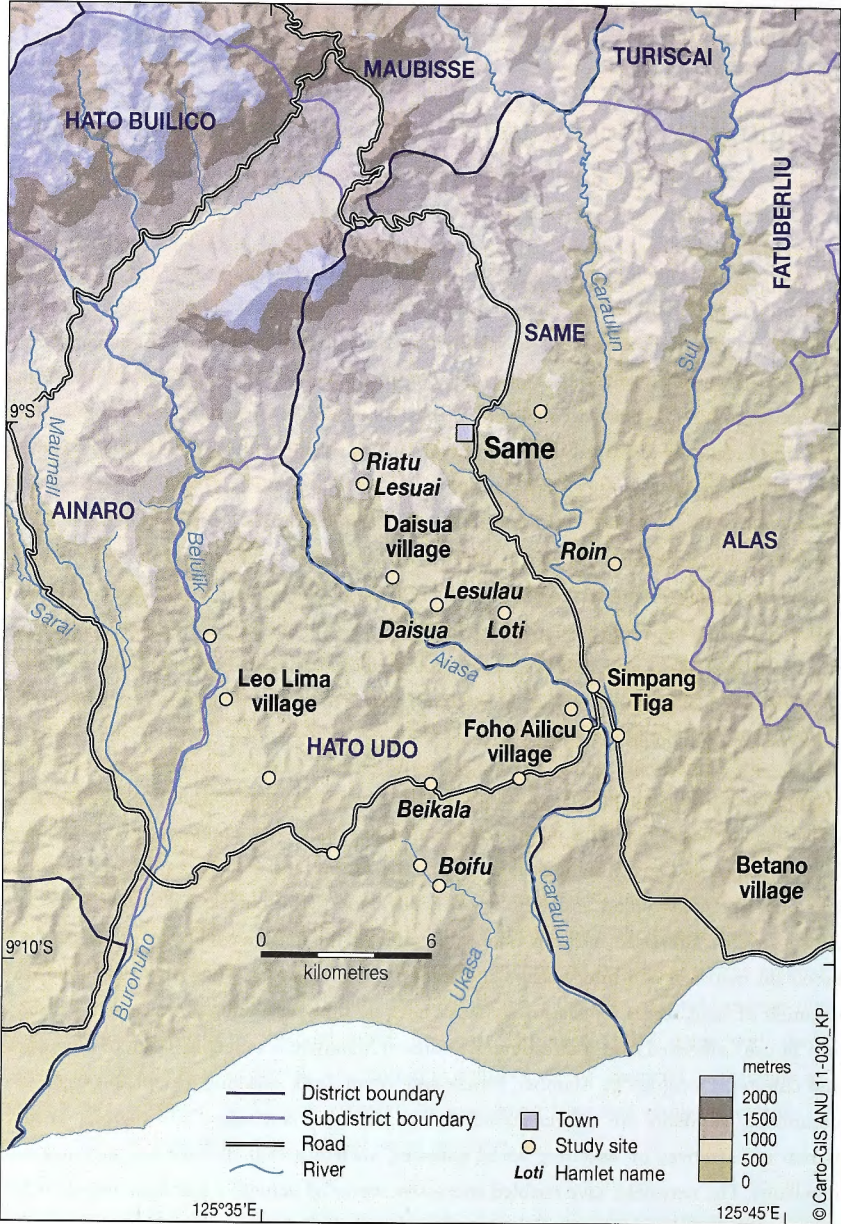
Fig. 5.1 Locality map of Simpang Tiga resettlement site in Daisua village. Also featured are the neighbouring villages of Foho Ailicu, Leo Lima and Betano.

These alliances were forged as early as the nineteenth century. As I probed deeper into how Daisua settlers activated and marshalled their social networks, multiple and overlapping socio-political relationships came to the fore. These relationships reinforced one another, providing a strong base from which to negotiate land access.

My second mode of enquiry questions how landowners and resettled families seek to keep these extended kin relations visible in order to legitimise their claims to 'sacred land' in Southern Manufahi (cf. Kirsch 2001; Bainton 2009). Oral histories which recount historical migrations are strategically used to emphasise origin, precedence and alliance, which in turn underpin the varying degrees of access rights to 'sacred land'. The continued encroachment of new settlers in recent years onto 'sacred land' is however leading some members of the alliance to differentiate themselves from their extended kin. There is a strong indication that they wish to redefine their 'community', and in doing so, cut off networks with settlers.

5.1 SIMPANG TIGA: AN INDONESIAN RESETTLEMENT SITE IN DAISUA

Indonesian authorities established the resettlement site of Simpang Tiga in Daisua village some time between 1977 and 1978. At present, Daisua village is comprised of six hamlets (*aldeia*): Riatu, Lesuai, Lesulau, Daisua, Loti and Roin. The village population was 2400 in 2007.[1] The territorial boundaries of each hamlet more or less reflect a distinct ancestral domain, which are most likely to have been negotiated and reworked during pre-colonial and colonial times. Simpang Tiga is located in a low-lying area claimed by the lineage groups of Loti hamlet. The name Simpang Tiga is derived from Indonesian language and translates literally to 'three way junction' in reference to the three intersecting roads that pass through the resettlement site. The roads link Simpang Tiga to the nearby sub-district and district centres of Samé, Ainaro and Betano (Fig. 5.2).

Houses were built in a linear fashion along these intersecting roads. During my first visit to Simpang Tiga, I was struck by the crowded conditions and the lack of garden plots, much akin to the situation in Mulia. Several Indonesian-era public houses stood in ruins amongst mainly thatched dwellings (Fig. 5.3). Compared to Mulia, the settlement was less cohesive as a new community as the families were situated close to their places of origin, and as such, a new identity of 'Simpang Tiga' had not developed. The harmonious relationship with Loti landowners and early settlers also promoted interdependence rather than identity differences.

1 This equated to an estimated 486 families: Riatu (163), Lesuai (30), Lesulau (62), Daisua (99), Loti (90), and Roin (42).

Fig. 5.2 The junction of three roads that pass through Simpang Tiga.

Fig. 5.3 Dilapidated Indonesian-era public housing stands next to thatched housing, Simpang Tiga.

Fig. 5.4 Dwellings of families from Babulu village, Simpang Tiga.

Simpang Tiga is not an administrative hamlet. For all state administrative purposes the households were registered in their origin hamlets. There were approximately 80 households from the hamlets of Riatu, Lesuai, Lesulau and Roin, and 30 households from the neighbouring Babulu village. Families from the same lineage tended to cluster in the same area, spatialising kin-affiliations and re-emplacing the distinct 'houses' in Simpang Tiga. The Babulu settlers resided close to the bridge that crosses the Ai Asa River into Ainaro District (Fig. 5.4). They tended to isolate themselves from Daisua residents. The respective hamlet chiefs and village chiefs of Daisua and Babulu took responsibility over their own populations residing in the area – while acknowledging that the land is customarily claimed by the 'houses' of Loti. A younger generation of families who have intermarried between the hamlets built dwellings close to their parents', which meant that the resettled population has grown over the decades.

When settlers first gained the freedom to leave the confines of Simpang Tiga, they sought the most pragmatic strategy to secure arable land for livelihoods. A significant proportion of settlers relocated on their own initiative to the neighbouring village of Foho Ailicu in the hamlets of Beikala, Hatu-Udo, Bobe, and Boifu. This group of interlocutors, mainly comprised of families from Riatu, Lesuai and Lesulau hamlets, had marriage affiliations with Foho Ailicu either through the mother's natal family or the wife's natal family. A smaller proportion of families returned to their respective ancestral settlements to re-claim abandoned private food gardens and family plantations of betel nut, coconut and coffee. The remaining settlers in Simpang Tiga cleared land on the bank of the River Ai Asa behind the settlement, while others crossed the river to open gardens on the bank that borders Foho Ailicu village while maintaining a residence in Simpang Tiga (Fig. 5.5).

Similar to the case in Mulia, families in Simpang Tiga move frequently between their current residences, food gardens, and their ancestral settlements. At the commencement of the maize growing season, families typically put in weeks of labour to prepare the field for planting. They spend their nights in the gardens where they built temporary shelters, only to return to their dwellings in Simpang Tiga when the weekly market opened on Wednesdays and Saturdays (Fig. 5.6). I found it difficult to conduct interviews in Simpang Tiga since most houses were unoccupied during the day. Correspondingly, the actual number of people in residence in Simpang Tiga was difficult to establish.

Understanding the negotiation of land and livelihoods in Simpang Tiga and Foho Ailicu requires an understanding of the mythic history and social relations between the multiple resident groups. Practices of land tenure are firmly embedded in the situated socio-political order, overriding state-imposed cartographic and administrative boundaries. Below, I sketch

the extended history of in-migration and the accommodation of successive waves of settlers in Southern Manufahi in order to foreground the intimate connection between kin-based alliances and land access. It is the lack of comparable social linkages that has limited settlers in Mulia from gaining secure access to land and instead reinforced tenuous relations with Tekinomata landowners.

5.2 SOUTHERN MANUFAHI: NINETEENTH TO TWENTIETH CENTURY HISTORICAL MIGRATION

The land area occupied by Daisua, Babulu, Foho Ailicu, Leo Lima and Betano villages, or what I term here as 'Southern Manufahi', has been a historically significant site of migration. Occupied predominately by the ethno-linguistic groups of Mambai in the interior and Tetun-Terik on the coast, the region has been a migration corridor for Bunak speaking groups that have expanded from the western districts of Bobonaro and Ainaro in the last two centuries (cf. Schapper 2011: 178-181). According to oral traditions, the landowning groups were said to have incorporated the arriving Bunak settlers by giving them wives and allocating land in present-day Foho Ailicu village. However, land disputes and communal

Fig. 5.5 Food gardens in Foho Ailicu village, some of which are cultivated by Daisua settlers.

Fig. 5.6 Market Place in Simpang Tiga on a Saturday. The market also operates on Wednesdays.

conflict then ensued between local residents and settlers. It is believed that a customary peace-making contract (*juramentu*) was carried out to prevent further disputes between the residing populations. The land gifted to the Bunak settlers was sanctioned as 'sacred land' (*rai lulik*), a communal resource to be shared with landowners.

Southern Manufahi was furthermore the centre stage of the 1912 uprising against the Portuguese rulers, now famously known across the country as the Manufahi Rebellion (*Funu Manufahi*). Interlocutors stressed that the physical ability to rise up against the Portuguese regime was attributed to these longstanding alliances between the diverse resident groups in this region. After the failed anti-colonial revolt, the allied groups were swiftly re-organised and physical dislocated by the colonialists. Notably, some groups were forced to move to Betano, and remain there to date. During the Indonesian occupation, the populations here were further subject to forced resettlement and re-definition of village and sub-district boundaries. This migration 'genealogy' of Southern Manufahi has consequently formed a backdrop to the shaping of local livelihoods and identities.

Daisua Village: The Customary Domain of Babulu

The village of Daisua is situated within the aforementioned complex landscape of historical migration, alliance and warfare. Historically, Daisua was part of the customary political domain of Babulu. The origin myth of Babulu begins with a rock, a sago palm, and a banyan tree that rose from the ground on the nearby Ramelau Mountain. They transformed into human beings and moved down to the foothills to avoid the cold. The rock came to settle near a sacred spring on the hills of Manufahi and became the founder-ancestor of Babulu. The sago and banyan tree settled to become founder-settlers in the western districts. The

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sacred house of Rai Gulora in present-day Riatu hamlet marks the first ancestral settlement of Babulu domain and continues to be the ritual locus in Daisua village.

When colonial administrative boundaries were introduced in the twentieth century, the Babulu domain became an administrative village. According to oral traditions, the appointed village chief of Babulu was a descendant of the ruling Searema lineage group and was said to have been a cruel man who spent most of his time gambling at cockfights rather than fulfilling his leadership role. His poor leadership caused grievances among some villagers who pleaded with the colonial authorities for a change of leadership. Consequently, the village population was divided into two, and those who were diassatisfied with Babulu's leadership entered the newly created village of Daisua.

Daisua's ruler was drawn from another politically powerful lineage known as Deslau. Both Deslau and Searema held political power but they were ranked subordinate to the lineage of Rai Gulora in ritual authority. The 1952 Portuguese government report that contained the names of indigenous authorities (both *liurai* and *chefe de suco*) shows that Daisua and Babulu were already two administrative villages at that time, led by the respective *chefe de suco* Nai Cosso and *chefe de suco* Joao do Rego (see Sherlock 1983). In 2007, the *chefe de suco* of Daisua was democratically elected from Lai Tua, a closely affiliated lineage of Deslau (refer to Appendix Two for a compiled list of lineage groups in Daisua village).

Foho Ailicu Village: Dato Haat and Cassa Lau Usu Settlers

The first substantial migration into Southern Manufahi occurred in the mid-nineteenth century. A group of Bunak, collectively referred to as Dato Haat, originating from the western district of Bobonaro settled in the area currently known as the village of Foho Ailicu (Fig. 5.7). Dato Haat were said to have been relatively wealthy, so much so that in the construction of a ritual house, the accompanying sacred rites involved precious coral-bead necklaces and gold coins, which symbolised Dato Haat's noble status. The group's wealth was a source of jealousy amongst the local populace who consequently staged a rebellion against Dato Haat, and forced them to take flight from their territory.

Upon reaching Foho Ailicu, which at that point in time came within Babulu's domain, the ruler (*liurai*) of Dato Haat, Hui Bere from Ai Saliu lineage was invited by the *liurai* of Babulu, Mau Kei, to settle in his territory. Dato Haat was incorporated into the local domain through a symbolic process of 'changing names' (*troka naran*) between the two leaders. It is said that Mau Kei married his daughter to a member of Dato Haat to install the 'outsiders' as 'insiders'. Oral traditions also suggest that Mau Kei sacrificed a white buffalo to mark
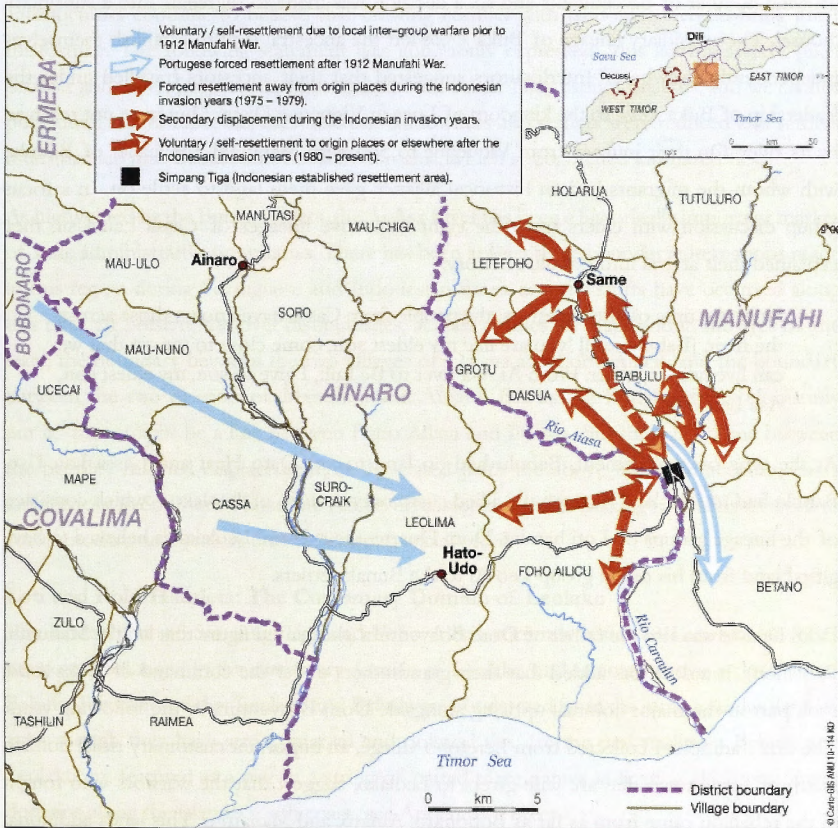
Fig. 5.7 Historical and current migration trends in southern Manufahi.

the gifting of land to Dato Haat, effectively giving Dato Haat autonomy over the land. Interlocutors described this act of land gifting as 'looking after the betel nut and coconut'.[2]

In the late nineteenth century, another group of Bunak known together as Cassa Lau Usu arrived in Babulu territory. Cassa Lau Usu traced their ancestry to an area known as Cassa in Ainaro District (Fig. 5.7). Local accounts suggest that Buka, the senior-most lineage had a growing number of descendants and so, a decision was made to segregate into a subsidiary 'house'. The subsidiary lineage of Buka *kraik* left the ancestral land to establish themselves independently elsewhere.[3] Interlocutors suggested that their ancestors travelled under the leadership of Buka *kraik* to the kingdom of Luca in Viqueque District but were not received by its ruler. On their journey from Viqueque to Southern Manufahi, the leader of Babulu, with whom the migrants had an historical alliance gave them land to settle on. In a focus group discussion with elders from the eight respective lineages of Cassa Lau Usu, they explained their arrival into Babulu territory:

> Since the time of the ancestors, the people from Cassa have known those across the river. [Babulu said] 'you are like my eldest son, come close to me, so that we can live here together. From Ai Asa river to Be Luli, I give to you, my eldest son, Asa Lau Usu'.

At the time of resettlement, Babulu had no land to gift Dato Haat and Cassa Lau Usu. Babulu had to seek land through the allied customary domain of Leolako – which consisted of the lineage groups of Loti hamlet. Dom Duarte, the ruler of Leolako, is believed to have gifted land from his origin group Leo Ai to the Bunak settlers.

Dom Duarte was also the father of Dom Boaventura (the central figure that led the Manufahi Rebellion). Interlocutors added that their grandfathers under the command of Buka *kraik* took part in the major colonial uprising alongside Dom Boaventura in the following years. The oral traditions I collected from Letefoho village, an important customary ritual domain north of Samé town that are wife-givers to Leolako, suggest that the warriors who fought in the rebellion came from as far as Bobonaro, Ainaro, and Manatuto. This lends additional credence to the importance of expansive kin-based networks in historic times.

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2   Traube (1980: 295) has similarly noted the Mambai speaking people in the district of Aileu expressed the branching out of subsidiary groups from the origin group as in search of 'field and palm and betel' (*nama nor naua/bua nor maula* (Mb)).

3   *Leten –kraik* (upper-lower) is a dual classification used to establish social status or position in Timorese societies (cf. Fox 1996a; Therik 2004). In the case of *Buka kraik*, they are ranked subsidiary to *Buka leten* – the original group from which they have branched out.

The gifting of land to the Bunak settlers was said to have been preceded by the customary dispute resolution process of *juramentu*.[4] The agreement was intended to establish peace between landowners and settlers, but it also created a new social order via mutual expectations and reciprocity. *Juramentu* was necessary, according to the chief of Foho Ailicu – a descendant of Casa Lau Usu – to mitigate land conflict which prevailed in the early period of the settlers' arrival. This ancestral sanction retains legitimacy as far as the settlers are concerned. Interlocutors continue to believe that creating conflict with landowners could bring great misfortune. The following statement was commonly expressed, 'this land is sacred, [like] brother and sister, [we] cannot fight against each other. They cannot push us, and we cannot push them'. Over time, disputes between landowners and settlers were reduced and settlers inter-married into Babulu and Leolako domains, which strengthened kin-based ties.

As highlighted by the Bunak settlers, the Ai Asa River has been a historically important marker of state administrative boundaries. There has been at least three boundary alternations made in this region during Portuguese and Indonesian times, and the shifts have occurred along this river. At present, the river distinguishes, at least as lines on maps and in the eyes of the state, the boundary between the two villages of Daisua and Foho Ailicu, and the boundary between the two districts of Manufahi and Ainaro. But as the Bunak settlers eloquently put it, 'there might be a line between Foho Ailicu and Daisua, but there is no line between the people'. Internal displacement, as illustrated from the above historical account, has a long history in Southern Manufahi. However, customary peace-making mechanisms work to accommodate new settlers into the existing social order.

Loti and Roin Hamlets: The Customary Domain of Leolako

The landowners of Simpang Tiga and Foho Ailicu currently reside in Loti hamlet. They previously belonged to the customary domain of Leolako, and as noted above, a close ally of Babulu. It is believed that Leolako and Babulu are not derived from the same founder-settlers, even though they have strong marital and political ties. In one oral tradition, Babulu and Leolako are featured as a pair in a string of paired place names indicating allied customary domains along the island's south coast (see Appendix Three).

The members of Leolako are of Bunak heritage, however, the Bunak dialect spoken by them was quite distinct to that of Dato Haat and Cassa Lau Usu, and their vocabulary had incorporated a larger number of Mambai terms and expressions, indicating that Leolako

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4 In the post-independence period, *juramentu* has been reified in the transitional justice literature as a grassroots mechanism for reconciliation. A similar process known as *nahe biti* (lit. stretching the mat) is revitalised as a customary conflict resolution process (Babo-Soares 2004).

settlers migrated to Southern Manufahi much earlier in time. Their unique linguistic characteristics give credence that their ancestors were 'born from the ground' (i.e. a group of founder-settlers in the area).

After the Manufahi Rebellion, the groups that constituted Leolako were physically separated by the colonial authorities; nine subsidiary groups retreated into the teak forests of Daol in the village of Tutuluro, and three subsidiary groups were removed entirely from their territory to work as labourers on the south coast of Betano. To date, the descendants of these groups have not returned to their original territory. With the division of Leolako, the domain lost its political significance in Southern Manufahi.

During the Indonesian occupation, village and district boundaries were altered again. The descendants of Leolako residing in Tutuluro village were incorporated into Daisua to form a new hamlet known as Roin. The chief of Loti hamlet and the chief of Roin hamlet, both of whom were drawn from the senior lineage groups of Leolako and therefore held customary authority, outwardly expressed their desire to re-constitute Leolako as a socio-political entity in the current times. Specifically, they wanted to re-acquire their seniority status in the local 'order of precedence', which has been greatly suppressed by multiple layers of colonial and post-colonial politico-legal institutions and administration. The chiefs had the grand idea of re-uniting members of Leolako, including those dispersed in Betano to form a new independent administrative village. The chiefs further stressed that they had a unique Bunak identity which separates them from the Mambai residents of Daisua (of the former Babulu domain) and the later arriving Bunak settlers.

In addition, both chiefs emphasised that the domain of Leolako was 'the centre of land' or *rai klaran*. This idea of centredness located Leolako as the origin group or origin source of all local kingdoms of Timor. The chief of Loti conveyed that Timor was originally divided into four cardinal points of 'the male sea' (*tasi mane*), 'the female sea' (*tasi feto*), east (*loro sae*) and west (*loro monu*):

> We divided the land among four *liurai*. Manufahi stretched from Suai Kiik [the male sea] to Ai Kamili Tu'ur in the east. Dom Matheus ruled Viqueque, Dom Eddie ruled Dili [the female sea], the west was ruled by Dom Biboot until Laran Tuka.

In this narrative claim about origins, Leolako is depicted as the highest order of political domain that distributed power and territory to all Timorese societies to rule the four cardinal points of east-west (*loro sa'e-loro monu*) and north-south seas (*tasi mane-tasi feto*).

The folk etymology of Manufahi District further supports local constructs of Leolako as the source or origin point of Timorese societies. As Fox (1996a: 5) suggests, 'fictitious etymologies are also frequently devised and elaborated to support narrative claims about origins'. Manufahi as an Austronesian place name holds great significance for Leolako in tracing its origin and alliance. The place name Manufahi is most commonly linked to a myth involving a chicken (*manu*) that rested on top of a Mek tree with a pig (*fahi*) tied at the trunk of the tree. There are other versions of the myth. For example, during WWII, the Western Allied Forces (1943: 29) based on Timor made the following observations of their time spent in Manufahi:

> This town was heavily bombed and had a considerable amount of action, as it was an outpost of the Australian troops. Samé is often called Manufahi (native 'manu' = poultry, 'fahi' = pigs), as there were plenty of pigs and poultry in the district. Water supply at this posto is good.

Contrary to this popular myth of chickens and pigs, ritual elders claimed that Manufahi is instead derived from the corruption of the terms *maun* (brother) and *fahe* (divide).[5] Maunfahe as opposed to Manufahi is understood to symbolise the dividing of territories to be ruled by an elder brother (*maun*) and his younger brothers (*alin*). The use of dual symbolic classification of elder/younger can be read as a classical Austronesian characteristic to assert seniority and authority in a given social order (Fox 2008, 2009).[6] The sibling imagery further shows a form of growth derived from a source, or an origin point (Fox 1996a: 5-9), which in this case is Leolako.

The local etymology of Manufahi (Maunfahe) can be considered as a discourse that expresses Leolako's precedence in relation to the other groups in Southern Manufahi. The sibling imagery of *maun-fahe* underpins Leolako's worldview that they are the centre and the remaining domains are the periphery. Bringing the discussion back to the contemporary context, the peace contract over land in Foho Ailicu therefore sealed an 'elder-younger' bond (*maun-alin*) between the landowners and incoming settlers by installing the 'outsiders' into Babulu and Leolako domains.

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5 Oral traditions were collected from interviews conducted with a ritual elder (*lian nain*) from Tomonamo hamlet in Letefoho village, the hamlet chief of Loti in Daisua village, and a ritual elder from Leo Ai hamlet in Betano village.

6 Other dual classification may be found in the pairing of inside/outside, centre/periphery, male/female, tip/root, and head/leg to orient individual and group positions in society.

Sacred Land (*Rai Lulik*)

Upon establishing the peace agreement amongst the allied 'brothers', land in Foho Ailicu was deemed 'sacred land' (*rai lulik*). The term *lulik* invokes a sense of spiritual or magical potency associated with the land (McWilliam 2001: 90-93). There are particular social protocols associated with the recognition of spiritually potent land. Foremost, land can be cultivated for an extended period by individuals and families belonging to the respective lineages who had participated in the peace-making process. Perennial plants (*ai-oan*), such as coconut, teak, mango and betel nut could be planted and belonged to the cultivator. The land on which trees are planted is available for cultivation by other individuals, and reverts back to communal land when abandoned. Families who have only accessed cultivation land in Foho Ailicu in recent years related that they planted fruit trees but not trees such as teak since they signified permanence. It suggests that the later waves of settlers may face additional restrictions on land use.

Despite access to agricultural land, interlocutors did not consider they had control over access. They described their status on Foho Ailicu as 'sitting' (*tu'ur*), and some even felt that they were 'not sitting tightly' (*la tu'ur metin*). These ambiguous responses suggest that access may be secured but it may not be fully equivalent to ownership. The chief of Loti supported this idea of inalienability by stating, 'we cannot push, we cannot sell, and even if in the future we do not bear grandchildren who will inherit the land, the land will remain as it is'.

Disputes over 'sacred land' must be resolved openly (*kolia iha oin, labele subar*) amongst the conflicting parties under the guidance of senior elders of the 'houses' without resorting to physical violence. Violence is forbidden, and failure to show mutual respect is believed to result in physical and social retribution from the ancestors who forged the agreement. Interlocutors stated that transgression by way of stealing fruits or taking over land which is already in use can bring misfortune and illness upon the offender, or worse, the repercussions may extend to other members of the lineage. Transgressions are ameliorated with appropriate compensation payments sanctioned by the senior lineage elders.

Customary exchange practices, presented here in the exchange of land based on politico-historical connections and kin affiliations, showcase adaptability and negotiability in accommodating relations beyond the lineage group. The persistence of the peace contract is premised on the belief that individual and group actions are policed by ancestor spirits. In the absence of formal land law, the daily lives of inhabitants in Southern Manufahi draw legitimacy from a historically-established customary framework that informs conditions of land access. More broadly, customary exchange practices constitute an implicit set of moral

and ethical principles that guide different spheres of everyday life including marriage, family and community matters, and natural resource management (McWilliam 2001, 2005, 2008; Meitzner Yoder 2005). A sense of continuity between individual and lineage is also revealed with individual actions transposed onto community well-being.

5.3 MULTIPLE AND OVERLAPPING TIES: LOCAL ORDERS OF PRECEDENCE

As noted in Chapter Two, social differentiation in Austronesian societies is predicated upon the notion of precedence. Social differentiation is established upon unequal and asymmetric relations framed in a temporally recursive order (Fox 1996a, 1996b; Vischer 2009). The arrival of a new group or the birth of a descent group can significantly shift the existing hierarchy of social groups, and accordingly, the series of displacement can modify authority and seniority among groups (Fox 2008). In Southern Manufahi, the order of precedence among resident groups is established upon the narratives of origin and the sequence of settlement. Oral traditions capture origin myths of founder settlers' journeys that act as an important tool in emphasising customary authority and precedence, and simultaneously act to maintain a shared history between landowners and settlers. Babulu's origin myth, which traces their first ancestor's arrival from Ramelau to Rai Gulora, establishes their seniority in the area.[7] In a similar vein, Leolako's origin myth which links to the etymology of Manufahi supported their narrative claim of origin. In contrast, historical accounts reveal the Bunak settlers as later arriving groups that were installed from 'outsiders' to 'insiders' (cf. Fox 2008: 201-203) into the existing structure of precedence by the two origin groups. Marriage, allocation of agricultural land, and the awarding of the symbolic function to 'look after betel nut and coconut' were processes that incorporated the settlers into Babulu and Leolako. By emphasising their contributions to the major colonial uprising alongside Babulu and Leolako, Dato Haat and Cassa Lau Usu found another channel to assert their 'insider' status in the local orders of precedence in order to legitimise their presence in the region.

Local orders of precedence among the groups are established through marriage, inter-lineage alliance, and inter-domain alliance. The Bunak settlers are positioned subordinately to the origin groups of Babulu and Leolako in the sequence of settlement. The relationship between Babulu and Leolako is commonly articulated in the metaphor of uncle-nephew (*tiu-subriyu*), as Leolako is the subordinate wife-taking group. The relationship between Dato Haat, Cassa

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7 This differentiation of houses in terms of social ranking is more than just symbolic; they are 'performed' in the attendance of rituals. Members within the local order of precedence must travel along a very specific and actual path according to seniority during attendance at ritual ceremonies. The path begins by entering the house at the base of the seniority order before one can proceed to the next senior house (see Appendix Four).

Lau Usu and Babulu is described as 'mother-child', which indicates that they are constituted within Babulu's domain. The relationship between Leolako and the later arriving Bunak settlers is likened to a siblingship of 'elder brother-younger brother'. Over generations, there has been high numbers of inter-marriage between the groups, which has created another order of precedence based on intra-lineage relations. In principle, each order of precedence can constrain or reinforce rights over access to customary land in Simpang Tiga and Foho Ailicu.

Marriage ties are important in sealing intra-lineage, inter-lineage, and inter-domain alliances. Regardless of origin group status or settler status, marriage alliance at the household level can position families in favourable ways, particularly if they establish the status of wife-givers (*umane*). Wife-givers are considered the 'source of life' for families in Babulu, and as such they are superior to wife-takers (*fetosaa*).[8] Marriage is a traditional mechanism for incorporating non-kin migrants, as is the common case elsewhere in eastern Indonesia, Melanesia and the Pacific islands (see, for example, Fox 2008; Bainton 2009; Koczberski et al. 2009). In the context of Southern Manufahi's particular history of migration, it is not surprising then that when the populations were internally displaced at the outset of Indonesian occupation, they drew on existing multiple and overlapping social relations to gain shelter and a means of living. The recognition of 'sacred land' in Foho Ailicu illuminated the manners in which spiritually charged memories associated with founder-settler journeys can be expressed, and actively used to legitimate long term access to land (and other natural resources). These memories were re-activated and restored in contemporary times, which enabled the new wave of Daisua settlers to rebuild their livelihoods after displacement.

New Livelihoods: Simpang Tiga and Foho Ailicu

Due to crowded conditions in Simpang Tiga, Daisua settlers organised themselves to relocate into the neighbouring village of Foho Ailicu to open up food gardens and raise livestock (Fig. 5.8 and 5.9). Some families resettled directly in Foho Ailicu from the mountains, while others had historically been accessing agricultural land in Foho Ailicu and returned to those sites. The shortage of land in the origin hamlets has encouraged families to reside away from Daisua since the days of Portuguese rule.

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8   The Bunak groups of Leolako, Dato Haat and Cassa Lau Usu do not engage in bridewealth. Instead, they engage in a symbolic form of exchange to acknowledge female birth labour (*be manas ai tukan*). However, inter-marriage with Babulu requires another exchange payment, or what Bunak interlocutors called 'a symbolic payment to the sacred house'.

There were an estimated 120 families from Daisua in Foho Ailicu – spread out in Hatu Udo, Beikala, Boifu, and Bobe – during the time of research. I was told that in the early years of Indonesian occupation, families from Suai and Alas who had relatives in Foho Ailicu had also resettled there. They left when the security situation improved and abandoned the coconut trees they had planted. According to interlocutors, the trees still belonged to those families and they can always return to harvest the fruit.

On the basis of their seniority and precedence, Daisua settlers (from Babulu domain) drew on marital networks to gain land access, but also turned to inter-lineage and inter-domain alliances between Babulu, Leolako, Dato Haat and Cassa Lau Usu to reinforce and legitimise their rights of access in Simpang Tiga and Foho Ailicu. In most cases, Daisua settlers had a parent or a distant relative linked to Leolako, Dato Haat and Cassa Lau Usu. In the existing orders of precedence, Daisua settlers, on accord of being descendants of Babulu domain, hold wife-giver status to Leolako, and therefore they could access land in Simpang Tiga. In addition, they hold 'origin group' or 'first-settler' status in relation to the Bunak settlers, and as such, they could access 'sacred land' in Foho Ailicu.

A striking example of marriage ties translating into land access is found among families from Riatu hamlet. Displaced to Fatudu during the Indonesian invasion, they were gifted land in Hatu Udo by their uncle Rai Mundu who had married a woman from Cassa Lau Usu. The couple were childless and had in their old age transferred a significant amount of land in Hato Udo to their extended family members who were displaced in the Indonesian period.

The continued legitimacy of *rai lulik* was validated when the village chief of Foho Ailicu accompanied me one day as I went to interview fifteen families from Daisua who had settled along the western river bank of Ai Asa that is within the official village boundary of Foho Ailicu. None of the families interviewed had formally met the village chief in person, nor had they informed the chief of their relocation (however the chief was aware this in-migration). These families had been living in the area for almost a decade, forced to abandon their gardens on the eastern bank due to repeated flooding in the preceding years. Clearly, the families had relied on ancestral efficacy of the peace contract over 'sacred land' as opposed to seeking permission from the village chief of Foho Ailicu. The chief was not displeased, and instead reiterated the point that Foho Ailicu was 'sacred'. He relayed, 'so long as we pay respect to one another, and to the land, the people will continue to live harmoniously'. Although the village chief held political power, he clearly did not have an overriding authority to establish land entitlements over Foho Ailicu where ancestor spirits guide land use. There is a mutual understanding that the land is a commons to be shared.

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In the last decade, there has been another wave of settlers from Daisua forced to relocate due to the flooding of the Ai Asa River. The flooding of the river destroyed food gardens and the nearby homes of families who resided on Simpang Tiga side (Fig. 5.10). About 20 households abandoned their houses and land and moved to rebuild their livelihoods in Foho Ailicu. The steady arrival of new settlers, whether a result of political or environmental displacement, onto land that was gifted to early settlers is another clear motivation for the latter group to emphasis the *lulik* qualities of land. This steady in-migration of settlers from Daisua could give rise to conflicts related to natural resources if pressures for land and livelihoods exceed the respect of pre-established conditions over land use.

As estimated 23 families from Lesuai hamlet resided in Boifu. Five families from the hamlet lived nearby in an area called Bobe. When I interviewed these resettled families, they revealed that the large amount of available land attracted them to move from Simpang Tiga. With the available land, they were able to raise cattle and cultivate two or more garden plots. This was an unexpected response, given that they chose to live in a remote area, almost an hour's walk to the main road, when instead they could have accessed 'modern' facilities had they remained in Simpang Tiga. An interlocutor explained the advantage of residing in Boifu:

> We can grow maize twice a year here and both harvests are good. We can get between 50 to 100 baskets of maize. Previously we had gardens in Lesuai, the maize can only be grown once in the wet season and the yield is good. But the land in Lesuai is already crowded.

Not surprisingly, the main sources of income for families in Boifu were derived from selling maize and livestock. Typically maize (*batar*) takes three months to grow before it is harvested. Slash and burn techniques are widespread in this region, and food gardens are prepared by burning weeds and remnants of vegetation. The ash from the vegetation then becomes a fertiliser for the soil. Sago (*arka*) replaces maize and rice as the staple food crop during the 'hungry' season, which occurs for two to three months after the previous season's harvest of staple food crops have run out and before the new season's crops are fully grown.

Fernando and Lydia

Fernando and his wife Lydia are one of the growing numbers of young married couples who form the second generation of Daisua settlers to have grown up away from their ancestral territories. Fernando was born in Foho Ailicu, whereas Lydia was born in Simpang Tiga; their parents originate from Riatu and Lesuai hamlets. Their parents had been clearing land for garden space in Foho Ailicu since the Portuguese times, since the origin hamlets did not

Fig. 5.8 Garden in Beikala, Foho Ailicu.

Fig. 5.9 Grazing Land in Beikala, Foho Ailicu.

Fig. 5.10 Abandoned garden after the Ai Asa River overflowed its banks in 2006, Simpang Tiga.

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provide sufficient cultivation land. Fernando did not pay off Lydia's bridewealth, and as such, the couple resided with Lydia's family in Simpang Tiga.

Fernando and Lydia had two gardens in Hatu Udo which they rotated in cultivation every three to four years (Fig. 5.11 and 5.12). They practised inter-cropping of maize, peanuts, papaya, beans, and root crops like cassava, and divided the yield between family-consumption and market sale. Lydia, like many women in the rural districts, supplemented the household income by selling banana fritters (*pisang goreng* (I)) to hungry school children in Simpang Tiga. Like other Daisua settlers, they spent most of their days in the gardens, and returned to Simpang Tiga only a few days a week. The couple regularly returned to Riatu and Lesuai to harvest family fruit groves and to participate in ritual exchange.

Fernando explained that when he first cleared land for gardens in Hatu Udo, the land was wild, and there were no markers to indicate the land was occupied. He stated:

> If individuals were to steal the products of the labour of another individual, for example stealing fruits from a garden, you can fall sick, or your family and children can experience bad luck.

Fernando expressed a collective orientation towards accessing 'sacred land' in Hatu Udo by suggesting that individual acts of transgression can compromise the welfare of his family and lineage group. The ancestral sanctions remained legitimate and guided his land use.

Tiu Marcel

I met Tiu Marcel, an outspoken but respected elder from Lesuai hamlet, outside his thatched house in Boifu, deep in the forests of Foho Ailicu. In 1978, Tiu Marcel, his wife and their five children surrendered shortly after the advancing Indonesian forces attacked Lesuai in 1976 and forced its residents down onto the lowlands. While 44 members of his hamlet were imprisoned under suspicion of supporting the FRETILIN resistance, Tiu Marcel plainly stated he had no desire to be part of the resistance movement, and that his priority had been to protect his family. They resided in Simpang Tiga camp for several months before Tiu Marcel made contact with his uncle, a hamlet chief in Foho Ailicu. Married to Tiu Marcels' aunt from Riatu hamlet, his uncle gave Tiu Marcel and other relatives access to land in the Boifu forests. Considering the crowded camp living conditions, Tiu Marcel accepted the offer and relocated.

It is not clear if Tiu Marcel's uncle had offered his unused land willingly, but Tiu Marcel by right of being a member of the wife-giving group (*umane*) was in a favourable position to make these requests from the wife-taking group (*fetosaa*) since marriage ties involve mutual

Fig. 5.11 Fernando's peanut garden in Beikala, Foho Ailicu.

Fig. 5.12 Fernando in his maize garden in Beikala, Foho Ailicu.

exchange, obligation, and reciprocity. In any case, marital ties can readily translate into land entitlements.

At the time, Tiu Marcel and his two sons-in-law shared labour to cultivate one large garden, approximately 1500 square metres (Fig. 5.13). They had grown mature teak trees, coconut, bananas, pineapples, and other staple crops. Since the garden has been worked by the family and was now filled with valuable cash crops and plants, under customary tenure, Tiu Marcel's children and grandchildren were entitled to inherit them.

Tiu Marcel explained that he had betel nut groves back in Lesuai which were looked after by his sister and nephews who returned to permanently reside in Lesuai in the early 1990s. His sons returned annually to harvest the betel nut, which can be read as an attempt to stake a claim on the family's resources despite their long term physical absence.

Return and Reclaiming Land

A substantial wave of families were said to have returned to their ancestral settlements in Daisua village between 1991 and 1996 (Fig. 5.14 and 5.15). The ritual houses in Riatu hamlet, the highest ranked ritual centre in Daisua, were reconstructed and inaugurated before families actually moved. An interlocutor explained:

> The sacred houses [in Riatu] were destroyed by the Indonesian soldiers. [The houses] have been restored before 1999. Prior to that, the sacred objects were brought to Simpang Tiga and we built temporary houses. The Indonesian soldiers did not stop us from continuing our traditional ceremonies, but we were always sick and we had bad dreams. So we brought the sacred objects back to their original place in the hills.

The above statement firstly suggests that the authoritarian Indonesian regime did not ruthlessly undermine all customary practices. Secondly, the statement also implies that return journeys are motivated by a desire to ritually secure physical well-being and prosperity for family members. Families journeyed back to their ancestral settlements to mark life-cycle rituals such as mortuary feasts (*kore metan*), and to restore and re-inaugurate sacred houses (*um been* (Mb)). Rituals are also held to mark the beginning (*kuda batar*) and end (*silo batar*) of maize cultivation, the single most important staple food crop for settlers.

Although settlers spent the bulk of their time and energy tending their gardens in Foho Ailico, their ancestral territory retained affective significance as the ritual centre. The elderly settlers emphasised that they were living in the *to'os* (garden) – in the literal and figurative senses –

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Fig. 5.13 Tiu Marcel's family garden in Boifu, Foho Ailicu.

Fig. 5.14 Daisua hamlet, Daisua.

Fig. 5.15 Riatu hamlet, Daisua.

as opposed to the *moris fatin* or *knua* (birth place). A detailed analysis of the socio-cultural significance of the ancestral settlement and return journeys is undertaken in Chapter Seven.

The ancestral settlements are also a safe refuge from the constant outbreaks of conflict, as opposed to living beside the road which was considered vulnerable to violent attacks. Many interlocutors reportedly fled Simpang Tiga to their respective ancestral settlements for one to two weeks after the 1999 referendum vote to escape potential violence. Similarly, during July and August 2007 in the lead up to Parliamentary elections and the days following the vote, numerous families, especially mothers and younger children went back to the mountains, wary that the election results might cause additional violence.

Tiu Francisco

Tiu Francisco is from originally from Riatu hamlet. Like many families, he has a residence in Simpang Tiga but his gardens are in Hatu Udo. He explained that since the Portuguese era, the people in the region had been accessing land in Foho Ailicu:

> I had a garden in Hato Udo before the Indonesians arrived. My father and his father did the same. There is insufficient land for gardens and the rugged terrain makes keeping animals in the hills difficult. So we have always been coming down here to open gardens and raise livestock. There are still large amounts of land available. We can plant valuable trees and crops, and keep the harvest. People from Babulu are residing on Leolako's land, so there is no conflict.

In his opinion, residing in Simpang Tiga also presented no difficulties for his everyday life. He stated:

> I am accustomed to living next to the road. It is easy for the children's education and to go to Samé. In the past, I used to sell my betel nut in the markets in Suai or Bobonaro. Now I only need to go to Simpang Tiga or Samé to sell vegetables. My livelihood is not difficult here.

Settlers who had children shared these exact sentiments. Simpang Tiga was a central location for education, health care, a market and a communications corridor (with the intersection of roads, and news being exchanged at the weekly market). As Tiu Francisco explained, he only returned to Riatu for important ritual purposes and during harvesting of family groves:

> Only custodians of sacred houses reside permanently in Riatu. My family has some betel nut, coconut and coffee. I go back to harvest sometime but if I don't have time, my relatives can do that. If they sell the harvest, that is if the harvest is abundant, then we will share the money. If the harvest is little, then they can take it and buy sugar and oil for themselves. I live in the garden and only visit Riatu to participate in *adat*.

Fig. 5.16 A betel nut grove in Daisua hamlet, Daisua.

Fig. 5.17 Betel nut laid on mat to sun dry, in Lesuai hamlet, Daisua. This is sold in Simpang Tiga or Samé market.

A sustained return by families to Riatu and Lesuai is observable during cash crop seasons, with households earning a livelihood surplus by picking betel nut and coffee. Families that have betel nut groves are able to earn a surplus income during April to June when the nut is harvested, shelled and dried, before they are threaded on sticks (*fitun*) and sold in Samé or Simpang Tiga market (Fig. 5.16 and 5.17). Depending on the number of trees, families may earn between USD 40 and USD 120 in one season. Coffee has been an important cash crop for subsistence Timorese families in Daisua and Manufahi District since Portuguese times. Coffee season begins in August in Southern Manufahi. At the time of research, interlocutors sold unprocessed coffee cherries to a Japanese NGO at USD 0.15 per kilogram. Similar to Mulia settlers, return journeys to the ancestral domain can be seen as an assertion of people's claim over family land and resources as much as it is about reconnecting with the sacred site of ancestral spirits.

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Over the decades of resettlement, some Daisua families have registered their name in Foho Ailicu village, but others have chosen not to as they see their origins as founded in Daisua village. An interlocutor originally from Lesuai relayed:

> I'm not sure if I will return to live in Lesuai. I have eight children and they all live here. Some are married and have their own families and gardens. We have family inherited betel nut and coffee groves in Lesuai which my younger sister looks after. She sells what she can manage from the groves and the money is used to buy candles, oil and other things for the ritual house. Since there is large open land here, I help my siblings to look after their livestock as they cannot keep them in Lesuai. If I sell a buffalo or pig, my children will bring the money to them.

This statement reflects the situation of Mulia settlers, where families are 'split' between the ancestral settlement and sites of resettlement in order to take best advantage of available resources. Although families are physically dispersed, they remain mutually dependent for their livelihoods. Pursuing multi-local livelihoods, it is common practice for family members who reside in Foho Ailicu to look after cattle owned by relatives who have returned permanently to the ancestral land, and for family members who reside in the ancestral land to maintain fruit groves and plantations for non-returned family members.

Senor Margo

Simpang Tiga has an elementary school and a junior high school located behind the open market pavilion. Both schools were opened in 1990. Senor Margo, the principal of the elementary school, played a key role in the initiative. The schools have expanded access to education for the children in this area.

Senor Margo resided in Samé town to attend school in the early 1970s. In 1975, he had moved to Dili to further his studies but two months into his course, the Indonesians invaded East Timor. He returned to Daisua and hid in the forests for at least a year. Mr Margo was still hiding when the Indonesian troops advanced into Manufahi. He surrendered in 1977 in Hato Udo and was reunited with his family. His mother was from Foho Ailicu and therefore his parents had land in the village. When the general security situation stabilised, he took on a teaching position in Samé junior high school (SMP or *Sekolah Menengah Pertama* (I)) in 1980. He recalled:

> I returned to Dili to finish my course and after graduation in 1986, I moved to Bobonaro to teach. I met my wife there. In 1990 we returned and settled here in Simpang Tiga. Our names are registered in Lesuai. My wife and children have not visited Lesuai. The children are still young and it is a difficult trip. But I regularly buy oil, rice and candles and ask people to pass it to my relatives there.

Although Senor Margo resided in Simpang Tiga, he remained registered in Lesuai. He had no desire to return to live in Lesuai. Senor Margo's wife complained that Lesuai was too far to travel, especially with their newborn baby. To make up for his absence in attending social and ritual gatherings at Lesuai, Senor Margo regularly sent oil, rice, sugar, and other everyday items of convenience through family relatives to Lesuai. His absence was nevertheless met with constant gossip and disapproval by his lineage members.

Mana Isabel

Mana Isabel was a volunteer at the Simpang Tiga health-post. She was a member of the mobile-clinic team that provided basic health services to the surrounding villages. Her role was to distribute free vitamins and medicine to residents in Daisua, particularly those who resided in the remote settlements and had no access to public health amenities. Mana Isabel lived in a sturdy thatched house that turned into a kiosk and small eatery during the Simpang Tiga market days. She was a single mother of a ten year old girl. After surrendering from the mountains, she lived with her parents in Simpang Tiga before she married and moved to the transmigration site of Dotik on the south coast. She and her husband lived there for nearly six years until her husband suffered from a mental illness and they separated. The land was informally transferred to her relatives and she returned with her daughter to Simpang Tiga in 2002. In 2003 the national micro-credit organisation *Moris Rasik* opened a branch office in Samé town, which gave Mana Isabel access to capital to open up her home-based business.

Armed with a bag full of medicines strapped across her chest, Mana Isabel and her fellow volunteers visit households scattered in the hills once every couple of months. She proudly showed me a large map of Daisua that her team had drawn up using coloured pencils (Fig. 5.18). The hand-drawn map captured a great deal of local knowledge of place; it showed footpaths well travelled by locals, river tributaries, fruit groves, rice fields, cemeteries, schools, and clusters of houses where families resided in their distinct ancestral settlements. The map demonstrated a rich visual record of Daisua which has yet to be captured in official maps.

To date, the Timor-Leste state remains noticeably absent in the rural districts. There is therefore much value in recruiting local volunteers to extend state health services to remote areas. Mobile clinics appear to be an effective means to provide families in the hills with access to a minimal form of health service.

A Resurgence of an Old Identity

The increasing number of settlers who have opened up gardens and keep livestock on Foho Ailicu and Simpang Tiga has been met with a resurgence of the Leolako identity. As the population of Daisua grows, families have expanded their livelihoods, encroaching on more

Fig. 5.18 Mana Isabel's hand drawn map of Daisua. The map is used to distribute free medicine in Daisua. Map details the walking trails, residential housing, ritual domains, and cemeteries in the village.

land for cultivation and livestock grazing. Furthermore, an increasing number of settlers are displaced by environmental changes, particularly with the recent trend of the flooding of the Ais Asa River. The landowning groups of Leolako are responding to the encroachment by emphasising their origin and precedence to distinguish themselves from the settlers.

The elders of Loti unequivocally proclaimed that they would petition local authorities to establish an administrative village in their own right in the near future. A ritual elder who was responsible for maintaining the ritual houses of Leolako at their original location remarked:

> The ruler of Leolako has not risen yet. Because of the Manufahi war we are now divided into Betano, Tutuluro, and Daisua. One day when we gather again, we will have our own leader. I am here guarding their birthplace so that when they return, they will know where their original place is. Because our grandfather was captured, we are still divided today.

This was a sentiment shared by elders in Roin, Tutuluro and Betano. They harboured vivid memories of the historical rebellion against the colonial authorities – even though most of them were not yet born during that time and have learned this history through oral narratives. The rebellion clearly marked a pivotal moment in time when Leolako lost its political significance in Southern Manufahi. The hamlet chief of Loti elaborated:

> We have gained independence. But the law is not established properly. The state establishes the same rules for everyone. But custom (*lisan*) also establishes rule, and according to custom, each of us follow our own rules. Now there are so many authority figures and chiefs that no one recognises one another, you

cannot add up. But in the past, there were only four rulers, and we each had our own flag.

Despite gaining national independence, the descendants of Leolako retained a highly localised identity. An elder from Leolako re-stated Leolako's generosity in allocating land to Babulu and the Bunak settlers:

> Babulu did not have land. Our grandfathers gave land to Babulu. They gave them a spring, trees and food. If they cultivate gardens, they must first ask our permission. If they forced us off our land, then they will suffer tremendously since it was our grandfathers who gave them the land.

The recounting of historical events by the landowning groups acts as a discourse of origin and precedence. By stressing that their forefathers were the original landowners at the 'centre of the land' (*rai klaran*) who gave land to the later settlers, Leolako was establishing their seniority and authority over the other resident groups.

By contrast, settlers from Daisua emphasised their marriage ties with landowners, which in the order of precedence, puts them in a superior status as wife-givers. Conversely, Dato Haat and Cassa Lau Usu, as later arriving settlers, featured low in the orders of precedence, and therefore they actively recounted their alliance with Babulu and Leolako to include themselves as 'insiders' in the existing social order. In general, the residing groups were preoccupied with keeping their social relations in the foreground by emphasising different threads of history linked to origin, precedence and alliance.

Comparatively, the complex dynamics of kinship, marriage, and friendship in facilitating resettlement has been discussed in the context of rural-urban migration in Dili during Portuguese times (Ranck 1977). Ranck (1977: 250-251) observed that kin, marriage, and social networks were essential for migrants to adapt successfully to urban life in Dili, and to gain education and employment opportunities. The contemporary articulation of kin and social relations that extend across the rural and urban districts in the post-independence years has not diminished, as illustrated by Guterres (2003, 2007).

The socio-cultural construction of identity and place regulates the distribution of natural resources (Reuter 2006: 18). How these constructions of identity and place change with the expansion of the market economy, natural resource extraction, and development projects have been of increased interest to scholars. Studies in the Southeast Asian, Melanesian and sub-Saharan Africa contexts have shown that relational concepts of land and notions of sociality are renegotiated and redefined in response to changing political and economic

circumstances by landowners and settlers in order to reap the most benefits from the commoditisation of land and other resources (for example, see Li 1996; Juul and Lund 2002; Kirsch 2004; Bainton 2009; Curry and Koczberski 2009; Cramb and Sujang 2011). With the continued pressure on 'sacred land' in Foho Ailicu, practices of sociality in Southern Manufahi will most likely shift, and what are currently expansive and inclusive social alliances may possibly narrow, or worse, close off.

5.4 CONCLUSION

Families in Southern Manufahi continue to turn to customary forms of governance to guide their everyday livelihoods. Customary land tenure arrangements are constructed in relation to the past, where the order of precedence – established on lineage, marital and political ties – strongly influences one's rights of access to land. It is arguable that Dato Haat and Cassa Lau Usu, by virtue of having been allocated land by Babulu and Leolako, allowed Daisua settlers to access land in Foho Ailicu in fear of angering ancestral spirits, but the important point to take note of is that the local order of precedence retains its political legitimacy in Southern Manufahi, and social ties continue to promote interdependence among the different ethno-linguistic groups.

Customary governance is a cornerstone for these rural societies to remain socially resilient and interdependent, to pursue livelihoods when they cannot depend on state assistance. I have focussed on the peace-making practice of *juramentu* and the ancestral sanction of 'sacred land' as complementary practices of customary governance that retain contemporary relevance. As I have noted in the case study of Mulia, the lack of pre-established social networks with Tekinomata landowners has greatly limited the ability of settlers to remain in the area. Making the most of their circumstances of displacement, settlers in Mulia, Simpang Tiga and Foho Ailicu, together with those who have returned to the ancestral land, pursue multi-local livelihoods. The local narratives discussed here, and in the previous chapter, showcase the complexities of contemporary rural Timorese livelihoods that have emerged out of the impacts of colonial territorialisation and conflict-induced displacement, and the particularities of local history and social context.

Chapter Six

Contextualising Internal Displacement and 'Internally Displaced People' in East Timor

Thus far, this thesis has discussed interlocutors' experiences of flight, forced resettlement and strategies to recreate new livelihoods in Mulia and Simpang Tiga (and Foho Ailicu). It is apparent that the lived experiences of displacement in the two field sites are conditioned by local history and intricate webs of social and power relations in the specific localities. This chapter brings together local responses to internal displacement in conversation with how displacement is thought about, written, represented and responded to, at the national level. By doing so, I aim to demonstrate that there is divergence in the representation of internal displacement and internally displaced people across geographical and temporal scales within East Timor. I suggest that this divergence is most evident in the introduction of statutory land laws and the manners in which 'internally displaced persons' are portrayed in official discourses. By highlighting the gap between national conversations of displacement and my empirical observations in the study areas, I seek to contribute to a more nuanced and locally grounded discourse on displacement.

This chapter first attends to how internal displacement is commonly perceived as a product of conflict in East Timor. I turn the focus on state territorialisation processes to suggest that these strategies have equally been a source of internal displacement. I then examine how the dominant understanding of displacement as a product of conflict has influenced the Timor-Leste government in addressing colonial-inherited land issues. Specifically, I discuss the directions taken by the dual processes of land claims registration and formulation of statutory land and property legislation. My view is that if the 'rule of law' is a preferred path taken by the national government to resolve the impacts of conflict and displacement, there must be some understanding of how people are negotiating land access for livelihoods in order to minimise negative social effects. I argue that the national land laws concentrate on land ownership rather than land access; the lack of attention to how people gain access to and control land, overlooks the social relations and power dynamics at work in shaping local livelihoods where displaced people and customary landowners have had to negotiate a new existence as a result of displacement. The previous chapters have shown that occupied land in rural East Timor has economic, social, cultural and political values. As such, formal land titles

alone will unlikely resolve tensions between settlers and landowners completely. Mediation and reparation must also be taken into consideration. Drawing out the main themes from Mulia and Simpang Tiga, I consider what implications statutory laws on land might have for interlocutors and more generally for displaced people in the rural districts – bearing in mind that the formal land law will be extended to the rural areas in the future.

The chapter then shifts focus to outline how 'internally displaced people' are understood at the national and local levels. I argue that internal displacement has largely been understood as a product of conflict. It follows that 'displaced people' figure within national post-conflict narratives as 'victims', 'survivors' and 'heroes' of war. This is discussed in relation to local perceptions, where interlocutors are actively positioning themselves within the broader discourses of 'displaced people'. The selective representations of the dynamics of displacement and 'displaced people' drawn by various national and international actors potentially brings ambiguity to state protection and assistance offered to displaced East Timorese. In seeking to contextualise internal displacement in East Timor, I conclude by asking what might be the best way forward to address displacement impacts in terms of rural land and livelihoods.

6.1 UNDERSTANDING INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT THROUGH TERRITORIALISATION

In general, recent scholarship on land tenure in East Timor takes a 'post-conflict' perspective by highlighting multiple and overlapping land claims, land disputes and social conflict (for example, Fitzpatrick 2002; Meitzner Yoder 2003; Harrington 2007; Unruh 2008). This complex contemporary manifestation of a legacy of foreign occupation is interwoven with internal displacement, but there has been little focus on the nature of the phenomenon. The devastating impacts of the 1999 post-referendum violence, and the most recent social unrest in Dili in 2006, have foregrounded conflict-induced displacement over development-induced displacement. This perception of conflict has in turn, shaped government policy on land and how 'displaced people' are understood. Therefore, I highlight the historical processes of state territorialisation and development interventions to illustrate their equally significant role in producing internal displacement.

'Development' strategies can be considered as a component of the state's portfolio of extending its spatial and administrative powers (Ferguson 1994; Vandergeest 2003). As I have pointed out previously, the modern state seeks to exercise and consolidate its authority within its geographical boundaries through various material and discursive strategies that enable it to control the populace and natural resources, and these can be termed 'territoriality' and

'internal territorialisation' (Vandergeest and Peluso 1995). Individuals and other politico-legal institutions (e.g., customary authority figures) may also engage in their own practices of 'territorialisation' to assert control over land and natural resources, which can come into conflict with state forms of territorialities (Peluso 2005).

The Portuguese and Indonesian administrations applied military violence to pacify the East Timorese but, at the same time, asserted symbolic violence through the establishment of formal regulations on land boundaries, property rights, political administration, and population movement. Establishing spatial control can be considered as a technique of power to reshape the conduct of populations according to the state's vision (Malkki 1992; Stepputat 1994; Vandergeest and Peluso 1995; Peluso 2005). Taking territorialisation as an analytical lens, it can be argued that conflict and state-led development occurred in tandem under the two regimes to produce internal displacement.

State territorialisation practices under both regimes were strongly influenced by global discourses of the time, including those relating to 'western civilisation', 'modernisation', and 'development'. For most of the period of Portuguese presence on Timor, the colonialists only exerted indirect rule through allied indigenous chiefs and rulers. The most reliable evidence of displacement caused by state territoriality goes back to the late nineteenth century when the expansion of colonial military capabilities led to direct and violent encounters with the East Timorese. The rise of colonial capitalism made it necessary to reconfigure the administration of land and labour. It is noteworthy that colonial state plantations generated less revenue than smallholder production, which suggests that the plantations were guided by political rather than economic considerations, enabling colonial power to expand into the rural interior of the island.

As colonial authority expanded through the cash crop economy, the people and landscape became increasingly visible and legible, allowing the state to exert greater control over territory (cf. Scott 1998). These introduced changes generated new forms of conflict and local resistance related to taxation, dispossession, and contestation over political legitimacy, which resulted in both internal and external displacement. Arguably, local resistance was attributed to a certain degree of competing territorialities – between local- and state-claimed territorialities. The colonial authorities responded again by imposing new political institutions, administrative boundaries and regulations on people and land.

After the Second World War, the Portuguese administration attempted forced resettlement and sought to develop the agricultural sector in order to bring the East Timorese closer

to 'civilisation' and 'modernity'. Most of the East Timorese remained scattered in their respective settlements, which made it difficult for agricultural extension programs to run. Commercialised wet rice cultivation, the preferred mode of livelihood under a modernisation approach, had more success in encouraging populations to move closer to the towns as they migrated seasonally to work on the rice fields (Metzner 1977). Due to the rise of nationalisms in the African colonies, and a poorly financed administration, Portuguese territorialisation processes in East Timor came to an abrupt end in 1974. However, the Portuguese left behind a local governance structure which the Indonesian government adapted during their rule.

In a similar fashion, state territorialisation of East Timor flourished under the Indonesian technocratic government. State territorialisation arguably began during the invasion years, when the Indonesian government demarcated the land areas outside of strategic camps as Timorese resistance frontiers. After the violent annexation of the territory, some strategic camps were closed down, while other camps, such as Mulia and Simpang Tiga, transformed into resettlement sites and were provided with schools, clinics, markets and transportation. Enforced resettlement was justified on the moral grounds that local livelihoods will be improved by bringing the population closer to new public amenities. A series of impressive state-driven projects followed in the name of bringing welfare to the populations, notably the opening of new roads and bridges to create economic corridors required for socio-economic prosperity. The state ideology of *Pancasila* accompanied the technical interventions for 'improvement' and permeated all spheres of the local life to instil a sense of 'Indonesian' identity, culture (based on Javanese cultural norms), and attitude for 'development'.

Development under the Indonesian New Order government closely resembled Scott's (1998: 4) notion of 'high modernism'. The regime resolutely built large-scale agricultural projects, such as irrigation dams and transmigration housing, which became the primary vehicle of economic development. East Timorese families were displaced and dispossessed with undertaking of these processes. The New Order government, like its Portuguese predecessors, attempted to reconfigure the conduct of the East Timorese by establishing public services that enabled the East Timorese to experience what is now generally regarded as 'modern' (*modernu*) and 'development' (*desevolvementu*). Overall, the Indonesian territorialisation strategies brought new infrastructure, ideologies and values to the East Timorese. Nevertheless, 'New Order' territorial control was inseparable from the use of violence of an extreme nature. Notably, the 1999 popular consultation vote for national independence took a destructive turn, destroying almost all the physical infrastructure the New Order government had invested in the territory.

As shown here, state territorialisation practices underlie, to a large degree, aspects of internal displacement in East Timor. Violence was implicit and viewed as a necessary part of carrying out 'development' from the perspectives of the Portuguese and Indonesian regimes, hence territorialisation and conflict are overlaid and interconnected in the case of East Timor. Clearly then, conflict-induced displacement and development-induced displacement are less discernible as two distinct phenomena and can mutually implicate on one another. This legacy of displacement presents challenges to the current Timor-Leste government.

A New State, an Old Trajectory

Taking displacement as a process rather than an event that occurs in a specific place and time, the lingering effects of displacement can be seen to have taken on a recursive dimension to produce displacement and conflict in the post-independence years. The imbrication of incomplete Portuguese and Indonesian territorialities over local forms of territorial claims have produced multiple claims to land and property, fresh social tensions and divisions. The 2006 social crisis marked the worst period of violence and instability. Internal displacement and violence took on an 'ethnic' dimension as the populations mobilised 'regional' and colonial 'ethnic' identities built on historical and more contemporary political, economic, social, and generational grievances (Kingsbury and Leach 2007: 9-11).[1] An understanding of the salient and recursive dynamics of displacement would therefore prove useful to preventing similar generational conflict.

In contrast to the previous regimes, the Timor-Leste state is taking a less violent approach to assert its authority. Its management of the internally displaced persons (IDPs) of the 2006 crisis is a case in point. The Timor-Leste state together with international humanitarian assistance managed the 2006 wave of displacement in a timely fashion; the displaced were housed in 65 IDP camps and informally accommodated by their extended family and friends. After three and a half years, all IDP camps were closed down, with residents either returning to their former places of residence or relocated to new sites. The Timor-Leste government implemented a recovery, resettlement and restitution package known as the *Hamutuk Hari'i Futuru*, which provided shelter and housing, social protection, economic assistance and security. I return to discuss this government initiative later. By 2010, the majority of IDPs

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1 Hampered by emergent state institutions, slow establishment of legislations, and a nascent judicial system, the state was not equipped with sufficient formal mechanisms to deal with the grievances inherited from East Timor's violent past. Moreover, there was limited translation of the recent accumulated national wealth derived from oil and gas revenues into social and economic welfare for the 'ordinary' East Timorese. The disenfranchisement of various sections of society aggravated dormant social tensions, and fuelled anger and frustration (Harrington 2007; Scambary 2009). Considering most of the East Timorese population contributed in one way or another to the liberation struggle of their country, the Timor-Leste state was in essence indebted to them (Traube 2007). Hence, a new layer of grievance was added over colonial injustices.

were compensated for loss of property and assisted in the re-integration process. This is a stark contrast to the management of displacement in East Timor's past.

Nevertheless, the state continues to hold similar ideologies to the previous regimes in its approach to 'development'. The historical continuity in viewing East Timor through a 'development' optic is striking. Notably, the National Strategic Development Plan (SDP) for 2011 to 2030 states that East Timor shows visible signs of a perceived development 'gap', with the dominance of a subsistence economy, high rates of illiteracy and mortality, food insecurity and poverty. Thus, development is taken to be 'self-evidently necessary' (Ferguson 1994: xiii). The government envisions opening up large agricultural fields, creating regional development corridors and redefining land into 'sustainable agriculture production zones' and 'forest conservation zones' (SDP 2011:107-116). The Plan also proposes the Millennium Development Goals Suco Program which seeks to build five houses in each hamlet in all 442 villages across the country for 'vulnerable people' (SDP 2011: 107-117). Who these 'vulnerable people' are and how land will be acquired by the state to carry out such a project are, however, not laid out in the Plan.

These proposed development interventions can potentially directly or indirectly result in forced displacement and resettlement. The Timor-Leste government needs to exercise caution that its own post-conflict development agenda does not exacerbate the social consequences triggered by previously implemented government interventions. The national land tenure reform, which can be taken as an example of state 'territorialisation', poses the potential risk of displacement and dispossession. In drawing the links between state territorialisation efforts and displacement, I consider the implications of the proposed Transitional Land Law for displaced Timorese communities in rural East Timor in more detail below.

Post-Conflict National Land Reforms

Post-conflict land issues in East Timor are highly complex in nature. The urgency to resolve land and property disputes in post-conflict Timor-Leste has been prompted by ongoing outbreaks of communal violence after national independence (Gunter 2007; Harrington 2007; Scambary 2009). The Timor-Leste government has therefore looked to land titling to address these matters. The formalisation of land rights is primarily advocated by neoliberal policy makers who take an economic view of land as 'dead capital' (see, for example, De Soto 2000). The mobilisation of 'dead capital' through land titles by demarcating clear and legally enforceable rights is posited to clarify competing interests in land, enable landholders to exercise greater control of land, and free up land for productive investment and collateral loan (De Soto 2000; Hughes 2004). In post-conflict settings, such as in the case of East

Timor, the need for clear and enforceable land rights is further justified on the grounds that they will bring peace, reconciliation, post-war reconstruction, foreign investment, and sustainable livelihoods (Fitzpatrick 2002; Du Plessis 2003; Ita Nia Rai 2005; Unruh 2008).

A growing body of evidence from South Asia, South-east Asia, Africa, and Latin America has shown, on the contrary, that formal land titles do not always guarantee security of tenure, protection from land grabs, poverty alleviation, and gender equity (Lund 2000; Deere and León 2001; Agarwal 2003; Manji 2006; Hall et al. 2011). In post-colonial and post-conflict situations, access to land can be ambiguous given that there are usually coexisting and competing politico-legal and socio-political institutions that can determine land rights, creating a plural legal context (Meitzner Yoder 2003; Unruh 2008; Sikor and Lund 2009; Fitzpatrick and Barnes 2010). Further, the post-conflict/post-independence context is marked by rapid social, economic, and political changes, implying a kaleidoscope of informal land and property transactions that is more fluid than in the colonial past. Together, these studies question the central role reserved for legal solutions. Instead they stress that securing land rights for one group of actors inevitably entails the exclusion of others. They also highlight need to attend to the specific historical, political, institutional, and socio-cultural contexts to better understand how conflict is managed, land access is negotiated, and benefits from the land are distributed – in other words, they stress the need to examine the underlying power relations at work.

Broadly, there are four competing categories of land claims in East Timor: customary tenure, Portuguese titles, Indonesian titles, and Temporary Use Agreements (TUAs) distributed during the transitional period to independence between 1999 and 2002 (Fitzpatrick 2002). In practice, the full typology of land and property transactions and arrangements is most likely more complicated than currently documented, as these claims intersect and overlap with one another, and give rise to different outcomes. In the post-independence era, residues of conflict and colonial territoriality persist in the forms of inter-generational tensions that manifest into land and property disputes. Conversely, land and property conflict can also transform into socio-political differences (Meitzner Yoder 2003; Gunter 2007; Harrington 2007; Scambary 2009). Within this context, the Timor-Leste government seeks to advance formal land titling to resolve colonial-inherited land disputes and social conflict. The proposed land laws are outlined below to analyse their potential effects on rural livelihoods.

Formal Land Registration and Titling

The National Directorate of Land, Property, and Cadastral Services (DNTPSC) of the Ministry for Justice is the main government body responsible for administrating matters of

land and property in East Timor. In 2005, the Directorate launched a land claims register program to clarify land claims and 'strengthen' property rights (Ita Nia Rai 2005). The program is known as *Ita Nia Rai* (Our Land) and is sponsored by USAID (United States Agency for International Development) and other donor partners to record land claims in the urban and peri-urban areas – with the aim to cover rural land in the future.[2]

Over a period of five years, the project has four objectives, namely to strengthen land policy, develop a land administration and information system, resolve land disputes and advocate public awareness (Ita Nia Rai 2005). The recorded land claims will be entered into the National Property Cadastre, which will be used to clarify and formalise individual titles in accordance with the proposed *Transitional Land Law* and *Civil Code*. To what extent *Ita Nia Rai* can successfully record disputed land claims warrants research; considering the recorded claims are publically displayed in newspapers, noticeboards and on the program's website. Considering the political nature of land claims, the prioritisation of transparency over confidentiality may discourage claimants that have safety concerns from registering their interests.

The Timor-Leste government developed a legal basis for determining ownership of land in 2009 with the drafting of the Transitional Land Law. The draft law underwent nation-wide public consultation before it was presented to the national parliament for approval.[3] This move set in motion formal processes to determine land ownership, clarify disputes, and award titles for the registered land claims. *Chapter IV: Special Adverse Possession, Chapter VI: Determination of Ownership of Property, Chapter V: Community Land* and *Chapter VII: Compensation and Reimbursement* in the Transitional Land Law are particularly relevant in addressing land conflict related to displacement and dispossession during the Portuguese and Indonesian eras, or in cases where people have independently sought to occupy abandoned land and property in the post-1999 violence.

Special Adverse Possession

The legal articles under *Special Adverse Possession* enable claimants to obtain property ownership through long-term occupation (Transitional Land Law 2009). Occupation must have started

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2   USAID has supported land reforms and land policy development in other post-conflict nations such as Afghanistan, Cambodia, Guatemala, and Rwanda to name a few.

3   The proposed Transitional Land Law has been criticised by Rede Ba Rai – the national land-based NGO group – for not undergoing thorough public consultation and providing insufficient protection to customary land; women's land rights; and, unfair eviction by landowner or state (Rede Ba Rai 2010a).

peacefully by 31 December 1998 (Article 21(1b)).[4] In cases where claimants have primary previous rights from the Portuguese and Indonesian times, these titles take precedence over claimants in possession of land (Article 27). If there is no primary rights holder, the right of ownership is awarded to the claimant who holds the secondary previous right, and who is the current and peaceful possessor of the property in question (Article 29 (1)). If the case concerns a dispute over competing claims without previous formal titles, Article 33(1) states the right of ownership is awarded to the claimant in possession.

The Law establishes that compensation will be awarded to unsuccessful claimants. This is significant for populations who are unable to meet the special adverse possession requirements but who have been residing away from their original residence for some period. Article 42 states that the successful claimant must compensate the unsuccessful claimant(s). However, Article 43(1) establishes that the state 'may concede, in whole or in part, exemption from the payment referred to in the above article if there is verification of grave financial need'. Article 33(2) adds, 'claimants who have exercised a previous peaceful and long term possession and having proven their dispossession based upon violence or threat, have the right to compensation borne by the State'.

Community Land

The formal regulation of customary land is covered in *Chapter V: Community Land* (Transitional Land Law 2009). To date, the national parliament is still deliberating on this legal provision. Potentially, the legislation of customary land has significant ramifications for both customary landowners and displaced people who occupy customary land. The Law refers to customary land as 'community land'. Article 23(1) states that community land is 'land in areas where a local community organises the use of the land and other natural resources by means of norms of a social and cultural nature'.

Article 24 outlines the definition of local communities that reside on customary land as follows:

> Local communities residing on customary land are defined as 'a grouping of families and individuals living within a territory at the level of a village or smaller, which aims at safeguarding common interests through the protection of housing areas, agricultural areas, whether under cultivation or not, forests, sites

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4 The Transitional Land Law must be read in relation to the rights enshrined in the Constitution of the Democratic Republic of East Timor (2002). Section 54(4) of the Constitution stipulates that only East Timorese citizens have the right to ownership of land. The Constitution lays out additional principles that safeguards land rights, gender equality, citizenship rights, and freedom of movement.

of cultural importance, pasture land, sources of water and areas where there are natural resources, the use of which is shared.

(Article 24)

The above definition of 'local communities' takes an essentialist view of people as engaged in localised livelihoods and wedded to a territory imbued with cultural significance. In addition, local communities are required to perform 'customary norms and practices'. The articles state:

On community land, local communities participate in the management of natural resources; the resolution of conflicts relating to the use of natural resources; the identification and definition of the boundaries of the lands they occupy. Local communities utilise customary norms and practices.

(Articles 25: 1a to 2)

Having noted the diversity of ethno-linguistic groups in East Timor (Chapter Two), the idea of 'customary norms and practices' is inadequate to capture the diversity of cultural practices. With this foregrounding of the legal articles that are most likely to impact on displaced people and their livelihoods, I turn to highlight how interlocutors are actually gaining access to land in the sites of resettlement in order to assess the potential implications of the aforementioned legal provisions.

Local Access to Land

The parochial national focus on land ownership, I argue, places emphasis on ownership over access, contestation over cooperation, and exclusion over inclusion. Inevitably, the range of actors that can reap benefits from the land in question is overlooked, and the power relations that shape the ability to derive those benefits remain obscure (Ribot and Peluso 2003). I consider in this section how displaced people have gained access to land at the resettlement sites under customary land tenure and how settlers assert their claims to land in the ancestral settlements. My contention is that without a proper understanding of social relations that create conduits to land access, statutory land rights can perpetuate systemic inequality in power and resource control. Access is distinguishable from property; the former is not necessarily limited to socially-sanctioned or legalised rights (Ribot and Peluso 2003), whilst the latter can be considered as the 'negotiation of social and political relations' (Strang and Busse 2010: 4). Property requires legitimisation from some form of authority or institution, hence, property can be taken here as one channel of access (Ribot and Peluso 2003; cf.

Blomley 2005; Sikor and Lund 2009). Access may also be gained through capital, labour, technology, knowledge, and more (Ribot and Peluso 2003: 156).

Under Timorese customary tenure systems, access and control of land is reliant on membership to a lineage group or 'house' (*uma kain*), gender, marriage, and social status within customary socio-political domains (Fitzpatrick 2002). 'House' members hold varying degrees of property rights and are able to access family inherited land and may also enjoy use rights over general areas of land belonging to the group for cultivation. Accordingly, one might expect little adherence to the commands of customary authority in the areas of resettlement, where newly arrived displaced people/settlers have no prior socio-political links to customary landowners (Fitzpatrick et al. 2008).

However, inter-group alliances may also translate into land access. Following the order of historical settlement in a particular territory, a local 'order of precedence' is established on a temporal and spatial basis to differentiate social status, authority and seniority (Fox 1996a). The founder-settlers or senior-most origin group usually has the authority over land access. Non-kin settlers may be incorporated into the existing local 'order of precedence' commonly through marriage or establishing an alliance with the origin groups. Building on Fox's work on precedence, Fitzpatrick and Barnes (2010) discussed the limited resilience of customary tenure, or what they term 'relative resilience', in the village of Babulo in Viqueque district, and the social ordering capacity of 'first possession' principles. The authors suggest that in the absence of a legal land framework, the 'first possession' principle has acted to minimise conflict in the rural areas due to its potential maintain social order, but at the same time, the emergence of multiple public authorities have competed for authority, consequently undermining the legitimacy of customary institutions; thus, creating the potential for conflict (Fitzpatrick and Barnes 2010: 234).

For settlers in Mulia and Simpang Tiga, land was allocated by the Indonesian state following the forced dispossession of customary landowners. They have nonetheless managed to subsist in the resettlement sites, without the need for ownership, under customary tenure arrangements. They were able to gain varying degrees of customary use rights that range from usufructuary to inheritable rights. Gaining and maintaining land access are thus distinct concerns from land ownership.

To whom and to what should land policy pay attention to? Whose voices are potentially marginalised in enforcing legal property rights to land? In seeking to answer these questions, I return to my field sites to examine the actual practices of land access and land control. A

focus on *access* rather than *ownership* opens up space to investigate the situated fields of power that form under local historical contingencies and makes visible the diverse and informal nature of land tenure practices ensuing from displacement in rural East Timor.

In both study sites, terms of access operate within, and are negotiated through customary norms and prescriptions. Contestation over ownership only rarely surfaced as a heated issue when overlaid with other individual, household, community frustrations, such as an over extraction of forest material, livestock-damaged crop cultivation, political volatility, and social and economic deprivations.[5]

6.2   ACCESS TO LAND IN RESETTLEMENT SITES

As discussed in Chapter Four, settlers in Mulia have a longstanding tenuous relationship with customary landowners over property rights. The absence of pre-existing kin and affinal relations has cut off settlers' ability to assert property claims over the site under customary tenure. It follows that settlers turned to the Timor-Leste state to legitimise their claim on the basis that they are 'victims of war', they have occupied the land for nearly thirty years, and they have made significant socio-economic improvement to the land. However, their claim has not been given due recognition by the state. Firstly, the Transitional Land Law is limited in applicability in urban and peri-urban areas. Therefore, formal-legal mechanisms over land disputes are not available as yet for rural land. Secondly, a prominent district-level government official is a customary landowner, and the sub-district administration promptly relinquished all administrative responsibility concerning Mulia from Laga to Quelicai Sub-District in 2003, a year after the restoration of national independence. With this official decision, Mulia was reduced to its current status of 'provisional village' (*suku provisório*).

Despite heated contestation over property rights to residential land, settlers nevertheless gained and maintained access to agricultural land. The majority of settlers were engaged in sharecropping arrangements in the rice fields held by customary landowners. The ability

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5   Aside from the inter-village violence between Tekinomata and Mulia, two incidents of land and property disputes were witnessed in the field. Both were intra-family conflicts. The first instance was in Simpang Tiga where a couple had cut and sold teak logs from Daol forest prior to seeking permission from the wider kin group. The female protagonist claimed that the teak was planted by her now deceased father and so she had legitimate claims to log it. Her uncles however insisted that the teak belonged to the 'house' since her father was dead. She was asked to compensate and share the earnings from the sale of timber with 'house' members. The second instance was witnessed in Tekinomata, and involved a family from Bulubai aldeia who resided on the female head of household's cousin's land (related through the maternal line). The family had resided in the area since the Indonesian times. They lived in a cement-walled house with a thatched roof. The family decided to buy a truckload of cement to build a veranda for their house without first asking the woman's cousin for permission. Subsequently, they were publically reprimanded by their cousin for taking advantage of his benevolence. The pile of cement was left outside the house for at least a week, serving to remind others, who were not customary landowners, that they had little control over land and property. The two examples highlight that contestation over land ownership also manifests within families, and also suggest that women may have less negotiating power in asserting customary land rights.

to access land for sharecropping seems, at first, to sit at odds with conflict over property in Mulia. However, different customary use rights apply to residential and agricultural land. Cooperation can thus co-exist alongside contestation; and in this case, cooperation in the rice fields has benefitted both settlers and customary landowners. Because landowners owned large tracts of rice paddies and did not have sufficient labour to bring the fields into production, settlers were a much-needed source of available labour. On the settlers' side, Mulia only provided land sufficient for housing and a small garden, hence, agricultural land was required as a means of livelihood. Cooperation between settlers and customary landowners ensured that both groups gained economic benefits from wet rice cultivation. Additionally, it can be inferred that whilst non-agnates are readily incorporated into the economic realm, they are less likely to be socio-culturally integrated, especially without pre-existing links between the groups.

Sharecroppers were able to gain and maintain access to rice paddies through several mechanisms. For a start, the intra- and inter-lineage dispute over land amongst Tekinomata customary landowners has been to the advantage of Mulia settlers. While rights of access were denied by certain members of the landowning lineages, others readily contracted with settlers to tap into the settlers' labour. Even though customary landowners held property rights to the rice fields, they did not have the labour to actually derive benefits from them.

A clear power imbalance stood between settlers and landowners as settlers contributed most of the labour required for wet rice cultivation and they were obliged to fulfill additional responsibilities in the customary harvest ceremonies. Harvest was then equally shared with the landowner. Even though sharecroppers had control over their own labour, they were clearly in positions of unequal bargaining power in relation to landowners who retained control of access to land. Landowners could deny sharecroppers future rights to cultivate, particularly if the yield is low or if sharecroppers were considered not to be putting in enough effort. Hence, access to land (rice paddy) is maintained without contestation over the ownership of rice paddies. Sharecroppers are moreover entangled in a larger moral landscape/economy that encompassed customary landowners, land spirits and the ancestors that cultivated the land through ritual appeasement. Even though settlers may dismiss customary property claims to Mulia, their participation in sharecropping, and enactment of animist harvest rituals at the behest of landowners can be seen as vesting customary institutions with authority (cf. Sikor and Lund 2009).

Sharecropping presents itself as a durable mode of livelihood as long as land access is maintained through the aforementioned prescriptive rules of engagement. It is nonetheless

common for sharecroppers to work in several fields with other individuals, or to combine non-land based livelihood activities to minimise the risk of loss of land access. But the lack of employment opportunities in rural districts means that non-land based activities in Mulia are limited to selling fish, setting up small kiosks, or turning to the unsustainable extraction of the commons (i.e. quarrying rocks from the river bed and hills).

In comparison to Mulia, settlers in Simpang Tiga faced less disruption to their social lives after displacement. Forcibly resettled in close proximity to their ancestral territories, settlers remained within their familiar physical and social environment, relying on extended kin networks to re-establish livelihoods. Simpang Tiga is customarily claimed by the lineage groups of Leolako with whom settlers had pre-established marriage and political alliances, dating as far back as the nineteenth century. The region of Southern Manufahi has a long history of migration. Ruled by the autochthonous local political domains of Babulu and Leolako, two Bunak speaking groups from the western districts, known as Dato Haat and Cassa Lau Usu, arrived in the nineteenth century and were given property rights on customary land claimed by Leolako. This practice of gifting land was cited as being given 'betel nut and coconut' (*bua no nu'u*), implying autonomy of the occupied land and politico-historical relations in present-day Foho Ailicu village. At the same time, a peace-making contract (*juramentu*) was made between customary landowners and settlers – declaring the land area 'sacred land' (*rai lulik*) – to prevent disputes over land claims.

Therefore, when the new wave of settlers in Simpang Tiga sought agricultural land in Foho Ailicu, pre-existing customary access mechanisms were evoked, adhering to the notion *rai lulik* (sacred land) – a commons to be shared amongst the people allied to Babulu and Leolako through extended kin ties. Land access for household gardens was promptly given by the Bunak settlers to the newer wave of settlers. A second channel of land access ran in parallel to the ancient political alliance through inter-lineage and marriage networks. To elaborate, 'house' groups allied within the political domain of Babulu tended to inter-marry, which gives rise to customary exchange practices including land use rights gained through intra-lineage and inter-lineage membership. These overlapping channels of land access serve to reinforce one another.

The new settlers stated that they were 'sitting tightly' (*tu'ur metin*) on 'sacred land' in Foho Ailicu, which signified a reasonable degree of tenure security. They cited inheritable rights to gardens, trees they have planted and products gained from them. Interlocutors generally fell short of saying they had ownership, revealing that the customary notion of 'sacred land' (*rai lulik*) retained its legitimacy since the peace-making agreement. Despite the gifting of land

to the Bunak settlers, they too refrained from stating that they had ownership rights. Instead, all settlers insisted that the land ultimately belonged to the origin groups of Leolako and that the land was inalienable.

At present, the descendants of the allied groups continue to enjoy cultivation and long-term residence in the sanctioned 'sacred land' (*rai lulik*). Customary landowners and later settlers tended to stress the 'local orders of precedence' based on 'origin group authority' to validate their original customary rights to land, insisting that 'if they (the Bunak settlers) want to push us off the land, we only need to recount our history'. Such a statement demonstrates an unequal power relationship where the customary jurisdiction remained locally legitimate.

At the time of field work, Leolako landowners were strongly asserting a separate local identity from the early and recent waves of settlers. This is a likely result of the increased number of settlers who have opened up gardens, and have settled on a long term basis in Simpang Tiga and Foho Ailicu, which in turn places increased pressure on local land and natural resources. Whether land conflict could ensue in the near future due to increased population and environmental degradation warrants further research.

Property Rights in the Ancestral Settlement

The colonial persistence in resettling the East Timorese away from their small dispersed settlements has in the long term influenced their connection with their places of origin. Following independence, settlers have sought to re-connect and re-claim land and property at their respective ancestral settlements (*knua*) in pragmatic ways. Commonly, at least one or two households within the lineage or 'house' group have returned to permanently reside at the ancestral settlement. These individuals tended to be of an elderly demographic, where they returned to assume the responsibility as custodians of sacred ritual houses (*uma lulik*).

Sacred house custodians attended to the land and natural resources claimed by 'house' members, such as groves of coffee, betel nut and fruit, which have passed down the generations. Otherwise, customary entitlements to inheritable land, plantations, and fields, may revert to other members of the wider kin group. A significant socio-cultural dimension motivates displaced East Timorese to reconnect with their ancestral settlement. Held as a sacred site of origin, the reconstruction of the sacred ritual houses is deemed necessary to secure fertility and prosperity for the 'house' group. Even for those who have chosen not to reside permanently to the origin settlement, once or twice a year they journey back to the *knua* to restore *uma lulik*, and fulfil life cycle rituals and obligatory customary exchanges. When individuals and families are unable to physically return to their *knua*, they engage in the

symbolic gestures of remitting cash income or basic household provisions (e.g. rice, oil, tin fish, and noodles). I examine three aspects of how the ancestral settlement is restored with ritual potency in Chapter Seven.

The absence of formal land law has enabled displaced people to pursue multi-local livelihoods to keep hold of their customary claims at the *knua* whilst living in the resettlement areas. By staking a claim on property there, displaced people can freely move between the sites of resettlement and the ancestral settlement to access additional parcels of land and resources. For interlocutors in Mulia, the lack of property rights to rice fields and the village's continued 'provisional' status has compelled families to pursue multi-local livelihoods. Reluctant to move away from the 'modern' health care, school, market and communication technologies available in Mulia, settlers choose instead to base themselves strategically, returning to cultivate inherited garden plots in the ancestral settlement of Waitame when they are not engaged in sharecropping in Tekinomata (and Seisal). Daisua settlers in Simpang Tiga and Foho Ailicu, in contrast, have not widely diversified their livelihoods to include non-land based activities due to local ecological constraints and local economy. Their pre-established political and marital affinity with landowners and early settlers indicate that they have relatively secure rights of tenure to date with the evocation of the notion of 'sacred land'. Far from abandoning their claims to property at their ancestral settlements, Daisua settlers returned during coffee and betel nut season to obtain a share of the harvest, which becomes an additional source of household income.

6.3 IMPLICATIONS FOR RURAL LIVELIHOODS UNDER STATUTORY LAW

At present, the Transitional Land Law will only be applicable in the urban and peri-urban areas. Nevertheless, the National Strategic Development Plan (SDP 2011: 112) states that 'an on-request title service will be provided for farmers willing to pay for the service' to facilitate 'progressive farmers' undertaking agricultural development. The plan highlights a real possibility that land titles may extend to rural districts in the foreseeable future. I briefly consider the potential impacts formal law might bring to rural populations affected by displacement.

The case study shows that competing claims to land at the local level are asserted through actual possession and symbolic actions (cf. Li 1996; Peluso 2005). Unruh (2008: 104) contends that national land reform and land policies will only succeed by taking account of local land relations that have 'local legitimacy' and 'pervasiveness'. However, the legal system of clarifying land ownership through 'special adverse possession' is limited individualised

claims to either the possession of a previous legal title or the long term physical use and/ or occupation of land, both of which dismiss land claims based on 'origin group authority' and historical precedence. Considering there are a multitude of non-title based claims in rural districts where land is mainly held under customary tenure, legal solutions alone will unlikely be able to clarify competing land claims (Meitzner Yoder 2003). According to the International Crisis Group (ICG 2010), there is little evidence of demand for land titling by local populations.

In the case of Mulia, settlers stand to have a high likelihood of receiving formal land titles based on their long-term occupation under political duress. Settlers in Simpang Tiga similarly have a strong case to gain formal land rights. The 'special adverse possession' principle, however, will prove unfavourable to customary landowners whose claims to land are either based on 'origin group authority' or on a 'local order of precedence'. The undermining of customary authority over land by formal law has the potential to generate a new layer of tension between settlers and landowners, which can potentially impact on rural livelihoods.

Considering the persisting tensions between Mulia and Tekinomata, land titles could have the adverse effect of landowners denying settlers access to the rice fields. In a similar way, Daisua settlers in Simpang Tiga and Foho Ailicu negotiate their access to land based on the customary exchange practice of 'sacred land' that deems land as a commons. Such a conception of land is incompatible with privatised individual land ownership. Recalling that Mulia and Simpang Tiga do not have sufficient arable land for cultivation, negotiating land access through customary landowners is crucial in supporting settlers' livelihoods. Furthermore, the occupied land area in both field sites were historically, and at present time continue to be used by landowners and settlers alike as livestock grazing ground, therefore it is not clear how such land use will be demarcated and enforced in practice.

The regulation of customary land under the terms of 'community land' in the Transitional Land Law (2009) does not take into consideration the long-term impacts of displacement and dispossession. The definition of East Timorese 'local community' in Articles 24 relies heavily on an archetypical conception of rural village life wherein genealogically-linked groups of families share a common place of residence, identity, and engage in localised subsistence modes of production. As a long-term impact of displacement, communities may no longer be situated in a single locale, or share a common sense of belonging.

Although settlers in Mulia and Simpang Tiga have attempted to stake their land claims in both the sites of resettlement and the ancestral land, it must be stressed that multi-local

livelihoods might not be a viable option for all communities. The physical use or occupation of customary land at the ancestral settlement may not be viable for those who have invested economically elsewhere. The younger generation of displaced people born and raised in the resettlement sites expressed ambivalence to the ancestral settlements. As a result of residing away from one's place of origin, difficulty may also arise for displaced people to provide adequate physical evidence necessary for successful claims to community land. I suggest in the next chapter that communities remain emplaced on their ancestral land through the 'affective' qualities of locality, to substitute for the lack of enacting material practices that physically tie them to the ancestral land.

The legal articulation of 'customary norms and practices' similarly shows a lack of consideration for the impacts of displacement and dispossession. The definition of 'customary norms and practices' is generalised and assumes that 'customs' have remained static despite the evident changes made in local realms under foreign incursions, state formation, market penetration, and, in recent years, foreign aid and development. Such a view ignores the intergenerational impacts of displacement; for example, 'traditional' knowledge, land use, and resource management practices may have been lost due to protracted displacement. The codification of 'customary norms' moreover risks cementing inherent societal inequalities, such as the marginalisation of women in patriarchal communities. In summary, the limited understanding of the lived experiences of displacement is a cause of concern for the formulation of legal measures that seek to protect rights, but may inevitably do more harm.

The above sections have sought to conceptualise internal displacement in the East Timor context by casting light on the role of state territorialisation. The overriding narrative of displacement as a product of conflict has prompted the East Timor government to pursue short-sighted legal solutions to the multiple and overlapping claims to land. The section below assesses how displaced people are officially represented in international, national and local narratives. Like the disconnect between official narratives of displacement as a conflict-induced phenomenon, I contend that there is a rift between official views of displaced people and the everyday lives of displaced East Timorese 'on the ground'. To elaborate, my interest in the following section is to investigate the range of representations mobilised to construct knowledge about 'internally displaced persons' or IDPs and the specific goals they seek to achieve; this includes interlocutors' representations of their own situations.

6.4   UNDERSTANDING INTERNALLY DISPLACED EAST TIMORESE

Through the course of writing this thesis, I have struggled to find an accurate term to conceptualise and represent interlocutors. Are they displaced people? IDPs? Settlers?

Occupants? Victims of war? Or, survivors and heroes of occupation? These are some of the ways in which internally displaced East Timorese have been represented in government reports, scholarly texts, and international media. Such representations are difficult to avoid, and as I have discussed in the methodology section (Chapter One), the researcher, in a more privileged and powerful position than the researched, plays an instrumental role in constructing knowledge about our research subjects that can discursively or practically impact their lives (Ley and Mountz 2001: 234-236). That is to say, the knowledge an academic writer produces about his/her interlocutors can have real effects that empower and transform, as much as they can disempower and marginalise. Writing on the representations of Indonesian planters and peasant workers, Dove (1999: 204) posits that representations travel across space, time, sectors (in his case, the Indonesian plantations), and culture, creating what he terms 'rhetorical continuities'. But the consequences of representations are not only discursive; Dove (1999: 221-224) contends that representations are ultimately political in nature and embed power within them.

With this anxiety about representation, I seek to examine the multiple views held about displaced East Timorese and the range of interests specific representations serve. To analyse how displaced East Timorese are represented officially at the national and international levels, I draw on the work of three key actors that have dealt with various aspects of addressing internal displacement nationally. I focus namely on the Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation (CAVR), International Organisation of Migration (IOM Timor-Leste), and two Timor-Leste Government Ministries. My aim is to illustrate what political purpose representations of displaced people in East Timor seek to achieve. I then contrast these views with that of interlocutors' perceptions of themselves and their situations to demonstrate that, despite an overarching victimhood discourse, their actions and self-perceptions prove otherwise. More broadly, I demonstrate, as I have done in the analysis of land access above, that there is a clear disconnect between national views of displacement and local realities.

Official Representations

In international discourses of displaced populations, they are generally cast as 'out of place' and 'uprooted' (Chapter One). Even though each displaced population may face a unique set of events and processes, they are categorised under the catch-all labels of 'refugee', 'exile', 'asylum seeker' and 'IDP' (Malkki 1992). In most instances, displaced people do not contribute to how they are represented in these broader discourses. As such, empirical research can contribute to a more critical assessment and representation of displacement and displaced people (Turton 2003). The innovative and independent responses employed by the displaced to transcend their predicaments are silenced under the broader categories that

predominantly render them passive victims of various forms of domination, oppression, intimidation and coercion in the effort to serve legal (in the case of refugees, asylum seekers, trafficked humans, and exiles) and humanitarian purposes (Turton 2003). Nevertheless, Hartnack's (2009) study of displaced migrant farm workers in Zimbabwe illustrates that displaced people may actively employ the broader representations to their own advantage. Hartnack (2009: 352-353) demonstrates that although the migrant workers' social worlds function within broader discourses that represent them as 'foreigners', 'powerless' and 'poor', they manipulated and optimised these negative discourses to gain material benefits. His study reveals that displaced people are neither a homogenous social group nor victims of their circumstances.

To understand interlocutors, I used the UN Guiding Principles' definition of 'internally displaced persons' (IDPs) as my starting point. As noted in Chapter One, the category 'IDPs' is not a legal status. However, the category does set the standards for international and national humanitarian interventions. The UN's definition of IDPs did not prove particularly useful in representing interlocutors. Interlocutors, for a start, did not refer to themselves as IDPs. This is because the IDP label was only recently introduced in East Timor to manage the large scale internal displacement during the 2006 crisis. As a result, the IDP category was reserved for the 2006 wave of displaced population in Dili by the Timor-Leste government and the international humanitarian community. By contrast, previous waves of internally displaced East Timorese did not figure in the discussions of humanitarian relief and aid, and finding durable solutions for them.

The CAVR

The Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation (CAVR) was mandated by the Timor-Leste government to investigate the truth about human rights violations staged between 1974 and 1999. Through peaceful dialogues and public hearings, the CAVR addressed nine forms of human rights violations and proceeded to record its findings. In 2006, the CAVR published a final report, *Chega!*, which summarised the human rights violations committed during the 1974 civil war, the Indonesian invasion and 24 years of occupation, and outlined recommendations to address the violations. The CAVR estimated between 84,200 to 183,000 East Timorese died as a result of conflict-related causes, along with starvation and disease during the occupation (CAVR 2005b: 72-73). Through truth-seeking, the Commission also assisted in the reintegration of small crime perpetrators and reconciliation within East Timorese communities affected by violence.

1979 Laga, archive photo.
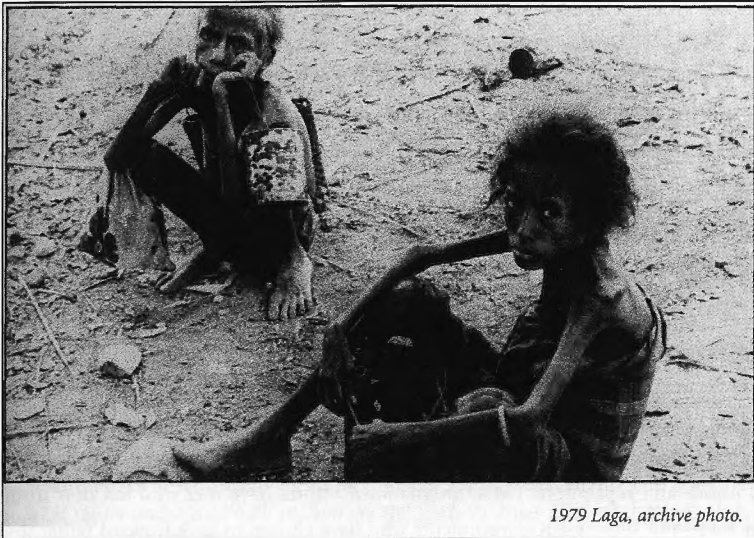
Fig. 6.1 A Common Image of Internally Displaced Persons, Laga Camp in 1979 (Source: CAVR 2005a: 69)

In its investigation of internal displacement, the CAVR published its findings in the report, *Forced Displacement and Famine* (2005a). The publication detailed key events, the stages of displacement, places and strategies linked to the phenomenon as it unfolded during the two and a half decades. The report incorporated testimonies of 'victims' and 'brave survivors', and featured rare photographic images that attest to the magnitude of malnutrition and famine in the detention camps (Fig. 6.1). The Indonesian occupation was described as a dark historical period and 'humanitarian disaster' under which the East Timorese endured great suffering (CAVR 2005a: 5). Hence, the narratives that prevail through the Commission's work are those of 'victims of human rights violations', 'brave survivors' and 'vulnerable ordinary people' (CAVR 2005a, CAVR 2006).

Pursuant to the Commission's mandate, a human rights perspective was drawn to cover the events within the 25 years time period. Most of the testimonies presented to the CAVR on displacement and famine only spanned from 1975 to the early 1980s, which gives the impression that displaced people immediately recovered from the consequences of displacement when the actual causes of displacement ceased. The long term physical, psychological, social, economic and cultural impacts of displacement were neglected. Also, stories of successful adaption and recreation of livelihoods in the long run were inevitably buried under the broader depiction of victimhood and suffering. Furthermore, the testimonies took individual,

rather than group perspectives on responses to displacement and famine, which overlooked the importance of kinship as an economic and social safety net during times of adversities, particularly when the state is culpable for violence and hardship. The findings nevertheless provide comprehensive baseline information on the experiences of displaced East Timorese in the early years of displacement. The CAVR recommended a national healing process by virtue of establishing public memorials and educational programs to remember those who lost their lives and, at the same time, educate future generations of East Timorese through historical records (CAVR 2006).

These representations of 'victims of human rights violations' and 'brave survivors' were rapidly elevated and mobilised in the international humanitarian scene in the dialogues of the UN Security Council, human rights activists and NGOs that sought to highlight 'victim' rights. The compassionate representations of displaced people as victims found in the work of the CAVR and human rights advocates were instrumental in promoting the need for social justice and reparation. These international efforts have met with inaction from the Timor-Leste and Indonesian governments who have chosen to look forward rather than to prosecute perpetrators of crimes committed during the occupation (Amnesty International 2009; ICG 2011).

IOM Timor-Leste

During the 2006 crisis, the IOM (International Organisation for Migration), a key inter-governmental organisation in the field of migration, advised, coordinated, and managed the 2006 crisis displacement in East Timor. Working under the auspice of the Timor-Leste government and partner non-state humanitarian organisations, the IOM managed IDP camps, logistics, humanitarian aid, and the return and reintegration processes of the urban displaced population. The government took on the responsibility of addressing food, water, sanitation, and land security concerns.[6]

The IOM draws on the UN Guiding Principles to define internally displaced people. As discussed in Chapter One, the international definition of 'internally displaced persons' was only formally introduced in 1998. Since the guiding principles are not legal provisions, they serve only to direct the response of national governments and other non-state actors in situations of internal displacement. This relatively late introduction of the IDP concept in the international humanitarian field has meant that East Timorese who live with the impacts of displacement prior to the crisis of 2006 are not officially recognised as IDPs. Accordingly,

6   A community dialogue program called *Simu-Malu* (receive one another) was carried out by the Ministry of Labour and Community Reinsertion in late 2006, however the program did not make substantial progress in reconciliation and was under-staffed and under resourced (ICG 2008).

of displacement prior to the crisis of 2006 are not officially recognised as IDPs. Accordingly, historically displaced East Timorese do not figure in the national and international discussions on IDPs. Official statistics on IDPs, therefore, do not include populations forcibly displaced or relocated during the Indonesian and Portuguese times, even though they may be still living in the sites of resettlement.

In my interviews with a staff member of IOM Timor-Leste, the organisation elaborated that since the Guiding Principles are non-binding, the Timor-Leste state has no legal obligation to recognise, compensate, or find durable solutions for the historical waves of displaced people, regardless of the basis for displacement. Nonetheless, the IOM staff member relayed that historically displaced populations can make an appeal regarding their circumstances under international human rights law:

> ...however, all 'rights' in the GP [guiding principles] are found in other binding conventions of international law, especially human rights law. But regardless of what time frame we are talking about (pre-1975 or post 2002), IDPs do not have legal rights under international law on the basis of their internal displacement, quite apart from rights conferred on the basis of humanity.

This statement suggests that historically displaced East Timorese are eligible to seek some form of reparation for past grievances under human rights law rather than drawing on the IDP status. In comparison, the official state recognition of urban IDPs in the 2006 crisis guaranteed that specific group state security and welfare during displacement and post-displacement phases.

The Timor-Leste Government

The Vice Prime Minister and a host of government ministries and departments were tasked with the responsibility of managing the 2006 wave of displacement. Significantly, the Ministry of Labour and Community Reinsertion (MTRC) and the Ministry of Social Solidarity (MSS) were tasked with overseeing IDP social welfare. During my time in Mulia, I visited the MTRC office in Baucau, which was responsible for providing food and aid supplies to registered urban IDPs that had returned to seek refuge in Baucau district. A MTRC staff member stated their office's role in providing IDP assistance:

> There are 13 camps in Baucau, but our office is responsible for taking care of IDPs in the three districts of Viqueque, Baucau, and Los Palos. However the IDPs are concentrated in Baucau. We provide assistance to IDPs in the camps and those who returned to live with families in villages. Once the IDPs arrive from Dili in the districts, they must register with us in order to receive assistance. One problem we have is the delay in people receiving assistance. Once they have registered with us, their data must be approved by the national office before

we can assist them, which can eat time. Also, sometimes due to rain and other unforeseen circumstances, we cannot reach the IDPs on time.

As evident from the above statement, urban IDPs were provided with food aid relief comparable to those in IDP camps even upon their return to the districts (most likely, these IDPs also received some housing and food assistance from family and friends). Conversely, previous waves of displaced people did not receive such comprehensive assistance. The MTRC staff suggested that historical waves of displaced people were not considered IDPs in the same sense as the 2006 group. He explained:

We assist IDPs and dispersed families of 1999 to reunite children and parents separated between Indonesia and East Timor. The people displaced [inside the country] during the Indonesian times are not the same as IDPs because they have land, shelter, and [livelihood] activities. We also assist those who have met with disasters, such as victims of arson, floods, rain-damaged properties and so forth.

The above statement suggests that historically displaced people are taken to have overcome displacement on the basis that they have the necessary resources for shelter, land and livelihoods to recover what they had lost. This assumption ignores the local situated politics of displacement, such as the contestations and negotiations of land and identity within customary arrangements as faced by interlocutors in Mulia, Simpang Tiga and Foho Ailicu. Additionally, no connection was made between historical and current tensions, or the possibility that those who were forcibly displaced during the Indonesian occupation could have been displaced again by the devastations of the 2006 crisis. This perspective further assumes that only displaced people are vulnerable, and not people who do not move in times of adversity. As Stepputat (1999b: 417) argues, people may not have the means to escape, and instead they may be confined to their places of residence unable to make use of their livelihood assets.

The Ministry of Social Solidarity (MSS) was assigned a similar function to the MTRC to attend to the needs of the 2006 IDPs. A MSS officer explained that they had wider responsibilities than the MTRC which extended beyond IDP assistance. The officer explained:

We provide social assistance to vulnerable people in society. They include veterans, widows, orphans, people with disabilities, the elderly, the poor, and more. We are developing programs that can assist such vulnerable people through the provision of food and cash. You can also include IDPs and those dislocated during the Indonesian times inside this framework.

From this statement, it can be inferred that the Timor-Leste state has plans to expand its social assistance programs to 'vulnerable' citizens at large, notwithstanding if their status as IDPs. Indeed, a main concern that arose during the operation of 2006 IDP camps was the privileges and entitlements given to urban IDPs over other 'vulnerable' people in society (ICG 2008). Hence, the expansion of state benefits to a wider section of society is most likely to ameliorate potential social tension that may ensue between IDPs and non-IDPs.

In my interview with the staff member of IOM Timor-Leste, he also expressed concern that aid dependency could prevail if the government continued to provide shelter and food to the IDPs. He relayed:

> It might be difficult [for IDPs] to re-engage in productive activities such as agriculture when food supply was secured. Economic recovery for IDPs would be slow considering a business culture is nascent in the country and the private sector is dominated by foreigners.

The IOM officer similarly suggested that there was a strong likelihood for aid dependency amongst IDPs. The officer further stressed a balance needed to be struck by giving similar assistance to non-IDPs who were equally vulnerable in securing rights to land, housing, livelihoods and personal safety.

The Timor-Leste's government provided aid to IDPs from 2006 to 2010. The IDP camps were officially closed in 2010. Following, the government developed a comprehensive recovery package known as *Hamutuk Hari'i Futuru* (Together Building the Future).[7] The strategy is comprised of five pillars: shelter and housing; social protection; security and stability; socio-economic development; and confidence building and reconciliation (GovTL 2007). IOM Timor-Leste was greatly involved in the reintegration process of urban IDPs. The organisation held mediation dialogues between IDPs and the government, and between the displaced and receiving communities. The organisation, furthermore, conducted post-return evaluations to monitor the success of reintegration, resettlement and repatriation. Comparatively, the previous waves of displaced people were not only denied international humanitarian aid in the initial displacement phase, but the previous regimes also tended to be directly responsible for creating insecurity for the East Timorese.

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7   The Crisis Group reported that the IDP camps accommodated young males from the districts who were not IDPs but had arrived in Dili after the general violence dissipated. Dili, the country's administrative capital and the heart of the aid and development industry, attracted rural youths in search of education and employment (ICG 2008: 8). This new migration trend into the urban camps was reliant on the same mechanisms of family and relations of kin that urban IDPs turned to when they sought refuge in the districts.

The potential for the government's compensation and recovery package to impinge on the sense of injustice and marginalisation held by victims of human rights violations was minimised with the extension of the national strategy to include all vulnerable groups and individuals in the country (Amnesty International 2009: 11). Specifically the MSS implemented a Conditional Cash Transfers program (*Bolsa Mãe*) in 2010 that awarded small cash incentives to identified vulnerable people. This gesture indicated that the government recognised, firstly, that the ongoing cycle of violence and conflict was contributed to by societal inequalities, including continuities from colonialism, and, secondly, that the bulk of the Timorese population were affected by the crisis in both direct and indirect ways, regardless if they were IDPs or not.

Local Representations

The conceptualisation of internally displaced people at the local level took different forms to the official narratives. For a start, interlocutors in both field sites expressed ambiguity over the discursive representations of them as victims of war and conflict. Interlocutors were indifferent to the usage of the terms 'refugees' (*refujiado* (P) or *pengunsi* (I)), 'IDPs' and 'dislocated people' (*ema dislokado*). Following on from this, interlocutors did not perceive themselves to be 'IDPs', and in the instances when they did represent themselves as 'IDPs', they used it to their benefit and sought to distinguish themselves from the 2006 urban IDPs.

There is no equivalent Tetun term for 'displacement' and, as such, interlocutors tended to draw on the terms *duni* (push or coerce), *obrigar* (a direct Portuguese loan word for 'obligate') or *dislokado* (from the English loan word 'dislocation') to describe the forceful nature of their movement. Interlocutors were, therefore, encouraged to describe in their own terms how they perceived 'displacement'. All interlocutors included circumstances that involved conflict in their definitions. Displacement was described as situations characterised by difficult livelihoods (*moris susar*), as the affected people have no capacity to return to their ancestral settlement (*knua*) to reside on their own land and, in turn, are unable to live with security (*hela hakmatek*) or have the ability to grow their own food. Other situations recounted by interlocutors to define displacement included events which caused people to lose their possessions, their houses (due to fire or vandalism), and which forced people to live in places especially for displaced people (*fatin refujiado*). One interlocutor went as far as to include domestic violence as a potential cause of displacement, citing, 'displacement could also be due to conflict within a family, which may force family members to leave the home in search of a safer place of residence'.

Displaced people were referred to by interlocutors interchangeably as *refujiado* (P), *pengunsi* (I), IDPs, and *ema dislokado* (evolved from the English words for dislocated people) regardless of whether individuals and groups were displaced within or beyond national boundaries. These four terms are not distinguished from one another in the East Timorese lexicon, which suggests that the terms are contextualised differently and have taken on local social meanings (cf. Brun 2003a). Moreover, these terms to describe displaced people are constructed on Portuguese, English and Indonesian words, which suggests that the attention on internal displacement and internally displaced people came only to the fore quite recently. Most likely, the attention on internally displaced people was gained as a result of the 1999 violence and 2006 crisis, which politicised internal displacement and people affected by it.

Based on the above definitions, interlocutors were asked if they perceived themselves as *refujiado*, *pengunsi*, IDPs, or *ema dislokado*. There were mixed responses and long pauses of reflection. An interlocutor in Mulia, whose family is originally from Abafala village said:

> I do feel like a refugee living in Mulia because we were moved here as an impact of war. Also, we are living on other people's land, even though we still have our own land in Quelicai. I feel like I am living semi-permanently (*semi-permanenti*) here. If the land owners and state demand us to leave, we will have to leave. Mulia is not our land.

The interlocutor revealed insecurity over land, and was conscious of the fact that the residents in Mulia did not have legal rights or customary ownership to land. The majority of interlocutors hoped that the state would recognise Mulia as an independent administrative village in due time (Chapter Four). Another interlocutor, whose family is originally from Waitame village, held a contrasting view of the situation in Mulia. The interlocutor elaborates:

> Refugees are people who live in difficult conditions. We are not refugees because we have sufficient food…[and] land to live on. We belong here [Mulia]. There is electricity, we live next to the road, and we are close to towns. We are all content living here. It is bustling (*rame*) in Mulia in terms of being close to towns.

This interlocutor's opinion aligns closer to the view held by the staff member of MTRC Baucau, arguing that the availability of land and livelihood resources at the site of resettlement is evidence that displacement had ceased. Read in an alternative way, the statement suggests emplacement in Mulia, with interlocutors acknowledging the benefits of moving closer to roads and government services.

Interlocutors ubiquitously stated that they were *ema Mulia* (Mulia people), which further implied that they had formed a new common identity through their long-term residence in

the resettlement village. An interlocutor explained, 'I feel I am a "Mulia person" because my family and friends from Quelicai have died on this land. They are buried on this land. The food garden here was grown from my own hands'. Another interlocutor added:

> We are one community. Our children have grown up in Mulia. We do not distinguish ourselves as coming from [the origin villages of] Gurusa, Waitame, Afasa, or Abafala. We may become divided [into our own origin villages] if there are some problems with our neighbours, but overall, we work together. All the families here, for instance, contributed money and labour to restore the village church.

The above responses reveal both vulnerability and resilience. Although they did not have legal or customary property rights to Mulia, they asserted their legitimate claims to land through the improvements done to land, a collective identity, and long-term occupation of the area, such that family members have died and are buried there.

Customary landowners of Tekinomata held their own views of the settlers. They were steadfastly reluctant to give up their customary claims of Mulia. A customary landowner remarked, 'each community in East Timor has their own culture. They [those residing in Mulia] should return to Quelicai where their culture lies'. Moreover, customary landowners felt that since the drastic circumstances of war and occupation have ceased, it was overdue that the settlers returned to their origin settlements. A landowner stated:

> Quelicai people living in Mulia are not refugees because it was the Indonesians who forced them to move down. Now that the Indonesians have left, there is nothing preventing them from returning to their land.

Both statements expressed an 'othering' of the settlers on the basis of culture and political allegiance to the nation. As I have elaborated in Chapter Four, there have been a limited number of inter-marriages between the two communities, which implies that landowners and settlers remained culturally disconnected and that they were not engaged in marital exchanges and reciprocity. The landowners' mistrust of settlers was further exacerbated by the two communities ascribing to distinct political identities. Settlers were believed to have supported the Indonesian regime because several militia members resided in Mulia. Landowners on the other hand were involved as FALINTIL combatants as well as members of the clandestine movement (Chapter Four).

The social relations in Simpang Tiga and Foho Ailicu were of a less hostile nature in comparison to Mulia since the customary landowners have a long history of accommodating kin and those beyond. Once more, interlocutors' perceptions of displacement and internally

displaced people were mixed in Simpang Tiga and Foho Ailicu. An elderly interlocutor from Lesuai *aldeia* in Daisua village who had been accessing cultivation land in Foho Ailicu since the Portuguese era relayed:

> We are, without a doubt, dislocated people. The Indonesian military pushed us up and down, to Carblaki, Betano, Samé, Simpang Tiga, Ainaro and elsewhere. We had no choice but to move. But I have always cultivated gardens in Boifu [in Foho Ailicu]. Therefore, I returned here after the military gave permission for people to leave the camps. Some of my relatives who previously lived in Daisua were confined to Simpang Tiga and they had to find cultivation land because we could not return to Lesuai.

This sentiment was shared among interlocutors in Simpang Tiga and Foho Ailicu who felt that they had suffered as a result of the ill consequences of displacement and resettlement. On the other hand, they had legitimate customary rights to 'sacred land' (inheritable and usufructuary rights) through family and extended kin. While some interlocutors had accessed customary land for gardens and livestock grazing in Foho Ailicu prior to the occupation, however, others did not, and they relied solely on cultivation land in their respective ancestral settlements. Hence, this latter group drew on existing kin and marital relations to open up gardens during and after the occupation.

The general consensus was that long-term land access in Foho Ailicu was attainable so long as the land remained cultivated. If the land is abandoned, all planted trees belonged to the original tree planters and were inheritable by their descendants. Having relatively secure access to customary land translated into a degree of apprehension in determining whether they were displaced or not. One interlocutor tried to articulate the difficulty in establishing their social status by expressing the following:

> Daisua and Foho Ailicu may be two villages, and Manufahi and Ainaro may be two districts, but amongst the population, there is no such boundary. We are always coming and going. Our ancestors carried out a peace-making contract (*juramentu*) which stipulates that we cannot have disputes over land. This land is sacred and the people who use it cannot push one another off it, otherwise we will face severe consequences.

In contrast to customary landowners in Tekinomata, interlocutors here drew attention to the administrative boundaries of the village and district to emphasise that they shared historical, marital and political links with the other resident groups in Southern Manufahi. This group of interlocutors feared spiritual retribution if they tried to assert their claims over land ownership in Foho Ailicu village. The 'sacred land' in Foho Ailicu is inalienable and a commons to be shared between landowners, early Bunak settlers and later Daisua settlers.

There was a less obvious cultural and political distinction between the groups. However, as I have discussed, one group of customary landowners from the customary domain of Leolako (in present-day Loti hamlet), are beginning to assert their own political and ancestral history in response to the recent increase of new settlers clearing cultivation land in Foho Ailicu and Simpang Tiga.

Clearly, interlocutors in both field sites grounded their representation of displacement in their relationship with customary landowners. While interlocutors generally agreed that they were displaced and resettled as a result of conflict, their ongoing social status at their respective places of resettlement was subjective and ambivalent, implying that displacement is conceived of differently to the official representations of the phenomenon and the people affected by it.

Representations of Resilience through 'Othering'

Interlocutors in both field sites drew on representations of resilience and independence at different settings. They saw themselves as different to the 2006 wave of urban IDPs but in the instances interlocutors referred to the urban IDPs, it was to demonstrate their self-reliance as compared to their urban counterparts. Most interlocutors were skeptical of the plight of urban IDPs and questioned if their helplessness was genuine. A common statement from interlocutors was:

> The IDPs are lazy, that is why they remain in the camps. They get money, rice and shelter from the government. We are different, we had to rely on ourselves. The Indonesians did not provide us with any assistance. We searched for food in the forest, we built our own houses, and we cleared the land with our own hands.

Overall, interlocutors had little sympathy towards the urban IDPs. They suggested the IDPs were homeless because they had actively chosen to leave their family in the 'hills' (*foho*) in the first place to migrate to the 'city' (*cidade*). Consequently, urban IDPs were left to rely on state-handouts in the aftermath of displacement. An interlocutor rationalised this perception of urban IDPs in more depth:

> They are dependent on the state for free materials. We are not the same. We did not receive any assistance. If they wanted to, they can always return to reside with their families. They will immediately get land and assistance from their families. However, they are reluctant because they can get assistance from the state and NGOs. So, it is not because they cannot turn to their families for help. They are simply reluctant to return to the hills.

The above viewpoint of one group of displaced people on another group of displaced people does not escape the stereotypes of IDPs as dependent and reliant on external help. Interlocutors strongly held the view that urban IDPs could turn to their family and relatives for help but they have actively chosen not to do so in order to reap the benefits of state and NGO hand-outs.

It is noteworthy that out of nearly 150,000 people displaced in the 2006 crisis, between 74,000 to 80,000 people, or approximately 50 percent, were thought to have sought refuge in the districts with their kin groups (IDMC 2011b). This high return rate indicates the continued strength of kin and social networks, and the re-activation of customary modes of exchange and reciprocity during times of adversities – akin to the situation in Simpang Tiga and Foho Ailicu. As I observed in the field, returned families tended to register themselves as IDPs even though they were living back with their extended family. Nevertheless, the food ration was commonly shared amongst family and relatives. I also found tarpaulin sheets and UN-labelled tents erected next to thatch huts throughout the districts, indicating similar stories of mutual assistance.

Arguably, urban IDPs exercised a different form of human agency in the camps as compared to my interlocutors. Despite the perception of dependency, IDPs seized the most of the resources at hand to overcome the loss of their property and livelihoods. As the International Crisis Group (ICG 2008: 8-9) points out, there were clear advantages linked to the IDP label. For instance, camp residents received tarpaulin and tents, a monthly food ration of rice (8 kg per person), oil, and other basic provisions such as clean water and health services. Over a period of time, IDPs were observed reselling their food provisions on the black market to earn some income, particularly taking advantage of the high prices of rice and oil in 2007 and 2008 when food prices soared due to the internal unrest and global food crisis.

Regardless of their self- and collective-representations, interlocutors in both field sites showcased resilience and independence to overcome the social consequences of displacement. They deployed varying strategies to counter the constraints of land shortage for cultivation in Mulia and Simpang Tiga. Turning to customary tenure arrangements, interlocutors successfully gained access to land to work as sharecroppers in wet rice cultivation or opened up household gardens to make ends meet. Interlocutors who returned to their ancestral settlements can equally be argued to exercise a form of agency, opting to leave behind 'modern' public infrastructure and village amenities created by the Indonesian state, to re-establish themselves in the remote, inaccessible, and poorly serviced ancestral land. These valiant efforts by interlocutors to transcend displacement require recognition as much as

the suffering they endured. Interlocutors have to navigate their livelihoods not only through the national discourses of 'displaced people', but also the particularities of place where they are situated. From the above discussion, it is clear that addressing internal displacement in rural East Timor requires more than resolving land conflict and providing short-term social assistance. There is a need for longer term solutions that have some 'grounded' understanding of local negotiations of land and livelihoods.

6.5 RESTITUTION, REPARATION AND RECOGNITION?

The diversity of land claims, land use and contracts under customary tenure warrants more scholarly attention. The case studies presented in this thesis reveal two similar but different scenarios that have ensued from colonial displacement and dispossession. Settlers in both areas have managed to gain and maintain access under customary tenure to secure livelihoods in the resettlement sites; it follows that concerns over land ownership are distinct to gaining use rights for livelihoods.

As discussed in Chapters Two, Four and Five, marriage and kin-based alliances form the main channels that facilitate land access under customary tenure. In considering policy making for customary land, Fitzpatrick et al. (2008) suggest that customary systems provide adequate tenure security in rural East Timor. Indeed, studies have noted that the East Timorese prefer to turn to respected elders and local authorities to mediate less serious social disputes, while they resort to non-customary mechanisms for more serious social grievances (Meitzner Yoder 2003; Asian Foundation 2008). Customary leaders and authorities also retain local legitimacy amongst the East Timorese (McWilliam 2008; Cummins 2010). While legal pluralism may pose uncertainty over the determination of land rights, customary institutions can be complementary to formal-legal institutions in managing local expectations and sensibilities by providing an alternative forum for land dispute mediation (Meitzner Yoder 2003: 18, 24). Conversely, there are complicated dispute cases that traditional mediation cannot solve, which would be better referred to formal authorities for a resolution.

Case by case mediation might be the best option to take into account site-specific circumstances (Fitzpatrick 2002: 202). Following Fitzpatrick et al. (2008: 5-6), mediation through non-customary mechanisms is best recommended only in cases where 'origin group authority' based on historical precedence is not strong, such as the case of Mulia where customary land is occupied by non-kin settlers. In Mulia, customary landowners and settlers draw on different narratives to assert their ownership claims, each dismissing the other's way of 'seeing' property (cf. Peluso 2005).

Close interaction between formal and customary realms of authority is already at work in terms of local conflict resolutions over land. In most cases, complicated disputes which are not readily settled through customary mechanisms at the family, lineage or village levels are brought to the district National Directorate of Land and Property officers, before progressing to higher levels of the formal judicial system (Meitzner Yoder 2003: 22-23). Traditional authority figures tend to work closely with formal government institutions as intermediaries, co-mediators, and witnesses to find the most appropriate settlement for disputants.

Du Plessis (2003) sensibly notes that any proposed land restitution program will unlikely resolve all land, property, and housing disputes in East Timor. Du Plessis suggests:

> The legacy of land dispossession, forced relocation, and deliberate destruction of housing is likely to remain with the people of East Timor for a very long time. It will simply not be possible to repay every debt, settle every dispute or make good every loss.

> Du Plessis (2003: 162)

Du Plessis contends that the issue at hand is not so much technical in nature, but rather how the country will succeed in transcending the legacy of colonialism and conflict in the long term, such that reconciliation, reconstruction and development are not hindered. In addition to formal land restitution, Du Plessis (2003: 162-164) recommends public acknowledgment, apology and compensation by the governments responsible for historical dispossession of land and property.

To date, the recommendations put forward by the CAVR and CTF have not been followed by political action, and most war crime offenders have not faced prosecution in Indonesia, East Timor or through an international tribunal (Amnesty International 2009; ICG 2011). Despite the symbolic recognition given to those who endured historical injustices, the government's decision to develop strategically-important diplomatic relations with Indonesia has come at the expense of not pursuing the prosecution of war criminals. Alternatively, it could be asked if the Timor-Leste government should bear complete responsibility for reparation and restitution when the Indonesian government is culpable. The former President of Timor-Leste, Jose Ramos Horta stated his belief that establishing truth in itself is an aspect of justice:

> Will justice really be done? Will those who did evil, who killed, who carried weapons in order to take people's lives, be punished? Our position, the position of the President, the Government and my personal position is this: firstly, the Government is giving strong support to this process by means of the CAVR,

> because before we think about justice we must think about truth. Truth is also an act of justice. At least the people of the world can hear what happened over those 24 years.
>
> CAVR (2005a: 66)

The Timor-Leste government's choice of reconciliation by virtue of truth-seeking over reparation, retributive justice and punishment has proved unpopular amongst the East Timorese (Traube 2007; Amnesty International 2009; Kent 2010). Describing feelings of injustice in Aileu district, Traube (2007) contends that Mambai conceptions of local justice takes the form of confessional and redistributive justice, where public declarations of crimes should ideally be followed by some form of customary exchange or compensation. The prevailing impunity has left the majority of the 'ordinary East Timorese' (*povu*) who suffered for national liberation marginalised. Hence, in the minds of the people, the state remains indebted to them (Traube 2007).

On a similar note, Kent (2010) posits that international transitional justice mechanisms only had limited success in East Timor as a result of diverging narratives of justice circulating in the international, national and local spheres. She adds that government officials and elites are opposed to reparations on the grounds that it could foster 'victimhood' narratives over 'heroism' exercised through the resistance struggle for independence (Kent 2010: 195). The government has instead chosen to view the CAVR's findings as a documentation of history, and has focused on investing in socio-economic development for the population (Kent 2010: 196).

The Timor-Leste government's preference to acknowledge 'heroism' and 'resistance power' over 'victimhood' is most notable in the official recognition of former armed combatants and their families as war veterans (*veteranos* (P)). The veterans were honoured with medals and are given monthly pensions for their contributions to the resistance. Referring to this official recognition of armed guerrilla fighters, Harris Rimmer (2007) makes a bold suggestion to symbolically recognise children born of war and their mothers as wartime 'veterans'. She proposes that state recognition can promote healing for the affected women and children by bringing to the fore their courage in surviving the ordeals of sexual violence and war crimes, and potentially lead to reconciliation in the communities where the affected women and children are ostracised. I have shown above that displaced people have exercised considerable agency in their manoeuvring within the broader constraints at hand. Perhaps, turning again to the 'heroism' narrative, historically displaced people can be embraced as 'veterans' of the occupation period.

6.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter has considered how internal displacement is thought about, written, and represented, and responded to, in East Timor. Internal displacement is a salient phenomenon resulting from the overlap of conflict and state territoriality. I have suggested that the character of internal displacement has transformed in the post-independence years with social tensions inherited from colonialism fuelling generational, social and economic differences between different sections of society. The intensified nature of displacement in the aftermath of the 2006 crisis underscored the urgency to address one aspect of displacement, multiple and overlapping claims to land and property.

The formulation of the Transitional Land Law heralds the first step towards the legal enforcement of land rights and titles. Nonetheless, land matters in East Timor are not limited to competing land ownership claims. A focus on *access* rather than *ownership* opens up space to investigate situated fields of power that form under historical contingencies, and further makes visible the diverse and informal nature of land tenure practices in rural East Timor. In both study sites, terms of access operate within, and are negotiated through customary norms and prescriptions.

The lived experiences of 'displaced people' in rural East Timor are certainly distinct to the experiences of other displaced populations. At the same, their experiences of hardship, struggles over land and livelihoods are indicative of the diversity of experiences across East Timor and further afield. It is possible to make inferences from their stories that categories such as *conflict-induced* displacement and 'IDPs' are too simplistic to capture the diversity and complexity of experiences and responses to displacement in the long term.

Representations of displaced people are not only disconnected between the different levels, but varied social meanings are attached to different waves of displaced people. Interlocutors' self-representations elucidate they concurrently espouse one or more of the aforementioned subjectivities. This underlines the necessity of reconsidering the usefulness of the broad category of 'internally displaced people' in favour of a grounded discourse based on the actual lived experiences of displaced people.

When socio-political differences lie at the heart of land disputes, how effective will legal rights be? I have focussed in this chapter on the national land titling project and have contended that titles alone will not be sufficient to resolve land disputes or reduce inter-generational conflicts. Lest we forget, displacement and dispossession are not only products of historical conflict, they are also a direct result of a long history of unfinished land titling and development

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undertakings that have been a source of tension in the past, and may become the basis of future conflict.

Chapter Seven

Return Journeys to the *Knua*

A widespread observable trend has taken shape throughout rural East Timor since independence. Local populations are returning to the remote reaches of the country to restore their ancestral settlements (*knua*). The return journeys are marked by the reconstruction of sacred ritual houses (*uma lulik*) on site (McWilliam 2005; Hicks 2008). As noted earlier, one motivation that compels the East Timorese to return has been to reassert customary land rights. Many settlers faced shortage of cultivation land in the resettlement sites, and as a result, returning to their places of origin has been an important channel of land access. The re-claiming of customary land rights can also be a measurement of asserting local identity, belonging, and territory.

This chapter is concerned with the continuing legacy of displacement on various dimensions of contemporary sociality in East Timor. To address this, I return to the starting point, in a literal and figurative sense, to the ancestral settlements. I consider the ancestral settlement (*knua*) as the reference point of Timorese sociality, and explore how displacement has affected people's commitment to it. It was precisely local commitments to the ancestral settlements that were considered as subversion to both the Portuguese and Indonesian state's authority, structures, and its various undertakings. Thus, colonial 'territorialisation' processes and practices attempted to impose new modes of spatial-political organisation to eradicate these pre-existing people-place relations.

As a consequence of forced resettlement under the New Order state and to some degree, Portuguese rule, Timorese kinship systems, social norms, cultural practices and local territorial affinities have been challenged. This chapter therefore examines how local affiliations to the ancestral settlements are articulated after the ordeal of displacement. I attend to three place-making strategies that are made up of the material, the affective (or embodied), and the social, which restore the ancestral land with cultural and ritual potency. Further, I ask how does the ancestral settlement fit into contemporary Timorese sociality, which is increasingly marked by new and expansive forms of socio-economic mobility? In both respects, the ancestral settlement is an instrumental site to understand social transformation in post-independence East Timor.

More broadly, return journeys to the *knua* raise equally important questions relevant to the study of forced displacement. Repatriation, resettlement, and reintegration are three durable solutions in the normative framework to address situations of displacement (see Chapter One). As peace and reconciliation are steadily established in East Timor, the prospect of repatriation becomes a real possibility for the internally displaced and refugees. The reluctance of interlocutors to return permanently to their former places of residence raises a significant question: have they found durable solution in resettlement? Drawing on a translocal perspective, I contend that the 'extended space of belonging' (Wise 2006) created between the resettlement sites and the ancestral land is an enduring solution in itself.

7.1 THE INAUGURATION OF SACRED HOUSE LARI'GUA

The sacred house of Lari'gua in Tekinomata village was abandoned by lineage members during the Indonesian occupation. Like settlers in the neighbouring village of Mulia, the community was forcibly resettled to the main road. I was able to observe the reconstruction of this sacred house (*oma falu* (Mk)) and participate in the house inauguration. The occasion highlighted the enduring importance of ancestral places and the basis for a socio-cultural form of translocality.

Four dimensions of the connectedness of East Timorese to their *knua* are gleaned from this example for deeper analysis in this chapter. First, it is believe that the neglect of the ancestral settlement and sacred house manifests itself in physical bodily harm and social misfortune. Second, the individual is inseparable from his/her lineage. Third, the ancestral spirits are believed to exert power over the living members of the lineage. Fourth, the ritual acts performed engendered non-religious social functions in bringing dispersed families together.

Lari'gua is one of nine sacred houses found in the ancestral settlement (*wa'a* (Mk)) of Bulubai in Tekinomata village.[1] Following the annual rice harvest in July 2007, work on restoring Lari'gua sacred house began.[2] The entire reconstruction process took well over three months with the mobilisation of large amounts of resources and labour. The most tiring tasks involved transporting white chalk boulders from the Batu Puti Formation in Lautem that had been extracted and moulded into large discs to decorate the house posts, and loading a truck with timber logged from the forest of Samalari to make the house beams. Young and

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1 Bulubai is located within walking distance to Mulia, thus I took the opportunity to participate in the sourcing of building materials for Lari'gua. I was invited to attend the inauguration process, which enabled me to see the magnificent efforts that go into restoring a sacred house.

2 Restoration of sacred houses in this area tends to take place during the dry season for practical reasons; it coincides with the end of an agricultural cycle that leaves families with spare time to attend to socio-cultural practices; torrential rainfalls during the wet season will otherwise hamper travel and work to collect building materials.

Fig. 7.1 Men and boys preparing to cut wooden planks for Lari'gua house construction.

old men from Lari'gua's extended network of family and friends contributed energy and time to cut, transport, and carry these materials to the ancestral settlement. Women and girls were on site to cook food and nourish the men after the day's work (Fig. 7.1 to 7.7).

On the day of the sacred house inauguration, I attended the event with the lineage members of Oma Ina Wai, a wife-taking group (*tufumata* (Mk)) of Lari'gua. The day prior was busy with calls and heated arguments as families of Oma Ina Wai mobilised their own kin and exchange networks to assemble prestation items for the families of Lari'gua. Our journey to Lari'gua required a steep climb through a rocky landscape (Fig. 7.8). As wife-takers, we were required to walk separately from the wife-givers (*oma rahe* (Mk)). The original site of the sacred house is situated at the summit of a small barren hill, approximately an hour's walk from the main road that passes through Mulia (Fig. 7.9). As we climbed, remnants of fortified walls from the old settlement were pointed out to me. When the Indonesian regime left, a small proportion of families returned to reside here, however, they chose to live on the base of the hill; the original site was now considered too steep, too far away from the nearest water source and main road.

Fig. 7.2 A ritual elder cutting up 'white' rock to be used as hearth stones in Larigua sacred house.

Fig. 7.3 Timber and imperta grass ready to be hand carried to the top of a hill where Lari'gua house was originally situated.

Fig. 7.4 Men and boys take a rest under the shade in the process of carrying the decorative stones to the original site on top of the hill where Lari'gua is to be reconstructed.

Fig. 7.5 Women and girls preparing food after collecting materials for house construction.

Fig. 7.6 Decorative beams of the reconstructed Lari'gua house.

Fig. 7.7 Lari'gua sacred house featured in the background as men install ornamental pieces on the roof.

Fig. 7.8 Families walk up the hill on which Lari'gua is situated.

The wife-takers and wife-givers of Lari'gua were welcomed with coffee and food; but we remained physically separated under two temporarily-built shelters. As we approached the magnificent newly constructed sacred house, a large group of children sang as several elderly men drummed from another shelter. Several women stood outside the sacred house beating their small drums (*tiba*) to accompany each ritual act (Fig. 7.10).

There was a long waiting period as the different allied groups went up to the host who stood on the side of the house with their gift-exchange items in hand. Each group argued with the host as they attempted to negotiate what a reasonable amount of exchange would be for the occasion (Fig. 7.11). If a consensus was not reached through the negotiations, the host could threaten not to proceed with the house inauguration. The potential of this happening clearly had an impact. The groups argued loudly but in the end were not too persuaded to counter the demands of the host, for none of the attendees had wished to incur any spiritual retribution as a result of giving offence to the host or by extension, the ancestors of the sacred house.

For the Makassae ethno-linguistic group, continuity of life depends on the exchange of food (e.g. rice and pig) and tools for production (e.g. horse, sword, and buffalo) to maintain the alliance between the principal groups of wife-givers and wife-takers.[3] Along with the actual exchange, the aforementioned performance act reaffirms the historical order of social relationships and the recognition of origins.

It was well into the night before the cooking hearth was constructed inside the sacred house. This is one of the final significant processes known as *ata lia* (see da Costa et al. 2006: 58-73). A palm woven mat was first put in place then four slabs of wood were fashioned

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3 See Forman (1980: 156-159) for a detailed discussion on Makassae marital and mortuary exchanges.

Fig. 7.9 Fully reconstructed Lari'gua sacred house on the day of its sacralisation.

Fig. 7.10 Women playing traditional drums as families arrive to attend the sacralisation process.

Fig. 7.11 Members of kin and marriage affines gathered to negotiate exchange items with the custodian of Lari'gua.

into a wooden frame. A layer of leaves was placed inside the wooden frame, topped by a layer of stones, and finally filled with soil. Six rounded stones were then carefully carried into the house, each wrapped in traditional woven textile for females (*tais feto*) (Fig. 7.12). The hearth constituted two cooking spots, each made with three stones (Fig. 7.13). A ritual prayer followed, performed in a repetitive manner where the ancestor spirits of Lari'gua were named and invited to witness this act of veneration. As offerings to the spirits, uncooked rice, feathers of a sacrificial chicken, hairs of a sacrificial pig, betel nut, betel pepper and two golden sacred objects were placed in a woven basket (Fig. 7.14).

Leading the processes was the ritual elder from the allied group of Bahu in Buruma village, located in the town centre of Baucau. He had come to lead the ceremony as none of the surviving members of Lari'gua were proficient in ritual knowledge or language to lead such a process. There were no female descendants left in Lari'gua to perform several ritual acts, such as the fetching of water from the sacred spring, which was carried out by a young male attired in a traditional 'female' woven cloth (*tais feto*). When the water in the clay pot was placed in the sacred house after the hearth was laid, the task was similarly performed by an older male who had put on a traditional *tais feto* to symbolically take on the status of a matured female head of household (Fig. 7.15).

As the ritual elder of Bahu prayed, he recounted the Indonesian invasion and atrocities of occupation that forced members of Lari'gua to sever their bonds with their ancestral land and sacred house. He recited:

Mau Rubi comes, Noko Lubu comes.

Your grandchildren have returned. This place has been abandoned since the time of your grandfathers and fathers. This house has recently been built on land where plates and spoons have decayed. Because of war, your grandchildren left this place. Because they were terrified of bullets, bombs, fighter planes, they hid themselves below Matebian [mountains]. When bombs, bullets and planes pushed them out of Matebian, they returned to this place. However, when they arrived here, this place had been eaten by fire, so they left to another place where they could not see or hear. Year by year this place had been abandoned, plates and spoons were left here, and the land grew wild. Now all the grandchildren are here. They live in horrible conditions. They have been falling sick. Granddaughters have died, grandsons have also died. Therefore this house has been built to shelter them, in order for their generations to continue.

Speaking with you is like making a promise. These items are for thought, hold tight onto your father, mother and children. Hold tight onto your words, till death, till you increase [in generation]. They have come to set their hands and
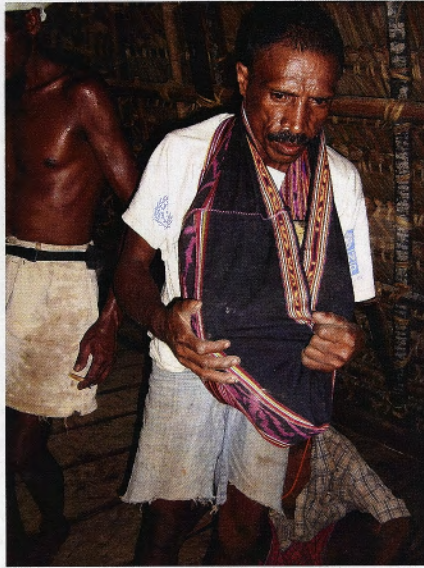
Fig. 7.12 Hearth stones are carefully wrapped in traditional textile and carried into the house.

Fig. 7.13 The hearth, the most significant component of the sacred house, is completed.

Fig. 7.14 Ritual elder handles a sacrificial animal by the newly laid hearth in the final and most important sacralisation ritual.

Fig. 7.15 Water from a sacred spring is carried in an earthen pot by a 'female' member of the house to be used at the hearth.

feet firmly back here in this house. This chicken is cooked for [the descendants']
limbs. Sacred objects have been placed above the house. You have called us
here; a female would watch over the fire, a male would watch over this house,
his origin house.

This pig and this chicken are brought here to the house. [We] call you to enter
inside this house. Grandchildren have arrived and they have carried wood to
cook the chicken and pig to offer to you, as a symbol. [We] call you to stand here
to give each [piece of chicken and pork] to you. Come here old women, old men,
grandchildren and grandparents. Here sits a female at the fire. Here sits a male
at this house, his origin house.

The ritual speech emphasised that the descendants had finally returned to the 'origin' house
to pay respect to the ancestors. Importantly, the ritual elder stressed that the abandonment
of the *wa'a* resulted in Lari'gua lineage members resettling in places 'where they could not see
or hear', which implied that they had no guidance from ancestors.

As a consequence of deserting their ancestral settlement, most of the family members had
suffered from illnesses and misfortunes or had died. Among the direct descendants of
Lari'gua, there are only three surviving male descendants. The second eldest brother who
was now the oldest among those living, claimed that he suffered from constant bad dreams
sent to him from his ancestors, which compelled him to initiate the rebuilding of his family's
sacred house. He had two daughters but no sons, and because he had not completely paid
for his wife's bride-wealth, his daughters had not been incorporated into his house. As there
were no elder males in the lineage, he had little knowledge of the processes involved in
restoring a sacred house. The middle brother on the other hand, had married a woman who
later suffered from a mental illness after their baby died. He then married a second wife but
they have been unable to conceive. The youngest surviving brother, considered the most
fortunate amongst the three, had received a scholarship to study in Portugal, but he was
involved in an arson incident several years ago, which left him disfigured and he remained
unmarried.

Return journeys to the ancestral places clearly have practical underlying motivations. First,
the abandonment of the traditional settlement and sacred houses manifest in physical bodily
harm and social misfortune. These problems are articulated and resolved through ritual
acts that appease ancestor spirits. In the case of Lari'gua, deserting the ancestral settlement
over the course of the Indonesian occupation has brought injury, infertility and death. The
rebuilding of the sacred house, in this manner, was necessary to salvage what remained

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of the lineage. In return, the ancestors bestow well-being and prosperity on the surviving members.

Second, each brother's misfortunes illustrate that individual ill-being is inextricably linked to the generational physical and social reproduction of the collective. The suffering of each brother was also the suffering of the family and lineage. Hence, the individual is inseparable from his/her community. Third, ancestral spirits are believed to exert authority over the living. This was clearly demonstrated by the oldest living brother interpreting his dreams as a communication channel with his ancestors. As the receiver of dreams, the oldest brother was further legitimised by the ritual realm as the ritual authority figure of the lineage and mediator of spiritual grievances.

Fourth, the reconstruction of the sacred house, together with the ritual acts had brought separated lineage members and their marriage and exchange networks together for the occasion. A translocal space is thus created between the multiple sites of resettlement and the ancestral site. This space is produced by the revitalisation of circumscribed social obligations and exchange practices that take place during occasions such as the sacred house inauguration (cf. Velayutham and Wise 2005).

7.2 TIMORESE SOCIALITY: THE ANCESTRAL SETTLEMENT AND SACRED HOUSE

Notwithstanding the diversity in ethno-linguistic groups, Timorese social life is defined by tracing origins through the 'house', and alliance and exchange enacted through ritual performance (Chapter Two). Insofar as local identity is concerned, the East Timorese align themselves within residentially-based kin groups that trace their origin to a common set of mythical ancestors that came to settle at a particular site. Thus, the ancestral settlement is a physical place of dwelling for living members of the kin group, and autochthonous founder-figure spirits. These kin groups can also be conceived as 'house' groups as the names of lineages correspond to the names of sacred ritual houses (*uma lulik*).

The boundaries of ancestral settlements typically reflect pre-colonial polities[4] that governed all aspects of life, through an emplaced moral order, relating to marriage, fertility, death, resource management and the cosmos. Life cycle rituals and exchange activities were performed and transacted there. An ancestral settlement usually comprises several 'big' houses (*uma boot*) and subsidiary houses (*uma kiik*). The sacred houses are generally concentrated in a ritual complex and set apart from everyday dwellings in the traditional arrangement (Hicks 2008:

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4 The boundaries of ancestral settlements and indigenous polities were mostly changing and the product of negotiations with the colonial governments and amongst customary landowners themselves.

172; McWilliam 2008: 135). Together, the ancestral settlement and the sacred houses found on site are local identity markers.

Until the Indonesian invasion, the knua functioned as the nucleus of Timorese social life. For the older Timorese generations born during the Portuguese time, the knua is also the place of one's birth (*moris fatin*). Return journeys to the knua indicate that local commitments to the ancestral settlements have endured colonial territoriality and repeated waves of conflict. The majority of interlocutors in both field sites are reluctant to reside permanently in their knua. Those who have chosen to return similarly expressed a degree of ambivalence. Historically, not all interlocutors lived in the ancestral settlements due to topographical constraints; particularly residents of Lesuai, who were forced to find arable land on the lowlands of Foho Ailicu; land was secured through marriage and exchange networks (Chapter Five). Nonetheless, house members regularly reunited at the ritual complex for ritual purposes (Traube 1980; Forman 1980).

Considering the significant role of the knua in East Timorese societies, an investigation into how these 'emplaced' communities have transformed in the context of displacement and rapid socio-economic change warrants attention. Further, the persistence of local territorial and cultural affinities have broader relevance to contemporary studies of rural agricultural livelihoods (Fox 2001; Gunn 2003), national identity (Anderson 1993; Leach 2002, 2008; Hicks 2008) and the roles played by customary institutions in local governance in the new nation (McWilliam 2005, 2008; Palmer and de Carvalho 2008; Palmer 2010; Cummins 2010).

7.3 A TRANSLOCAL PERSPECTIVE

Most studies of translocality are conducted across national borders in response to suggestions of an increasingly globalised, de-territorialised and re-territorialised world, where the relationship between local subjects and their neighbourhoods are shifting under transnational flows. A translocal perspective is useful to examine the impacts of displacement because it transcends the dichotomous notions of people as displaced/emplaced, rooted/uprooted, in-place/out-of-place, and deterritorialised/re-territorialised. Such a view can cast light on the enduring (but changing) connections between displaced Timorese families and their ancestral settlement. Translocal connections may be understood as follows:

> ...a set of dispersed connections across spaces, places, and scales which become meaningful only in their corporeality, texture and materiality – as the physical and social conditions of particular constructions of the local, become significant sites of negotiations in migrants' everyday lives.
>
> Brickell and Datta (2011: 6).

As Brickell and Datta contend above, translocality is produced through the migrant's material, embodied, and social practices. As people move, local place affinities are not obliterated but extended, multi-layered and plural (McKay 2006a, 2006b; Wise 2006; Brickell and Datta 2011). These movements may range from small-scale quotidian travels to journeys that traverse national boundaries. Through moving, migrants create new subjectivities and establish attachment and commitment to multiple places.

Importantly, McKay (2006a: 199) contends that whilst new subjectivities are created, and are in a constant process of change, the migrant always carries multiple subjectivities or 'senses of place' that become part of their biographies. Applying this perspective in the context of displacement, displaced people's subjectivities are shaped by their previous experiences in the ancestral land as much as their current experiences living in the resettlement site; the connections between the two places – through material practices, affectively, socially and so forth – transform the social character of people and places. The reverse is also true for those who remain in place, where their imagined or virtual interactions with family and friends across different locales can transform local subjectivities and their sense of place (McKay and Brady 2005). In this sense, displaced people bring with them new lived experiences gained through displacement, and re-territorialise the ancestral settlement in different ways.

Displacement studies have much to gain from drawing on a translocal framework. Translocality stresses the 'groundedness' of movement and local-local connections across multiple sites and scales, which transcends the common perception of displaced people as 'uprooted' and 'de-territorialised' (Malkki 1992, 1995). In this manner, movements of various forms undertaken across a range of spatial sites and scales are always situated. Further, places are porous, not bounded. Appadurai's (1996: 178) formulation of 'locality' is useful to conceive of place as 'relational and contextual rather than scalar or spatial'. Locality, he argues, has phenomenological qualities of 'agency, sociality and reproducibility' and is maintained through 'the sense of social immediacy, technologies of interactivity, and the relativity of contexts' (Appadurai 1996: 178). Locality can be taken as the social dimension of situated communities; these situated communities can take the form of actual place-based or virtual 'neighbourhoods'. The material production of place thus translates into its social production (Appadurai 1996: 179-180). The above example of the inauguration of Lari'gua sacred house is one of numerous place-based practises the East Timorese perform that reproduce the ancestral settlement as a culturally-significant site.

The *knua* can be conceived as the basic unit of place-based 'neighbourhoods' in East Timor. Through displacement and other new forms of movement, a unique form of translocality

resembling the globalised flows of people, goods, knowledge, and values across national boundaries is created inside the nation. The East Timorese are increasingly translocal in character; as the local subjects adopt new subjectivities through movement, it is changing the way the ancestral settlement is reproduced, and unsettling the pre-existing relationship between people and place, particularly amongst women and youth.

In addition, internal migration from the rural districts to Dili has almost doubled since with an estimated population of 175,000 in 2004 increasing to 200,000 residents in Dili in 2010 (NSD 2010). This has been accompanied by an extended presence of foreign development and aid workers in East Timor in the post-independence years, which has seen international development terms such as 'gender equality', 'social justice', 'democracy' and 'human rights' permeate into the everyday lexicon of the East Timorese even in the most remote areas. These concepts nonetheless often translate into quite different understandings at the local level, yet they bring with them imported values. These forces of modernity, including an expanding market economy will increase translocal and transnational flows of people, goods, values, and knowledge. Hence, I suggest that place-based practices of belonging are increasingly accompanied by what I term 'affective belonging' (cf. Smith 2006). Ultimately, contemporary rural Timorese sociality is entwined with mobility – and this has shown to be always the case historically.

The following sections examine how the ancestral settlement in Lesuai is reproduced materially, affectively, and socially. These three place-making strategies are intertwined as the opening example has illustrated – the materiality of the sacred house is made possible only through memories and embodied experiences of individuals, who are in turn motivated to return to the ancestral land. I also highlight perspectives of families in Mulia, including perspectives of the youth.[5] This chapter concludes by considering the notion of translocality *inside* East Timor where families are increasingly separated by distance due to new and extended forms of mobility.

7.4   MATERIAL PRODUCTION OF LESUAI

Nestled on top of Riak hill, Lesuai is one of six *aldeia* in Daisua village, Manufahi District (Chapter Five). Families from Lesuai were forcibly displaced in the Indonesian times, and

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5   Interlocutors in Mulia returned to Waitame during the dry months of August to October. By November, access to several ancestral settlements is completely cut off due to heavy rainfall that washes away footpaths and makes travelling on the foothills of Matebian dangerous. With the exception of Lari'gua sacred house inauguration in Bulubai, I was unable to observe return movements from Mulia. During those months, I moved to conduct research in Manufahi District. It was unfeasible time-wise to commute frequently on public transport between the central interior and north eastern coast of the country. Therefore I decided to stay in one site. Nevertheless, I returned to Mulia and Waitame in January 2008 to follow up on their journeys to Waitame.

subsequently became scattered in Simpang Tiga, Foho Ailicu and to a less extent in Holarua. With this forced dispersal, the sacred houses in Lesuai were also destroyed by the Indonesian forces and Timorese militia.

The sacred house is the single most integral part of Timorese material culture. Its social, cultural, and political significance is well-established in the literature (Forman 1980; Traube 1980, 1986; McWilliam 2005; Hicks 2008; Trindade 2008). The sacred house is a referent of local identity and kinship alliance as well as a national cultural symbol of resilience. Even the overseas Timorese diaspora frequently drew on the sacred house as a national symbol in the public space through the use of sacred house replicas and other ritual objects in staged protests to raise awareness of the independence struggle (Wise 2006). For Wise (2006: 110) the sacred house served 'a dual function, at once encoding and igniting continuity with family and cultural traditions in East Timor, and translating this generational continuity into the East Timorese national imaginary'. In the private sphere, Crockford makes a similar observation on the prominence of the sacred house amongst her young Timorese interlocutors in Australia:

> [Images of the sacred house] are reproduced three-dimensionally, in miniature, and two-dimensionally in paintings and woven into cloth and mats; they are inscribed on bodies, on the ultimate home, as tattoos. Along with religious memorabilia, *Uma Lulik* prevail as distinct and cherished icons of East Timoreseness for those who have been radically displaced.
>
> Crockford (2007: xxii)

These scholars assert that the sacred house is symbolic of kin and alliance, but also an evocative national symbol in the broader context of the nation's struggle against successive colonial powers.

The architectural forms of sacred houses in East Timor take various shapes, ranging from circular to rectangular, some are wide and firmly grounded on land, and others are elongated in height and raised off the ground on wooden posts (Cinatti 1987). The house is also a cultural category that differentiates social groups and families. Houses are ranked in terms of ritual and political superiority and those which are ranked higher in ritual hierarchy tend to be represented physically by houses with elaborate roof ornaments, such as nautilus shells, buffalo horns, and wooden carved birds. Taken in the above manner, the house design is a 'representation of a cosmological order' (Fox 1993: 1). Parts of the house structure itself can be ritually charged, such as a post, beam or altar. In addition, objects stored in the house, particularly ancestral heirlooms, are sacralised and feature in local myths that enshrine them as physical evidence of 'a specific continuity with the past' (Fox 1993: 1).

Sacred houses, in this manner, are at once a 'material artefact' and 'social abstraction' of Timorese society, serving as a source and object of knowledge (Fox 1993: 1; Hicks 2008: 175-177). They are a socio-cultural repository that embody memories and transmit place-based knowledge (Fox 1993: 20-23; McWilliam 2005: 29). It is noteworthy then that the rebuilding process in this way is a display of cultural knowledge transmission, social solidarity, and legitimisation of a past order.

Sacred houses are referred locally in Mambai language as *um luli* (Mb) and the process of sacred house restoration is referred to as *fun um heu* (Mb). Architecturally, sacred houses in Lesuai are square or rectangular in shape with thatched roofing, and they are elevated from the ground on wooden posts. There is only an inner room in the sacred house and a surrounding covered porch where guests are received with betel nut and tobacco. A blackened hearth is located towards the back of the inner room and cooking takes place here. During the evenings, the house is lit by kerosene lamps or candles (cf. Hicks 2008: 172-173).

There are thirteen sacred houses in Lesuai representing two main origin groups (Fig. 7.16). Each house is symbolic of a lineage derived from the two origin groups. The sacred houses were burned by the Indonesian forces and Timorese militia that penetrated into Daisua village in the invasion years. Most of these houses have been restored as temporary structures, or 'simple' in design, as termed by interlocutors. In comparison, the cost associated with

Fig. 7.16 The ancestral settlement of Lesuai, Daisua village.

restoring a sacred house to its complete traditional structure (*um tuan* (Mb)) is far greater and must accord with prescriptive stages of construction and sacred rites. Considering most interlocutors in Lesuai were subsistence farmers, restoring a sacred house to its former glory was a difficult feat to achieve.

Sacred houses in Lesuai were first reconstructed in 1992 after the internal security situation improved locally and families were able to organise themselves to mobilise time, labour and resources to carry out the task. By this time, key authority figures of Lesuai had reunited, particularly several elder men who were arrested on suspicion of participating in the FALINTIL guerrilla movement, and who had finally been released from Indonesian imprisonment on Atauro Island.[6] Ritual elders in Lesuai gathered to meet with other ritual elders in Daisua village to discuss the restoration of the six ancestral settlements, and more specifically, the reconstruction of the respective sacred houses. Following the restoration of sacred houses in Riatu hamlet (Fig. 7.17) – venerated as the highest order of ritual supremacy in the village, similar efforts were taken to reconstruct sacred houses in the other five hamlets.

Through the material construction of the sacred houses, Lesuai has gradually reclaimed its former socio-cultural status amongst the residents. All sacred houses were identified to me except for one which was regarded as the most sacred (*lulik*) and consequently, outsiders were not permitted to physically approach or even mention its existence. Two ritual altars were located within this ritual complex, each made up of terraced rocks and a tree (*bosok*) set in the centre. Ceremonial sacrifices took place at these altars. McWilliam notes the intrinsic value of the altar in Timorese cosmology as follows:

> If one were inclined to select a core symbol of Timorese indigenous religion, it would be the ritually potent image of rock and tree. This pairing is a leitmotif of Timorese ceremonial sacrifice and invocation to ancestors and the unseen powers of the deity and spirit. Across the island, the rock and tree form remains a highly charged symbolic cultural structure. It represents in different contexts, the dualism and cosmic union of mother earth (rock) and father sky (tree), the threshold of communication between the living and the ancestors and, through ritual sacrifice, a focus for the articulation of social relations and more generalised flow of life and death (for example, Forman 1980; Traube 1986).

McWilliam (2001: 91-92)

Taken together with the sacred house, the altar may also be considered as an integral aspect of Timorese indigenous religion, acting as a conduit that connects the living descendants to

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6 Atauro Island is an outer island of East Timor, situated approximately three hours by boat from Dili.

their ancestral spirits. Each altar in Lesuai represented the residing two origin groups, and accordingly, each group performed their own ritual activities in their own ritual space.

At least 35 inhabitants have returned permanently to Lesuai. The majority of whom are sacred house custodians and family members. House custodians have the responsibility of maintaining the sacred house to secure the well-being of group members. Some custodians whose family had not returned permanently had a grandchild or an adopted child that acted as an aid. Families who usually resided in their garden fields of Foho Ailicu and Simpang Tiga returned to Lesuai during times of sacred house reconstruction to contribute additional labour and resources. In the rebuilding of Um Nauhul sacred house in Lesuai, the traditional practice of fasting during the day and non-consumption of meat was strictly observed by the men. The surrounding forest provided rare black palm, imperata grass and timber, which alone took months to collect and had to be hand carried to the original site of the house at the top of a hill. Invoking memories of learning the skills involved in building a sacred house from forebears, the elder men in the community took charge of instructing young men in the architectural significance of the sacred house. The skills and meanings attached to the sacred houses are thus transferred through the actual performance of building tasks (Fig. 7.18 to 7.20).

As the sacred houses are reconstructed in the remote ancestral grounds, these majestic structures are inconspicuous in the rural Timorese landscape. An interlocutor insisted,

Fig. 7.17 The ancestral settlement of Riatu, Daisua village.

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Fig. 7.18 Reconstruction process of a sacred house, Lesuai.

Fig. 7.19 Reconstruction process of a sacred house: continued.

Fig. 7.20 Reconstruction process of a sacred house: final stage.

'sacred houses cannot be near roads. People cannot just enter and leave anyhow... [the houses] have to be in a safe place'. Interlocutors in both Lesuai and Mulia shared this view that the sacred house was reconstructed in the ancestral settlement because it was far from the main roads and deemed to be the most secure place (*fatin ne'ebe hakmatek*) undisturbed by the hustle and bustle of roads and town life. Such responses can be rationalised by the fact that East Timor's security situation has historically proven to be volatile, prompting the majority of the Timorese to reside in fortified settlements hidden deep in the forests, nestled on top of hills, or located in mountain valleys (e.g. Lape 2006). Remnants of the old fortified settlement were clearly visible when I climbed up the hill to Lari'gua sacred house in Bulabai hamlet.

Interlocutors further claimed that they felt vulnerable living along the main roads, so much so that they temporarily fled to the closest hill or returned to their ancestral land at least once following the ballot vote for independence in 1999; the outbreak of violence during the 2006 crisis; and the days during and after vote count for the parliamentary election in 2007. The ancestral settlement and sacred houses in this sense seemingly offer living descendants protection from violence and conflict. The section below expands on this idea of the spiritually charged ancestor settlement and ancestral spirits that inhabit the site. The potency attributed by interlocutors is embodied, and the interaction between living descendants and the spiritual realm can have both positive and negative effects.

7.5 EMBODIMENT OF LOCALITY: WELL-BEING, ILL-BEING AND PROTECTION

The idea that the ancestral settlement and sacred house are safe havens from all sorts of troubles was striking across all field sites. Older interlocutors stated that family members were constantly falling sick in Mulia, Foho Ailicu, Simpang Tiga and elsewhere because they had abandoned the ancestral land. Although attempts to build temporary ritual houses were made in the resettled areas, health conditions did not improve, prompting families to rebuild the structures in their places of origin.

The ancestor settlement remains relevant to social life because it is a spiritually potent place. Numerous interlocutors claimed their continued veneration of ancestor spirits, and by extension the ancestral settlement, offered corporeal protection during times of turmoil. A female interlocutor relayed:

> Custom can save people's lives. For example, during times of difficulty, we
> simply call out our grandfathers' names or think of our ancestral land to get

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protection. In return, we promise them something, like a sacrifice of an animal. But mentioning the Church, Jesus, or God, does you no good.

Despite over 95 percent of the Timorese population professing to be Catholics, interlocutors believed the spirit realm exerts an overwhelming influence over their general well-being; it is believed that problems of the here and now can be resolved through seeking supernatural assistance. Interlocutors who were resistance fighters sometimes attributed their good health and personal safety to supernatural protection. Tiu Gaspar for instance, who fought in the Laga division of the FALINTIL resistance force, reported that on several occasions the enemies had surrounded his group's hideout, but they remained 'hidden' because they had asked their ancestors to protect them. In addition, Tiu Gaspar stressed that he was involved in numerous battles but managed to evade serious injury because he visualised his *knua* in his thoughts and mentioned the names of his ancestors to seek protection (cf. Bovensiepen 2009: 328). The interconnection between the dead and living means that there always seems to be a 'spiritual cause' to explain individual well-being in Timorese world view.

The Spiritual Realm

There has yet to be a detailed investigation of the spiritual realm in East Timor. From the existing anthropological literature, it can be inferred that generally, the local cosmos of the Mambai, Makassae, Tetun, Idate and Fataluku people are divided into the living realm and spiritual realm, consistent with the dual symbolic classification of other aspects of life (Traube 1980, 1986; Forman 1980; McWilliam 2001; Hicks 2004, 2008; Pannell 2006; Bovensiepen 2009). The spiritual world is conceived to be localised, and specific kinds of spirit entities are found in places, while other spirit beings appear to traverse across the country.[7] From my field experience and the above mentioned studies, the four most common types of spirit entities that inhabit and charge the material landscape with spiritual qualities are the ancestor spirits (*mate bian, viza avo*), souls of the dead (*mate klamar*), 'lord of the land' (*rai nain*), and the 'sacred' (*lulik*) (e.g. trees, water sources, land, songs, and heirlooms etc.) (see also for example, McWilliam 2001: 90; Hicks 2008: 170; Bovensiepen 2009: 326).

In a timely analysis of the impacts of Indonesian occupation on the spiritual landscape of Funar in the eastern sub-district of Laclubar, Bovensiepen (2009: 333) observes that the local spiritual landscape was not 'purified' of spirits through the abandonment by residents. Instead, through the incorporation of Catholic beliefs into the local belief system, the spiritual

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7 Therik's (2004) landmark study of the Tetun people in West Timor highlights the localisation of the spirit realm by comparing it to Hicks' work on the Tetun in East Timor. Therik (2004: 50-51) stressed, 'unlike the Tetun of East Timor, who have a word for 'secular' (*saun*) in contrast to 'sacred' (*lulik*) (Hicks 1984: 3,6), and therefore distinguish *rai lulik* (sacred land or domain) and *rai saun* (secular land or domain), the south Tetun only recognise the term *lulik*, which in many instances can be translated as 'forbidden'.

potency of the land has been through a 'mutually reinforcing' meeting of Catholicism and local beliefs. Instead, the spiritual landscape became reinvigorated when the residents returned to their ancestral land and incorporated Catholic spirits into the pre-existing spiritual landscape. There was also the presence of newly arrived dangerous spirits (of people who died during the conflict) beyond the inhabitants' control. Interestingly, Bovensiepen illustrates the agency of the spiritual realm in relation to the human realm, as certain areas of Funar physical landscape had spirit beings prior to human inhabitation, suggesting that the spirits were autochthonous to the land. She also observes that the boundaries between power exercised by ancestors, spirit beings and naturally potent objects/places are often ambiguous.

Further east in the district of Lautem, Pannell (2006) similarly observes the spiritual landscape in Tutuala. Powerful spirits, known as *téi*, reside locally over territories claimed by the Fataluku people. These local spirits are similar to that of Funar landscape, not apical ancestors but founder-figures of the place. Local accounts propose these spirit beings readily protect the Fataluku people from outsiders and were responsible for chasing out the Portuguese and Indonesian forces altogether from East Timor. The belief that the *téi* protect only the lineage members and kin of Tutuala demonstrates a sense of immobility and localisation of the spiritual realm. Depending on the relationship between humans and spirit entities, the interaction can potentially bring physical, social, economic, and political benefits.

Maintaining a harmonious relationship with the spiritual realm then becomes integral to securing personal and collective well-being. Usually, this is achieved through a reciprocal system where ritual acts are performed to 'feed' the spiritual realm through ceremonial offerings and sacrifices (e.g. of chicken, pig, and annual crop harvest). In return, the spirit beings 'charge' the land with productivity that yields an abundance of food that nourish the people (McWilliam 2008: 136). At other times, spirits show tendencies to be malevolent when social norms and moral values are transgressed (Bovensiepen 2009). Referring briefly to the Lari'gua lineage, infertility, sickness, and death were attributed to the powers of their ancestral spirits. Consequently, the surviving brothers were compelled to return to Bulubai to rebuild the destroyed sacred house to shelter the neglected ancestral spirits. Ill-being is typically interpreted to be the result of some kind of behavioural wrongdoings that cause the spirit entities to punish transgressors. Ill-being and misfortune can result in cases where individuals neglect to fulfil familial responsibilities and obligations; ancestral assistance or supernatural intervention are sought but in return individuals neglect to fulfil their end of the agreement; or else, individuals have fallen victim to sorcery or witchcraft. This suggests that a moral economy/community constitutes and links the living and the dead (Traube 1980: 299).

This notion of a localised spirit realm has much validity in both of my field sites. Interlocutors in both field sites articulated their concern regarding travelling to an unfamiliar physical landscape for it was associated with the risk of trespassing *lulik* land or encountering unfamiliar spirits. Interlocutors claimed that they became susceptible to illnesses and death when they arrived in the resettlement areas as they were outside of their ancestral land, and therefore beyond the protective reach of ancestral spirits and local spirit entities. Alternatively, it can also be argued that the local spirits inhabiting the resettlement sites did not recognise outsiders and caused harm rather than offer spiritual protection. Frequently, interlocutors reminded me to exercise caution when I travelled to places beyond their social circles. One day, I developed a rash on my hands and back after travelling through the thick jungle of Daisua to reach a remote settlement. Interlocutors in Lesuai quickly diagnosed the rash as being due to a spiritual cause that I had walked through an area where the local spirits did not recognise me.

From a pragmatic point of view, the rebuilding of sacred houses in the ancestral settlement can be taken as an attempt to alleviate health problems. Furthermore, if the spiritual realm is taken to be localised, spirit beings in the ancestral settlement are immobile and they do not belong elsewhere. The question may be posed if it is possible for ancestral spirits to relocate to new places in the longer term where families have come to resettle, such as the resettlement sites of Mulia and Simpang Tiga, since many family members are now buried *in situ* in the latter places.

Living outside of the ancestral settlement appears to make people more vulnerable to illness, injury and death, since the ancestors/spirit beings are immobile and cannot offer their residents protection beyond the place of origin. Nevertheless, individuals can take precautionary measures or consult traditional healers for counter-actions to repel illnesses and misfortunes. Numerous food items, for example, are thought to have magic or medicinal properties. In particular, betel nut (*bua*) and betel pepper (*malus*) are associated with customary healing and protection properties in both field sites. Ritual elders sometimes chew betel nut and recite a prayer (*hamulak*) after which the betel chew is smeared on the arms of children and adults to protect their bodies from harm. Many interlocutors and Timorese friends in-country and in Australia keep a piece of dried 'sacralised' betel nut or betel pepper on their body for protection when they travel away from the kin group and ancestral settlement – this is known as *biru* in Tetun. I contend that this is a translocal practice that enables the East Timorese to 'carry' their localised spiritual potency in their travels. By this contention, I mean that ancestral spirits and spirits beings may be 'rooted' at the ancestral settlement, nevertheless, they can still exert power over the living descendants elsewhere.

Dreams in particular act as a communicative medium between the spirits and the living. Families of Um Aisaifu and Um Aimiglau in Lesuai claimed to have attempted to build each sacred house in Boifu where they currently reside, however they continued to fall ill, particularly the children. As the sacred house custodian of Um Aimiglau remarked, 'if we did not have bad dreams every night, we would not have returned to build the sacred houses'. Therefore, there is a strong reciprocal obligation to return to Lesuai to rebuild the houses. Families in Mulia shared similar experiences of children and grandchildren supposedly dying due to a lack of protection from ancestors. These local accounts seem to suggest that spirit entities that inhabit the ancestral settlement can exert power across space and time to communicate with the living descendants. The commanding power of ancestral spirits therefore connects the resettlement areas and the ancestral settlement to create a translocal space of reciprocal obligation. In the following sections, I have chosen to relate the stories of Tiu Marcel, Tiu Augusto and Tia Teresa, three interlocutors who returned to Lesuai with different motivations. Tiu Augusto and Tia Teresa were, in particular, changed in their subjectivities through their experiences of displacement.

Tiu Marcel

Tiu Marcel is a ritual elder of the clans of Um Aisafu and Um Aimiglau from Lesuai *aldeia*. Chapter Five provided a short account of his experience of forced resettlement, and how he gained land access from his uncle in an area known as Boifu in Foho Ailicu village. Over the four months I was in residence, I followed Tiu Marcel and his family relatives in Boifu, Bobe, Simpang Tiga and Lesuai as they went about their day-to-day activities. In the later months, Tiu Marcel's health began to rapidly deteriorate, and before long, plans were made for him to return to Lesuai and remain there for a period of time to recuperate.

Before dawn on a December day, Tiu Marcel was accompanied by his wife, daughters, and grandchildren as they made the arduous journey from Boifu to Lesuai (Fig. 7.21). His extended family also left later in the day from the respective places they are scattered in, to gather at Lesuai. The journey took an entire day, beginning with a trek through overgrown grass to get out of the valley of Boifu. This was followed by a thirty minute microlet ride to Simpang Tiga, before the journey continued on foot through coconut, betel nut, and coffee groves, and shallow river streams. The journey also passes through the ancestral settlements of Daisua, Lesulau and Gou Ai, before arriving at the top of the hill where Lesuai is situated.

Prior to his return journey to Lesuai, I had suggested to Tiu Marcel that a visit to the health clinic in Simpang Tiga could prove beneficial, but in his usual commanding manner, he responded as though I made a laughable suggestion, 'I am sick because I have been angry

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with my family, so I need to go back to resolve the problem'. Tiu Marcel attributed his declining health to a recent incident related to incest taboo within the origin group, which he claimed had upset his ancestors. Earlier in the year, two teenagers from the subsidiary groups of Um Aimiglau and Um Aisaifu had expressed their love interest in one another to their respective families, which was met with much dismay by community members because they were too closely related by blood.[8]

Membership to an origin group plays a central role in marriage and ceremonial status. Referring to Mambai social structure, Traube (1986: 71-72) suggested that members of an origin group are related to one another as 'elder brother/younger brother', and as such the unit is exogamous. Members within the same origin group are strictly prohibited from marrying one another and intimate relations within the same lineage are defined as incestuous (*ran ida deit* – lit. 'one blood'). Thus, the choice of a marriage partner is drawn from outside the group. The teenagers from Um Aimiglau were violating a crucial custom when they had declared their relationship to the other group members. Although they were not married, the intention was sufficiently deemed a social offence.

Tiu Marcel, who is a ritual authority of both subsidiary groups, publicly denounced this relationship in Lesuai. The intent to marry in this case was deemed a moral transgression of the customary incest taboo. Despite the matter being swiftly resolved with the respective families of the youths compensating for their transgression at the Aisaifu sacred house in a combination of monetary and exchange items, Tiu Marcel's ill health was perceived to be a sign that the ancestors remained upset over the incident, and that tensions within the origin group persisted.

Marital allies of Um Aisaifu were informed through word of mouth that Tiu Marcel was returning to Lesuai to carry out a ritual ceremony to rectify grievances of his ancestor spirits. By restoring harmonious social relations, it could potentially remedy Tiu Marcel's ill health. It was evident that Tiu Marcel believed that his sickness was not curable by 'modern' medicinal treatment. He was convinced that the only solution to a speedy recovery was to appease his ancestors. A series of ritual acts led by Tiu Augusto were performed at the Aisaifu sacred house the following evening. The event was attended by elders from the thirteen subsidiary groups that constituted two origin groups, and representatives of Tiu Marcel's wife-taking and wife-giving marital allies. The large number of attendees was indicative of Tiu Marcel's seniority and respect within the wider community (Fig. 7.22).

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8 Elsewhere in East Timor, marrying with a close relative, such as a cross-cousin, can be a preferred marriage path.

The ritual proceedings continued to early dawn, and at the end, each household present received a portion of cooked sacrificial meat and rice. The ritual aimed at restoring social relations within the origin group, and between ancestors and the living, further legitimised Tiu Marcel's status as an authority figurehead. 'He is the one who speaks for Um Aisaifu and Um Aimiglau. He is like the police, the fence' confided one interlocutor. Hence, as the locally recognised legitimate ritual leader, spirit ancestors chose to communicate their discontent through Tiu Marcel's body, consequently negatively affecting his physical health. The Timorese continue to find meaning in the pairing of the living world with the spirit realm through which they interpret their everyday experiences. In this sense, physical illness can be healed through restoring good relations within the community as well as making peace with the ancestors.

A growing body of research has examined post-conflict reconciliation efforts in East Timor, ranging from international-led transitional justice mechanisms through the CAVR to grassroots *nahe biti* and *juramentu* ceremonies that draw on Timorese custom to create social unity and restore social relationships (Babo-Soares 2004). Return journeys to the ancestral settlement have been even less recognised as an aspect of *intra*-community renewal and reconciliation through the enactment of ritual practices. Here, I consider intra-community reconciliation an important aspect to understand how East Timorese families and communities recover from the impacts of the foreign occupations.

Below, I turn to another place-making strategy practised by settlers in Mulia. In the past, when a person died, their body was buried at the ancestral burial grounds. However, settlers now buried the deceased in the cemetery in Mulia and carried out a symbolic act of burying the death in the ancestral land of Waitame.

Waitame: Burying the Pillow

Locality in the context of East Timor may also be an aspect of the corporeal body. This is illustrated by the mortuary custom of *wada'e* (Mk), which was revived by families in Mulia back in their ancestral village of Waitame after the Indonesian regime departed East Timor. *Wada'e* (lit. to bury the pillow) is commonly practised by Makassae communities residing in the areas of Quelicai, Baucau, and to a lesser extent in Lautem. The practice involves the burial of the corpse in one's ancestral settlement. According to interlocutors, the adoption of Christianity, particularly Catholicism, has meant that the bodies of those baptised are buried in cemeteries. As a substitute for the corpse, an item that belonged to the deceased, such as a piece of clothing is buried at the ancestral grounds. Corpses of those who have not been baptised continue to be buried in the place of origin. Traditional graves known as *robo*

Fig. 7.21 Tiu Marcel and his extended family. Photo was taken on request by Tiu Marcel the day before he returned to his ancestral settlement of Lesuai, Daisua village.
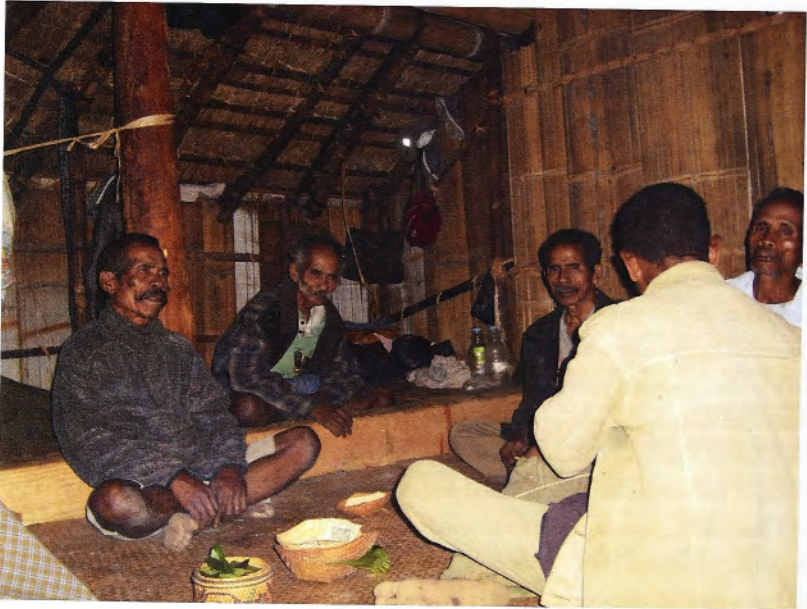

Fig. 7.22 Ritual proceedings for Tiu Marcel, Lesuai.

(Mk) are distinguishable from Christian cemeteries as they are made out of stacked rocks to form a rectangular tomb.

Previously when residents were prohibited from leaving the perimeters of Mulia, the deceased were buried immediately behind the resettlement area on the foothills that lead to Quelicai. This was an area where customary landowners formerly drove their buffaloes and goats. Now resettled families travelled to their specific ancestral settlements within the village grounds of Waitame to perform *wada'e*. Primarily, an act of veneration to one's ancestors is accompanied by an animal sacrifice. This is followed by the burial of an item previously owned by the deceased. In cases where family members disappeared or died in combat during the Indonesian occupation, and their bodies had not been retrieved, white stones may be buried to symbolise the deceased's body. A close interlocutor who participated in the traditional burial of her father, a guerrilla fighter who disappeared during the occupation, relayed she felt her father's spirit enter the rock, 'after the ritual elder prayed, the rock I was holding became much heavier. It felt as though I was carrying a load that formed a part of my father's body'.

In local conceptions, locality is constitutive of the intimate relationship between the body, ancestral land, and spiritual realm. The above examples demonstrated the affective qualities of locality, where the ancestral settlement is embodied in dreams, sickness, infertility, and death. Ancestor spirits communicate with the living members through dreams across space and time, serving to guide their moral actions and at the same remind them where their 'roots' are. The practice of *wada'e* demonstrates that locality is an aspect of corporeal life for the Makassae people who belong to their place of origin and they must return to the ancestral land upon death.

As described thus far, the corporeal bodies of settlers are linked to their places of origin. Living away from the ancestral land can bring illnesses and even death. Return journeys, in this light, are pragmatic and essential to secure well-being not only for the individual but for the continuity of the lineage. I now turn to the third integral dimension of locality, the social.

7.6   SOCIAL ASPECTS OF RETURNING

Since historical times, return journeys to the *knua*, whether momentary or long term, play a significant role in bringing together families and communities that remain scattered across multiple sites. Social gatherings involve material and symbolic exchanges, including food, money, information and values. Interlocutors relayed that gatherings were important to reacquaint with one's family relatives and tighten family bonds (*bele hametin relasaun familia*).

Otherwise, kin networks will end (*relasaun familia bele kotu*) and one inevitably forgets who is family (and may commit incest).

There were 30 families residing permanently in Lesuai during the time of fieldwork; the majority were elderly men and women who returned to take on the roles of sacred house custodians. Ten out of the thirteen custodians of sacred houses in Lesuai were females – most of whom were widows. Several of the custodians observed prescriptive norms. For example, because they maintained the sacred house, they could only consume old maize rather than newly harvested maize as it was taboo (*lulik*). A heavy sense of responsibility hinges upon the custodians to ensure prosperity is secured for group members. Apart from keeping the ancestors' shelter well-maintained, one of the most important acts of ancestor veneration involves keeping the sacred house brightly lit at night, which is believed to appease ancestor spirits. Keeping up customary practices (*lisan* or *adat* (I)) is an important aspect of return journeys. A common response by interlocutors was that *lisan* is important because founder-ancestors were born with it (i.e. Timorese culture and tradition). A house custodian explained:

> You must keep up with *lisan* which your grandfathers followed. For example, you go to church every week to maintain your religious faith. Similarly, we cannot forget this place. If you don't follow traditions you will fall sick. If you live well and healthy, it is because you follow traditions. If you fall sick, you must conduct rituals to ensure a speedy recovery. Otherwise, you might face death.

In this sense, all the ceremonial undertakings keep the immediate and extended family a tight unit. These practices serve as foundation to create social capital, which enable families to rely on the wider kin networks during times of adversity. Particularly for the younger generation, family gatherings enable them to get acquainted with the extended kin group and the ancestral settlement.

Interlocutors nonetheless relayed that these customs can be burdensome because they are entangled in the broader webs of obligation and reciprocity. For instance, most families in the study sites chose to keep livestock primarily as items for future prestation rather than a source of livelihood income. An interlocutor articulated:

> *Adat* tightens familial ties because every family member has to participate. They [members of the kin group] can be in Dili or further, but everyone must return to the ancestral land. Especially if there are family matters to discuss, and at the end of the rice and maize harvest seasons, we must go to the ancestral land. Even if individuals live far away, they must return here. If they are unable to return, they should send money, rice, oil, or animal.

The above quotes exemplify the general mixed feelings of duty, obligation and a profound sense that the benevolence of ancestor spirits will disappear if the *knua* and the *uma lulik* are neglected. Maintaining traditional practices necessarily entails a continued physical connection with the ancestral settlement. Attachment to the ancestral settlement can be discerned here to encompass localised quotidian practices such as the lighting of candles that are indispensable to secure the well-being of the family and wider kin group. House custodians held a strong sense of responsibility towards the collective rather than a mere nostalgic longing to recreate a form of sociality that is thought to be lost.

Increased social interactions between family and kin at the ancestral settlement can be argued to mend the social fabric of 'community' disrupted in the course of past troubles. Since the majority of the kin members do not reside in Lesuai, reunions at the site provide the opportunity for families to interact, exchange news and gossip. Families who have no wish to return permanently to Lesuai take store-bought goods on their visits, such as salt, sugar, cooking oil, kerosene, soap, candle, dried noodle packs, tinned fish and batteries. Families in Lesuai in exchange give bags full of local produce, such as peanut, betel nut, coconut oil, coffee beans, and tobacco that are not readily available in the resettlement areas.

Interlocutors who did not reside permanently in Lesuai, but who had a share in family-inherited fruit groves there said that they had 'given back to custom' (*fo ba lulik*) their inherited family wealth such as betel nut, coffee, and tobacco. This implied that their share of family wealth was returned to the sacred house, a common gesture to contribute to the living expenses of the house custodian through the sharing of inherited resources within the kin group.[9] Locality is produced through 'social contiguity' created through everyday concerns and the practical nature of exchanges and interactions between families split across places (Wise 2006: 166). Kinship ties are re-activated through participating in communal activities. Food preparation, ritual rites and gift exchanges generate intense moments of co-presence, wherein individuals and families encounter and reconnect with the larger community. Community in this case is argued to constitute the kin group, spiritual realm, and natural environment where the ancestral settlement is situated. In a romanticised sense of 'community', individual interests are thought to be submerged in the broader goals of the group. Below, Tiu Augusto's story illustrates the tenuous relationship between the individual and community.

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9   Food items are always needed by the house custodians as it is customary practice for them to offer a drink, betel chew, or tobacco when family and extended kin visit the sacred house.

Tiu Augusto

In 1990, Tiu Augusto was among a group of forty-four villagers from Daisua to be released from Atauro Island prison after he was captured by the Indonesian military for his political involvement with FRETILIN. Tiu Augusto initially resided with his brother in Simpang Tiga before choosing to resettle permanently in Lesuai. He is the custodian of the sacred house Dato Rai, which is considered as the 'door' in the order of local precedence of origin groups within the village. This ritual ranking of the house meant that I was unable to get interlocutors within Lesuai and Diasua at large to share local histories and origin myths unless I got permission from Tiu Augusto. He is one of the few individuals who received an education during the colonial times. Even though he is a pious Catholic who attended Saturday Mass in Samé town each week, he is also knowledgeable on origin myths and ritual practice. His versions of the origin myths often left me confused with the mixing of catholic symbolism.

As the nephew of a prominent colonial-appointed leader in Daisua village, Dom Mateus, Tiu Augusto assumed the position of village elder (*lia nain*) (lit. owner of the words) in the newly created village council of Daisua[10] in the post-independence years. He and his wife were the only household in Lesuai to live in a corrugated iron roof house built from remittances sent by their two sons who worked in Dili. Tiu Augusto's subject position as a respected ritual expert and village elder thus adopted a new subjectivity within Lesuai – one related to modernity and wealth. Despite the fact that it was his sons who had moved to the capital and became prosperous, Tiu Augusto's new subjectivity brought heightened expectations to distribute his wealth among his kin group and Lesuai community. When Um Aisaifu sacred house had to rebuilt in September 2007 due to extended periods of rainfall that had caused substantial damage, Tiu Augusto's all too obvious lack of contribution fetched criticism and continuous gossip from neighbours that he was self-interested, choosing to save money in order to buy a plot of land in Dili with his sons over the collective pursuit. He was accused of not contributing his share of resources to the feasting, 'not even a packet of sugar!' as one interlocutor exclaimed. The criticism, though widespread, was quiet, as families still regarded Tiu Augusto as a powerful community figure and did not confront him on the matter.

Tiu Augusto's individual aspiration to purchase a parcel of land in Dili was clearly disapproved of by community members who felt that he had assigned more significance to his private interests than fulfilling his obligations to the wider kin group. Tiu Augusto's relative wealth

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10 The village council (*conselo de suco* (P)) is a state imposed administrative construction. Depending on the candidates drawn from distinct origin groups, the village council, on the whole, may not meet the expectations of perceived local political legitimacy.

and prominent status as *lia nain* – a position given due recognition by his community brought added responsibilities and expectations. The reuniting of families in Lesuai has proved to be circumscribed and tenuous as the binding social obligations and contractual relationships are reactivated (cf. Velayutham and Wise 2005).

7.7   UNSETTLED PLACE RELATIONS

This chapter has focused on three dimensions of how the ancestral settlement is reproduced with spiritual potency and social importance. The material, affective, and social place-making strategies are inter-dependent. Through highlighting the various reasons for returning to the *knua*, I have also demystified that 're-territorialisation' is not a romantic search for a life before displacement. Instead, pragmatic reasons related to health and fertility underpin these movements. The viability of the ancestral settlement is then heavily reliant on the ongoing work surviving members. I argue that with the prolonged period of residing in the various sites of resettlement, people have come to develop new and multiple ties to place through displacement and other forms of mobility. These new ties and affiliations are in turn competing with people's connection to the *knua*, marking a certain degree of ambivalence. People increasingly have affiliations to a number of places for diverse reasons associated with livelihoods, kinship, and security. The centrality of ancestral settlement as the nucleus of Timorese social life is invariably unsettled by tensions between a past and present way of life. An elderly man in Mulia, for instance, felt that his kin group was no longer the tight unit they had been in the past. Reflecting on the changes brought about by living in Mulia, he lamented:

> Now that we live separately, we come together only when there are household matters to discuss, such as death. In the past, we lived closed to one another. We used to sing when night fell. Now we have television and everyone stays in their own house and keep to themselves.

As local subjectivities change through mobility, this has come to have some bearing on subjectivity-place relations related to the ancestral settlement. The majority of people who now live permanently in their ancestral territories in Daisua and Waitame have an expectation that the Timor-Leste government will provide public infrastructure similar to the Indonesian New Order state. Having experienced modern infrastructure and facilities in the resettlement areas during the Indonesia occupation, interlocutors hold onto the idea that 'development will come' (*desevolvementu sei mai*) to the mountain settlements in the near future. A great desire for basic physical improvements such as sealed roads, electricity and piped water was expressed by interlocutors in both study sites.

Although Lesuai retains its traditional setting and local authority figures, its social reproduction is not unchanging. The *chefe de aldeia* (hamlet chief) of Lesuai relayed that the village council had proposed to the district administrator that a sealed road be built from district capital Samé town to Riatu hamlet, but remoteness and a low population base in the ancestral territories could not justify such a demand. The well-traversed footpath joining the town centre to Riatu is a two-hour walk uphill, and the path leading to Lesuai is at least an additional hour. Most residents of Lesuai take a shorter route through the deep valleys along a narrow and slippery path carved out into the steep side of the hills. The lack of a proper road poses real danger for the residents living in the hills. The United Nations Police stationed in Samé relayed to me that one time it had taken them at least four days to retrieve the body of a man who fell off the path into the deep forests. At present, the sealed road from Samé ends at Mane Ikun hamlet in Letefoho village (located above Samé town, see also Fig. 5.6).

Poor accessibility has implications for the health and education of those who have returned to reside in Lesuai. A female interlocutor shared her pregnancy ordeal of walking through the forests to Mane Ikun where an ambulance waited to take her to the district hospital. She stopped twice along the way due to painful contractions, and by the time she reached Mane Ikun, her clothes were drenched in sweat and she was bleeding. Educational opportunities are similarly limited for school children residing in these highland territories. There is a primary school in Riatu and an elementary school in Lesulau; however on many occasions, school children returned home early because their teachers had failed to turn up for class. In addition, youths attending secondary schools had to start their day as early as 5am to walk to school in Samé, and returned home close to 4pm, and most youths tended to have a meal only when they reached home as their families do not have regular income for pocket money.

Most ancestral settlements exist outside of the state's reach. Hampered by topography, torrential rains continue to cut communities off from the major towns during the monsoon seasons. Despite the lack of all weather roads, electricity and piped water, these remote and once isolated ancestral territories are increasingly connected to the national and global through 'distance-demolishing technologies', to borrow Scott's (2009: 11) term. Wireless communication technologies such as solar-powered radios and mobile phones are enabling inhabitants in remote highlands to stay informed of the latest developments in social, economic, political and environmental issues at the local, national and international scales.

Since the troubles of the 2006 crisis, there has also been a concerted push by the government to decentralise decision-making and redistribute resources to the districts.[11]

Although wireless connectivity is sparse up in the mountains, all *chefe de aldeia* in Daisua own mobile phones that closes up the distance between them and state-delegated authorities in the district and Dili. This is despite the fact that mobile phone coverage is patchy in the mountainous interior. In addition, village level authorities do not earn a government wage, and in the case of Daisua, most *chefe de aldeia* and *chefe de suco* were subsistence or smallholder farmers, therefore mobile phone credit was a relatively expensive purchase.[12]

The best reception spot in Lesuai is on top of a small hill behind the hamlet chief's house where people receive and make calls to relatives in Samé, Dili and elsewhere, to stay in touch, exchange gossip, and request resources from one another. Only the *chefe de aldeia* and Tiu Augusto owned mobile phones in Lesuai, hence, community members would buy a small amount of call credits and borrow their phones to make calls. The social reproduction of Lesuai has enabled power to be reconsolidated in certain figures of authority who are men, such as the hamlet chief, Tiu Marcel and Tiu Augusto. The following section outlines the voices of women who play an important role as sacred house custodians in Lesuai.

Tia Teresa

Tia Teresa is the custodian of the sacred house Um Badae. She is originally from Um Airetlau in Riatu hamlet and had married a descendant of Um Badae in Lesuai. When the previous custodian of the house passed away, she had taken over the responsibility to maintain the ritual house. Due to her age and status as a widow, she did not cultivate large tracts of garden in Simpang Tiga compared to most members of the origin group. She was considered appropriate to accept the role of custodian for she only had to sacrifice a little of what she had in Simpang Tiga.

Tia Teresa is physically strong and fiercely independent, and tended daily to her thriving garden. One day I even found she had climbed up high on a mango tree trimming its branches! She spoke fondly of her three surviving children who worked in Samé town and her desire to have remained in Simpang Tiga where access to the market was convenient

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11   Decentralisation processes will include changing sub-district administration (*posto*) into municipalities in the coming years. Decision-making processes will be devolved to municipal committees in a bid to empower local leaders. However, local capacity is a concern due to limited funds, experience and resources. In addition, there is no legislation on suco representation in parliament to date; local development plans must be appealed from the centralised state budget (Asian Foundation 2009).

12   Mobile phone ownership has grown exponentially in Timor-Leste in the last two years. Prices of mobile phones and phone credits have dropped, with credit purchase available in smaller units (USD 1.00, USD 2.00, USD 5.00) to capture lower-income users.
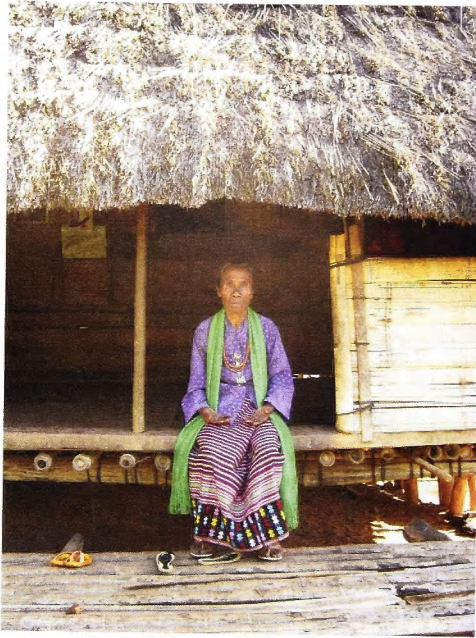
Fig. 7.23 A female sacred house custodian, Lesuai.

Fig. 7.24 A female sacred house custodian, Lesuai.

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and she had more freedom to secure her own livelihood. Speaking with Tia Teresa and the other women custodians (pictured in Fig. 7.23 and 7.24), it became clear that they had little say in the decision to return to reside in Lesuai. Tia Teresa said, 'no one asked if I wanted to stay in here. I had a garden in Simpang Tiga and I was earning enough money to pay for my children's schooling'. In a similar fashion, the custodian of Aimiglau ritual house explained:

> I was asked to return because I am now old and I cannot cultivate gardens anymore. When Tiu Augusto and the others who were captured by the military were released, they made a decision that some of us could remain where we were to make a living, but some would have to return to look after the ritual house.

In Hicks' (2008: 173) exploration of the material and cultural significance of the sacred house, he contends that old women tend to be selected as house custodians because 'the female sex is regarded as being closer to the world of the ancestors'. In Lesuai, the women's stories highlighted power imbalances that may be restored in patriarchal societies.

Tia Teresa's example suggests another micro-scale social transformation that has taken place due to New Order resettlement. In a paradoxical manner, the experience of forced resettlement was not wholly negative for Tia Teresa was able to experience another way of living in Simpang Tiga whereby she gained independence and prescriptive Timorese social norms did not enter the picture. However, her private aspirations have clearly been assigned less significance than securing the health and well-being of Um Badae's group members. Both Tiu Augusto and Tia Teresa's stories illustrate a strong collective ethic, where individual members of Lesuai are expected to contribute a fair share of commitment into community affairs. To suggest that all forms of return journeys to the ancestral settlement are sought by those who want to restore a certain degree of stasis, normality, and familiarity in their lives is debatable. There is a degree of compulsion that limits choices for some, particularly women in this case.

Youth Sentiments

The youth demographic is another group that appears to have an ambivalent attitude towards the ancestral settlement. Unlike the older generation whose memories are inscribed onto the local landscape, the young tend not to have lived experiences or embodied memories tied to the ancestral settlement. The ancestral place was commonly described as a remote place (*dook lahalimar!* 'so far, it is no joke!') with traditional huts situated inside thick forest on rugged hills; this was typically accompanied by complaints of immense isolation and boredom during their visits (Fig. 7.25 and 7.26). Some toddlers and young children had not

Fig. 7.25 Youths gathered for a meal after the reconstruction of Um Nauhul.
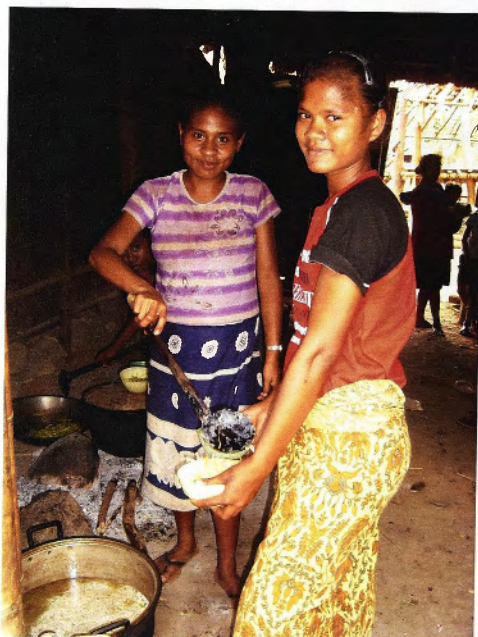

Fig. 7.26 Youths from Boifu at the healing ritual for Tiu Marcel.

visited their ancestral settlement as the journey is too arduous. Tiu Augusto in Lesuai once joked:

> You are from another country and you walk to here frequently. My nephew lives in Simpang Tiga but his wife and children have not once visited Lesuai. They send money, rice, oil and other things, but they are afraid to walk.

Young people born or raised in Mulia and Simpang Tiga were accustomed to having access to school, market, electricity and transport. These youth form part of the new generation or *gerasaun foun*, a large demographic who were raised and educated under the Indonesian occupation. An estimated 30 percent of the Timorese population are aged between 15 to 29 years old, and the proportion is expected to double in 15 years (SEFOPE 2009: 1). This age demographic poses some serious challenges for nation-building, as unemployment rates in the formal sector are high in both the urban and rural areas with an estimated 15,000 youths entering the labour market annually, but there are insufficient work opportunities (or more specifically, available opportunities are not matched by available skills) (World Bank 2007: 8).

At the time of conducting this research, a tense atmosphere hung over East Timor as the people were recovering from the 2006 crisis, and it was also a year of political change with the scheduling of the Presidential and Parliamentary elections. In Dili, the heart of where the troubles began or, at least the proximate causes of violence, IDP camps remained scattered across the city. Infamous trouble spots and neighbourhoods such as Comoro and Becora periodically broke out in gang fights. No one dared to stay out after dark. Chapter Four has discussed the persistence of multi-layered tensions between the settlers of Mulia and landowners of Tekinomata. While the landowners were overtly vocal in their support of FRETILIN, the settlers were not united in supporting one specific political party. The differences in political stance added an additional layer of hostility to the historical tensions between the two villages.

The violence in Dili had also driven out a large proportion of youths into the home districts. Each morning, I was greeted by groups of young men that sat next to the main road of Mulia. They were bored with the routine malaise of waiting for the general security situation to improve so that they could continue their vocational courses, secondary and tertiary education, or return to work in the capital. Their presence in the village was, however, welcomed by their families who depended on wet rice cultivation to make a living. Resettled families who worked as sharecroppers in the rice paddies of the customary landowners in Tekinomata benefited from the return of this urban youth cohort. In the rice growing months, the youth were kept occupied through their contribution to household labour.

They assisted in preparing rice paddies for cultivation, planting, harvesting, threshing and packing rice. Most of their labour contribution was paid in kind; typically, they were given a proportion of the total rice yield or fed a meal (males are commonly also given cigarettes).

I was able to conduct a small focus group discussion with 13 youths ranging from 16 to 27 years of age in Mulia to discuss the notion of 'home';[13] their perceptions of traditional beliefs and practices (*lisan*); and their future ambitions. Comparatively, Crockford (2007) and Bexley (2009) have examined the Timorese diasporic youth's identity and belonging to the nation. The focus group participants felt that their sense of 'home' was unequivocally tied to the most familiar physical and social environment where they were born and raised. In other words, Mulia was 'home'. All participants expressed their discontent that the name Mulia had reverted to the original name of Wai'aka due to persistent land disputes with customary landowners. They reasoned that even though 'Mulia' was only a name, it was significant of where they belonged. Thus, to replace the name was denying an aspect of their local identity. They maintained that when they were in Dili or elsewhere in the country, they tended to say they originate from Mulia rather than Wai'aka or Waitame.

Despite the youths' prolonged physical disconnection from Waitame, they all expressed an affective sense of belonging to the place. Waitame remained the key reference point of origin and ritual locus for the young who returned there at least twice a year to attend to family matters associated with marriage and death, and to mark the start and end of the agricultural cycle. All focus group participants overwhelmingly agreed that their cultural identity was a prominent aspect of their everyday lives. One participant relayed, 'our grandparents and ancestors are watching over us. They are protecting us. Everywhere we walk, we walk with *lisan*'.

Some participants referred to the ancestral settlement as 'old land' (*rai tuan*) which should not be abandoned. Comparing their acts of veneration to ancestral spirits with Catholicism, they jokingly stated that if they did not attend Sunday mass, they can be easily forgiven, but they could become susceptible to physical ailments and even face death if they abandoned their culture (cf. Crockford 2007: xxi-xxii). This enduring moral community between the living descendants and their spirit ancestors is a clear motivation for return journeys to the ancestral settlement. The young clearly engendered multiple belongings that did not necessarily 'root' them exclusively in Mulia or Waitame. The notion of origin transcends the

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13   There is no Tetun word that is equivalent to 'home'; the closest words are *knua* (ancestral settlement), *moris fatin* (birth place), *uma* (house), *rai* (land, settlement, country). I drew on the Indonesian term *kampung halaman* (home, dwelling, country) in order to elicit a similar meaning to 'home'.

lack of everyday place-based practices grounded in Waitame, creating a 'translocal space of belonging' between Mulia and Waitame (Wise 2006: 165-200).

Like young people elsewhere in the world, those in Mulia aspired to have good education and employment in the capital or to further their studies abroad through competing for bilateral and multilateral scholarships.[14] Many Timorese youth unfortunately have had their studies interrupted and delayed time and again by conflicts. Antonio, who was in his late twenties, was completing his studies in Political Science at the National University of Timor-Leste (UNTL) whilst he worked casually for Radio Timor-Leste as a journalist before the 2006 crisis. He remarked:

> I don't dare to go back to Dili. The house we were staying in was burned, so we are waiting for the situation to settle down… I still have to submit my thesis. You are fortunate to be doing your S3 [doctorate degree], look at me, I still have not finished my S1 [bachelor degree]. In 1999, the university also stopped functioning… It is very difficult to get anything done.

The circumstances Antonio faced were not exceptional among young Timorese. Resolute and undefeated by the broader constraints of recurring violence and political instability, Antonio and his two cousins who were similarly completing their final year of tertiary studies, decided to volunteer as teachers at a local senior secondary school. Teaching kept the three youths well occupied, as the school was under-resourced and the number of enrolled students increased during the period – many were similarly displaced from the urban areas by internal insecurity. There were two streams of classes, morning and afternoon, and despite this procedure, students had to share seats or stand at the back of classrooms. Antonio wrote a proposal to an international NGO requesting extra furnishing and for the school to be connected to the electrical grid, but they did not receive any response.

The younger focus group participants had great ambitions to contribute to the future of East Timor, ranging from being a teacher, police officer, to a computer programmer. They had disparate ideas of 'development' and nation building, but generally shared the consensus that the nation could not progress without their contribution. One interlocutor expressed dismay about his recent encounter with a government minister:

> I met this minister, and I was disappointed. She had not heard of the school I was attending even though it is well known for its courses in hospitality. As a minister, she should be aware of what is taking place in our nation.

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14 Their attitudes reflect the views of Timorese tertiary students in Leach (2008). According to Leach's (2008: 428) survey conducted with tertiary students, the number who responded that they were 'very willing' to move outside of East Timor to 'improve their work or living conditions' increased from 48.9% to 61.7% in the survey period from 2002 to 2007.

Such a comment might seem unimportant, however, it hints at the qualities the new generation of Timorese perceive national leaders should possess, such as an interest in the education and career path of young people. In summary, the everyday lived experiences of being young in East Timor are intertwined with the effects of forced displacement. Timorese youth, like the generations before them nevertheless show a great capacity to respond to political instability by turning towards family and kin networks. Thus far, I contend that the rural villages continue to form an important social and economic safety net during times of adversity in Timor-Leste. The transient or mobile nature of Timorese youth in post-independence Timor-Leste warrants more research concerning youth perspectives on local belonging and identity.

Upon my return to Mulia in 2009, there was noticeably a smaller permanent youth demographic based there as the security situation in Dili had improved. The young had once again left the village in pursuit of education and job prospects further afield. As noted earlier, there is rapid rural-urban drift in the past decade. Hence, in the context of large volumes of out-migration of young East Timorese from the rural districts to urban centres, the question remains, if peace and political stability endures in the capital, how might Timor-Leste's rural economic and social and cultural landscape transform in the coming decades?

7.8 THEORISING TRANSLOCAL CONNECTIONS IN EAST TIMOR

Wise (2006) examined translocal connections between East Timorese diasporic families in Australia and their family members who returned to East Timor after 1999. Despite the physical fragmentation, the 'split families' engaged at the quotidian level in the 'everydayness of material, family, social, symbolic networks and exchanges' that spanned across the two countries to form an extended space of belonging and identity (Wise 2006: 166). These local-local connections surpass national borders to link specific sites in Sydney, Melbourne, and Darwin to particular sites in East Timor.

Arguably a translocal space is similarly produced by experiences of forced displacement and resettlement *within* East Timor where an 'extended space of belonging and identity' is created between the ancestral settlement where families originate, and the multiple places they have come to settle. Like the East Timorese diaspora in Australia, resettled families inside East Timor are physically separated from their family and extended kin. Nonetheless, they remain loyal and committed to the aspirations of their 'neighbourhood'.

The translocal connections (ancestral land – resettlement site – other sites) created within East Timor are mediated by 'technologies of interactivity' such as radio, mobile phones,

newspaper, messengers, and *microlet* (mini van) and *bùs* (bus) drivers that enable the circulation of material and cultural products across localities. These translocal connections at some point, extend and intersect with Wise's translocal space that connects with localities outside of East Timor. Considering the expansive alliance and exchange networks, Timorese families have relatives who left the country in the distant past or more recently after national independence.[15]

Recalling Appadurai's (1996: 179) formulation of locality as phenomenological – which requires ongoing work to maintain its materiality, I have argued in the preceding sections that the ancestral settlement is reconstituted through ritual practices that require material, affective and social attention. As a locality, the ancestral settlement is tied to an enduring emplaced moral order established on the relations of local subjects to ancestral spirits to sacred geography. Therefore, this locality can only be reproduced according to the extent to which local subjects construct their identities based on 'house' affiliations and remain committed to participating in the localised moral economy.

The ancestral land is reconstituted through new subjectivities that have emerged from the experience of displacement and new forms of mobility. In this sense, the ancestral settlement is shaped by people's reference to other sites and scales, and is consequently porous, entangled with other places, and always in the process of transformation (McKay 2006a; Brickell and Datta 2011). This dynamic subject-place relationship was illustrated in the examples of families who returned (and those who wish to return) permanently to Daisua and Waitame on the one hand to recreate an emplaced moral order associated with the past, and conversely, they are attempting to make these remote places more accessible to 'modern' social, economic and political structures. Hence, re-territorialisation of place is not equivalent to restoring a lost past. Much of the rural constituency are demanding that the Timor-Leste government provide basic facilities such as piped water, electricity, and sealed roads for mountainous settlements; something that can be traced back to New Order village life.

Whilst the act of travel to the ancestral settlement exemplifies agency and resistance to foreign imposition of new modes of socio-political organisation, the reproduction of neighbourhoods can reveal pre-existing unequal power relations. The reconstitution of the ancestral settlement has been to the benefit of men, whilst women such as the likes of Tia Teresa reluctantly left their well-established livelihoods in Simpang Tiga to fulfil their duty

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15 A large number of East Timorese hold Portuguese citizenship and are able to get a passport that enables them to travel abroad in pursuit of education and employment.

as sacred house custodians. Females in Lesuai clearly had little decision-making powers in the kin group and wider community. Returning to the earlier point on new subjectivities, *intra*-neighbourhood relationships between local subjects will be tested as people settle across multiple places and come to hold conflicting views of 'community' and 'neighbourhood'.

The ancestral settlement is increasingly tied economically to a number of destinations where family members currently dwell. The circulation of monetary remittances and everyday household items allow those living elsewhere to contribute to household and community economics at the places of origin (McKay 2006a: 201). Tiu Augusto is a beneficiary of the emerging trend of rural migrants who move to the urban districts and abroad in search of livelihood opportunities. But his failure to re-distribute remittances from his sons within the kin group was consequently widely criticised. Family members who have no desire to return permanently, have in some cases, given back their inherited land and resources to the kin group. Such a gesture can be likened to Wise's observations on 'deferral strategies' among Timorese exiles who did not wish to return to East Timor. To ameliorate their sense of guilt of not returning to the *knua*, families voluntarily forfeited their inherited entitlements to land and family groves. Instead, they choose to participate in translocal practices of remitting money and material goods, attending to ritual activities and community matters (cf. Wise 2006: 197-198).

These translocalities inside the nation raise broader questions related to the creation of modern subject-citizens of the Timor-Leste nation-state. Local territorial imaginations, as Appadurai (1996, 2003) asserts, frequently exceed in importance to those of the nation-state, and local subjects pose a threat to the integrity of the nation-state and its perennial project of producing homogenous modern citizen-subjects. He further argues that the normative view held by state apparatuses tend to regard people's commitment to small scale neighbourhoods as subversive (e.g. migrant ethnic ghettos) and (mis)represents these social and cultural affiliations as primordial attachments. Indeed, this thesis has argued that the colonial imaginary of 'traditional' Timorese social life has been negatively associated with cultural backwardness. The Indonesian New Order state in particular took to the extreme by applying violence to reshape Timorese local subjects into modern Indonesian citizens. Forced resettlement into centralised settlements was a key strategy to shift the East Timorese's territorial allegiance to Indonesia.

Despite the colonial legacy of displacement, the Timor-Leste state continues to hold a normative view of Timorese local subjects and neighbourhoods. As discussed in Chapter Six, the proposed transitional land law on 'community land' (i.e. customary land) states that

titles will be granted dependent on evidence that proves claimants utilise land and natural resources based on 'norms of a social and cultural nature' (Article 23-25).[16] Translocalities consequently throw the Timor-Leste state's static view of rural Timorese sociality into disarray. The proposed law assumes that rural neighbourhoods are closed and 'place-bound' and that they are knowledgeable of 'traditional' practices. Such a view has little consideration of the impacts of forced displacement which have come to shape local subjectivities and change the character of the rural and urban social and political landscape. In particular, Timorese youths retain strong affective ties to the ancestral settlement but at the same time they have come to hold multiple registers of territorial affiliations that do not 'root' them at the ancestral land. Alternative evidence of 'attachment' that is not limited to place-based practices should be considered.

7.9   IMPLICATIONS OF TRANSLOCAL RELATIONS

As McWilliam (2005) has observed, and as I have demonstrated above, house-based affiliations are, and will continue to inform dimensions of Timorese social life for the foreseeable future. Socio-spatial practices such as the rebuilding of sacred houses and *wa'dae* contribute to the materiality of locality but they also serve a performative aspect of demonstrating one's origin and identity, kinship relations, and customary rights over land and property. The emotions and bodily experiences of individuals such as the brothers of Lari'gua and Tiu Marcel's ailing health can be taken as premised on the break down of emplaced moral communities, thus calling the need to maintain spiritual engagement with the sacred landscape.

What then is the future of rural Timorese sociality in relation to translocality? Since national independence, access to education has grown substantially with the opening of new tertiary and vocational institutions, and access to bilateral and multi-lateral scholarships. Employment opportunities have risen in Dili through the presence of the international aid and development agencies and the private sector. There is fierce competition amongst East Timorese for the limited scholarship and employment opportunities. In the process, the youth demographic is lured to Dili and increasingly absent from the rural districts, leaving behind a greying population base to support the agricultural sector. This migration trend poses broader questions for the viability of rural agriculture and national food security.

I turn once again to Wise's concluding thoughts on the Australian Timorese diaspora to guide my understanding of translocal communities inside East Timor. Wise states that members of

16 To complicate matters, an officer from the office of National Cadastre will determine if land use is in accordance with a 'social and cultural nature'. This process seems impractical considering each Timorese place-based communities have their own forms of customary practices.

the Timorese exile community who have chosen not to return are no longer embodying exile for they constantly talk about the possibility of return, engage actively in homeland-related projects, maintain news, gossip and circulate remittances to family and friends back in East Timor. For Wise, these gestures are equally symbolic of actual return, and mark the turning point from the state of exile to diaspora (Wise 2006: 199-200). Such a view disrupts the notions of repatriation as the ideal solution to displacement. It also unsettles the notions of an 'authentic' home or identity from which people are 'dislodged' and 'uprooted' (Malkki 1992; Cresswell 2006).

Rather than exhibiting characteristics of de-territorialisation or uprootedness, resettled Timorese families are actively planting roots in multiple sites, maintaining kinship ties with those who have returned, while continuing to be mobile between two or more places. In this manner, they have also taken the form of an internal *diaspora*. Yet the qualities of this internal diaspora are somewhat distinct to the overseas diaspora. For a start, return is an achievable feat. The level of social intimacy is also more intense as face-to-face interactions are a common occurrence and circumscribed social practices are readily activated (which are sometimes overbearing). In terms of living securely, most interlocutors felt secure that they could always return to the ancestral settlement to seek shelter during times of socio-political and economic uncertainty. Yet, families continue to assert claims in both the ancestral settlement and resettlement site to secure land and livelihoods.

The question remains if these local translocalities and internal diasporas are a long term solution or a transitional phase of displacement. Taking the perspective of the Mambai people, Traube (1986) proposes that the Mambai society is organised on opposing dual classifications (e.g. white/black, day/night, tip/trunk etc.), hence, dispersal and unity feature as one such pairing which informs social order within the Mambai system. She writes:

> Mambai conceive of their collective history as a steady movement away from plenitude, a passage from unity to diversity. Corresponding to the time of original unity is the image of the closed house, full and intact, shut off from the outside world of motion and change. But the place of origins is also the site of dispersal, and the house corresponds in its open state to the present time of separation and division.
>
> Traube (1986: 66)

Reflecting on Traube's statement about the ancestral settlement as a site of unity and dispersal, translocalities appear to be a 'durable solution' that is comparable to East Timorese orientation to life. My sense is that families resettled in Simpang Tiga and Foho Ailicu have relatively more secure land access and livelihoods than those in Mulia. Hence, the extended

community created 'between' the resettlement areas and origin settlement can be deemed enduring. The case of Mulia where settlers have limited social ties with customary landowners is less certain. There is an added layer of complexity with the interplay of the formal legal land laws which could influence settlers' presence in the resettlement areas.

7.10 CONCLUSION

This chapter has demonstrated that the socio-cultural effects of the Indonesian occupation have brought individual grief that extend into family and 'house' group suffering. There is an inherent spatial dimension to individual and collective ill-being, as the settlers are intimately tied to spiritual entities that reside in the ancestral land, hence, motivating them to return.

The reproduction of the ancestral settlement as a significant locality that informs Timorese social life has been examined in this chapter through three place-making dimensions: the material, the affective, and the social. Real repercussions are associated with abandoning the *knua* as it is intimately connected to the spiritual world. The importance of the spiritual realm as a 'source of fertility and life' as an aspect of Timorese social life cannot be undervalued (Hicks 2008: 175). Local place-making strategies serve the purpose of restoring intra-community relationships, where personal and collective well-being are secured through spiritual engagement and protection. Demonstrated in the case study of the family of Lari'gua, the rebuilding of the sacred house at the ancestral grounds served to salvage individual and group prosperity. Similar rituals took place to ameliorate Tiu Marcel's rapidly deteriorating health. The incest taboo in Lesuai was also resolved through compensation made at the sacred house. These place-based practices are readily aimed at restoring social order and harmony in a range of settings, including domestic offences and land disputes (comparable to the peace-making process *(juramentu)* in Chapter Five).

Indeed, families in Simpang Tiga and Foho Ailicu - who are originally from Lesuai hamlet - have lived away from the ritual domain in a scattered fashion since the Portuguese times, due to shortage of cultivation land. Nonetheless, this dispersed settlement pattern has been intensified by Indonesian state-enforced resettlement, where families had to seek available land where possible through kin relations. The affective nature of belonging has consequently been reinforced to ameliorate the lack of actual place-based practices that link people to their place of origin. In the case of Lesuai, families disperse to their gardens and dwellings once the collective activities cease, leaving behind the sacred house custodians until the next gathering.

Whether momentary or permanent, return journeys are not all driven by nostalgia to recreate a place that was forcibly abandoned. Return journeys are pragmatic, tied to securing economic, social and political well-being. Customary norms, social obligations, and unequal power relations may be reinvigorated but the lived experience of displacement is unsettling the pre-established moral economy/community.

Protracted displacement as an intergenerational phenomenon also warrants further research. As captured in the youth perspectives, the 'old land' continues to hold importance as the source of origin and custom. Their affective ties to the ancestral land are strong despite their limited physical connection to the ritual centre. The continued significance of the ancestral settlement as the source of local cultural and territorial affiliations suggests that the colonial directives to veer the Timorese's allegiance to the modern nation-state were incomplete. As the Timor-Leste state continues the colonial legacy of creating citizen-subjects, albeit in a less violent manner, and legitimised by international non-government actors and agencies, it must be asked what role local cultural forms can play in the nation-building project (McWilliam 2005, 2008).

The ancestral settlement will remain a cultural mooring into the foreseeable future as demonstrated by the interlocutors' laborious efforts to maintain connected to the site. Nevertheless, with the steady expansion of Timorese mobility in the post-independence years, ideas and practices of belonging will continue to evolve. East Timor's overseas diaspora is now spread across wider geographical destinations and no longer confined to refugee communities. The Timor-Leste state is actively establishing geopolitical links with its neighbouring and allied states, which have increased educational opportunities, professional secondments, and vocational training overseas. Whether translocality is an enduring solution or a temporary measure in response to a rapidly changing socio-political context can be opened up for debate. Traube's (1986) suggestion that the ancestral settlement is a site of dispersal and unity certainly hints at the historical nature of translocality in a Mambai understanding of the world. As individual subjectivities transform through varied modes of movement, commitment to one's lineage, and correspondingly, to one's ancestral settlement will certainly be challenged even if return is possible.

Chapter Eight

Lessons learned from the Legacy of Internal Displacement

This thesis has examined the livelihood strategies employed by 'displaced' East Timorese to negotiate their existence under the impacts of internal displacement. I began with the perspective that internal displacement is a process, and its effects dynamic. I traced the 'genealogy' of internal displacement and its contemporary manifestations to illustrate that internal displacement in East Timor reflects the confluence of conflict, state territorialisation, nation-building and development. This challenges the dominant perception of internal displacement as a product of conflict. One effect of this perception is that 'displaced' East Timorese are perceived as powerless victims of conflict, which obscures their capabilities. I therefore sought to derive a nuanced understanding of internal displacement by engaging in local experiences and perspectives to suggest that 'displaced' East Timorese are actively responding to the effects of displacement through innovative strategies that have enabled them to find 'enduring solutions' between their places of origin and sites of resettlement.

By mapping the history of internal displacement, I revealed that the phenomenon has been a constant facet of East Timor's history (Chapters Two and Three). Displacement and dispossession prevailed historically due to the country's ecology that compelled the East Timorese to move in search of better livelihood opportunities. Inter-clan rivalries and warfare also commonly caused groups to lose their territories and seek political allegiance elsewhere. Displacement under Portuguese colonialism brought larger social impacts (Chapter Two). The dispossession of local populations was induced by increased military capabilities, and gained momentum through colonial interest in capital. The East Timorese were therefore displaced from their land and forced to contribute labour to facilitate profits. The populations resisted the effects of colonial territoriality by staging revolts or evading the payment of taxes. However, this was met with increased military violence, forced resettlement, political exile, reorganisation of local administrative structures and the establishment of a legal framework to justify dispossession and displacement. Development programs characterised Portuguese rule only after WWII, where the government sought to 'modernise' and 'improve' Timorese peasant farming. However, colonial hegemony was incomplete when the Portuguese left.

The Indonesian occupation of East Timor carried out state territorialisation practices on a much larger scale to integrate East Timor as Indonesia's twenty-seventh provincial territory (Chapter Three). Only after the Indonesian authorities had successfully 'pacified' the majority of the East Timorese through violent means, did development pursuits override security concerns. The 'strategic camps' became spaces to establish order and development, reshaping local livelihoods in a Foucauldian sense. New Order state ideology (*pancasila*) permeated in all realms of East Timorese village life. The Indonesian regime funnelled large amounts of resources into the resettlement sites, raising the living standards of the East Timorese, and at the same time, to serve the broader goal of moulding local subjects into Indonesian citizens.

A thorough examination of the territorialisation practices under Portuguese colonialism and the Indonesian occupation was necessary to challenge the prevailing perception that displacement in East Timor is a consequence of conflict. Territorialisation strategies did not merely involve technical feats of drawing lines on maps, moving people from the mountains to the coasts, or imposing new laws and regulations; they were embedded in cultural discourses of western 'civilisation' and economic 'progress' to rectify perceived impoverishment and backwardness.

I then turned my focus on the livelihood practices of settlers in Mulia and Simpang Tiga (Chapters Four and Five). I demonstrated that the consequences of displacement 'on the ground' are complex and dynamic. The negotiations of displacement, land and livelihoods are shaped by the particularities of place; these particularities involved the intermingling of kin and social relations, economic practices, local histories of land, and cultural ideas of authority and origin. Most settlers faced shortages of cultivable land due to the highly concentrated living arrangements in the resettlement areas. As a result, settlers pursue multi-sited livelihoods to gain access to more parcels of cultivation land. Settlers in Mulia are particularly disadvantaged by the fact that they do not share pre-existing kin and martial ties with the customary landowners, and consequently they have limited tenure security. The pursuit of multi-local livelihoods is similarly practised by settlers in Simpang Tiga who move across into the village of Foho Ailicu to gain access to communal 'sacred land', and return to Daisua during the coffee and betel nut seasons to harvest their family plantations.

In both study areas, a large proportion of settlers strategically 'split' their family members between the resettlement site and ancestral domains to maximise the benefits offered at each site. Families with children who are attending school, or who are engaged in wage employment, or who trade their crop produce, tended to reside in the resettlement sites to take advantage of the accessible road, public transport, market and education facilities. Older

members of the family tended to return permanently to reside at the ancestral land to watch over the lineage sacred house (*uma lulik*). The temporal and spatial dimensions of coping with displacement thus become apparent. Displaced East Timorese have taken advantage of their predicament to navigate their own livelihood trajectories, and although livelihoods are predominately derived from the land, people are diversifying into non-land based livelihoods, such as fishing and rock quarrying, in the case of Mulia.

Furthermore, I included the voices of the host communities, whose perspectives and experiences of accommodating settlers, willingly or unwillingly, are often neglected in displacement studies. They too have had to negotiate displacement, land and livelihood by dealing with the arrival of kin and non-kin and sharing their resources. Considering that the customary landowners of Tekinomata, Simpang Tiga and Foho Ailicu are equally dependent on the land for their livelihoods, their ability to find 'common ground' with settlers illustrate the creativity and resilience of people in adapting to the living circumstances of displacement. In broader terms, this can be taken as an exemplar of *praxis*, that is the creative ways people as active subjects, respond and adapt their social practices and cultural ideas to produce and reproduce society (Giddens 1979: 4; Li 1996: 509).

Accordingly, customary institutions and land tenure contracts have shown great capacity to rework under political duress in order to accommodate 'outsiders', beyond the immediate members of the lineage or 'house'. I illustrated that local livelihoods are premised on the ability to gain, and maintain access to customary land. On the other hand, struggles over rightful land ownership are a separate process to the negotiation of land access. Therefore, there are limits of the negotiability of customary tenure (Fitzpatrick and Barnes 2010). Land conflict periodically surfaces over competing claims to ownership (which are based on divergent understandings of land associated with genealogies, origin myths, historical and current land use), but access to gain livelihoods on a day-to-day basis are of a different type of negotiation. My analytical focus on land access highlights the limits of attending only to ownership, which overlooks the power relations at work between customary landowners and settlers, kin and non-kin as they contest and negotiate the use of land.

The legal provisions of 'special adverse possession' and 'community land' under the proposed Transitional Land Law have potentially negative effects on customary landowners and displaced populations residing on customary land. The multidimensional character of land is treated in disparate and contradictory ways. While the promotion of private land titles seeks to enable individuals to invest economically in land, the concept of 'community land' seeks to protect collectives from engaging in the market economy (cf. Li 2010: 387).

The provision of 'community land' does not take into consideration that it might be difficult for displaced people to establish their claims through generations of living away from their ancestral territory. The 'community' is moreover privileges group stewardship over individual members' interest. In this perspective, both private land titles and 'community land' titles will most unlikely address the underlying power dynamics.

Chapter Six built on the preceding ethnographic chapters to contextualise 'internal displacement' and 'internally displaced people' in the East Timor setting. I highlighted the methodological and conceptual difficulties in studying displacement and displaced people in Chapter One. In this chapter, internal displacement in East Timor has resulted from the long history of state territorialisation practices and 'national development' projects which served to expand and consolidate bureaucratic state power (Ferguson 1994; Winichakul 1994; Vandergeest and Peluso 1995). Displacement and dispossession were disciplinary techniques of the modern state to reshape local landscape and livelihoods according to their visions. Hence, social conflict ensued not only with the clashing of local and 'national' aspirations (or the clash between different modes of territoriality), but amongst local populations who have come to adopt divergent ideas and allegiances. *Conflict-induced* displacement and *development-induced* displacement can therefore be considered as mutually constitutive processes in the East Timor setting.

Chapter Six continued with the conceptualisation of 'internally displaced people' in East Timor. I voiced my concerns about the representation of displaced East Timorese and stated that I have chosen an 'agency-focused' representation of interlocutors (Chapter One). As Li (1996: 502) points out, all representations are partial and vested with interest, therefore, I sought to examine how displaced East Timorese are represented by various actors across different scales to explore the specific outcomes they seek to achieve. Examining the work of the Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation (CAVR), 'displaced' people are portrayed as 'victims' and 'survivors' of war. The Timor-Leste government and political leaders, by contrast, advance a narrative of local 'heroism'. These official discourses in turn contrast with self-representation of displaced people, who emphasise resilience and victimhood in anticipation of state benefits. As my empirical findings suggest, displaced people engage in local and national identity politics to secure land and livelihoods in the aftermath of displacement. Settlers in Simpang Tiga sought to make their extended kin networks visible to maintain access to 'sacred land', whereas settlers in Mulia unsuccessfully sought to establish that they were historically within the administrative boundaries shared with customary landowners. In turn, they sought to gain recognition from the Timor-Leste state. By engaging with national representations of displaced people, interlocutors are

arguably creating a 'practical discourse of displacement' (Hartnack 2009: 354), where they employ practical and discursive strategies to negotiate power relations and access to resources (from customary landowners and the state). In this manner, 'internally displaced persons' are revealed to be qualitatively different, heterogeneous, and purposive actors faced with diverse historical and political circumstances (Malkki 1995; Turton 2003).

I also showed that the national authorities have represented historical waves of displaced people differently to the urban IDPs of the 2006 crisis. While historical waves of displaced East Timorese were presumed to have overcome displacement on the basis that they have gained resources to resume livelihoods in both the areas of resettlement and ancestral land, the urban displaced people were considered vulnerable and in need of external assistance – fitting in with the Guiding Principles' definition of 'IDPs' in the strict sense of the term. I further noted the divergence of local representations as interlocutors established themselves as independent as compared to their urban counterparts on the basis that they did not rely on state and international assistance. The 'IDPs' label has shown to be attached with social meanings (Brun 2003a), and constructed in relation to temporal (colonial versus post-independence) and spatial scales (rural versus urban).

Finally, Chapter Seven considered the enduring connection between displaced people and their ancestral settlement sites (*knua*). The ancestral land remains the nucleus of Timorese sociality insofar as it is the place of origin and ritual locus; a site of dispersal and unity (Traube 1986). I examined three place-making dimensions (of the material, affective, and social) that have restored the ancestral land with spiritual potency. The material place-making strategies of rebuilding the sacred house (*uma lulik*), conducting exchange practices and ritual ceremonies serve to reinvigorate East Timorese belonging and identity. Even though the majority of people no longer reside permanently at the ancestral land, they 'embody' the site through affective manners, such as through dreams and physical ailments. Physical and mental ailments are in turn attributed to spiritual retribution caused by neglected ancestor spirits who remain restless on the ancestral land, compelling their descendants to return to appease. them, and in the process, bestow them with prosperity. The negotiation of displacement, that is the decision to reside away from the ancestral domain in a prosperous manner, thus requires individuals to maintain their relationships with the place of origin and members of kin.

The prospect of return is achievable for interlocutors. Nevertheless, the lack of infrastructure, access to government services, and livelihood opportunities has discouraged them from returning. Taking into account families have invested large amounts of resources and

labour over the last three decades to recreate new livelihoods in the resettlement sites, they are consequently reluctant to move again without some form of formal restitution or compensation. In addition, because these families are not formally recognised as IDPs by the state or the international humanitarian community, return has been undesirable as it entails the mobilisation of their own resources, rather than through state and international assistance. To overcome their dilemma of de-territorialisation and re-territorialisation, interlocutors strategically locate themselves between the resettlement site and ancestral land. The limits of the 'durable solutions' to address situations of displacement is revealed here as interlocutors are not emplaced in a single locality. The regular movement between the resettlement site and ancestral land creates, 'an extended space of belonging' (Wise's 2006: 165), a translocal space, that connects the two locales. This translocal space, I suggest is in itself an 'enduring solution', which will continue to be challenged and transformed by state territorialisation and development practices. I have presented here the complexity of rural land and livelihoods through a displacement perspective, which can inform the related themes of post-conflict land tenure, rural land and livelihoods, the ongoing development, and the implications of displacement for rural East Timor.

8.1 POST CONFLICT LAND TENURE

Across the road facing the Timor-Leste Presidential Palace, hangs a protest banner that reads 'the population needs housing, not a library' (Fig. 8.1). The residents of Aitarak Laran in Dili were protesting against the construction of the National Library on land they presently occupy. The construction of the library will be funded by an international oil company that has contracts to to explore Timor-Leste's offshore sovereign territory for oil and gas (Rede Ba Rai 2010). Approximately 53 families will be evicted from the site to make way for the proposed project (Rede Ba Rai 2010). Evictees stand to lose their livelihoods as vegetables sellers, small businesses and civil servants (AlertNet 2010). To date, the Timor-Leste government has offered compensation in the form of 'cash for land' to the affected households. However, different residents had different opinions and expectations regarding restitution.[1]

This urban tale may appear too far removed from this thesis's setting in the rural districts. But let me attempt to convince the reader otherwise, and in the process, draw out the practical implications of my analyses in the preceding chapters. Although this thesis has not examined the urban impacts of internal displacement, the Aitarak Laran case is

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1   At the time of writing, families were reluctant to leave the site without a similar restitution package given to the IDPs of the 2006 crisis (ICG 2010). As noted in Chapter Six, the urban IDPs received a restitution package amounting to USD 4500 per household. Moreover, the Timor-Leste government had not actively attempted to provide alternative housing for the evictees.

Fig. 8.1 Protest banner 'The population needs housing not library', Dili (Photo courtesy of Claudio Fernandes).

illustrative of the wide ranging post-conflict land struggles that are taking place across the country. The vast array of informal tenure arrangements remain unmapped and warrant further research to gain a sense of how land vulnerable groups negotiate land access. This land struggle is also exemplary of disconnect between state development ambitions and local livelihood aspirations, a thread that runs through Portuguese colonialism and Indonesian New Order occupation. In a similar fashion, the Aitarak Laran case is one in which the Timor-Leste government is potentially repeating history by carrying out a project that places the interests of the state over local everyday concerns to secure housing and a viable means of living.

Furthermore, the Aitarak Laran eviction case has mainly been discussed in the media in a largely technical language of 'squatters' occupying state land, and what procedures are appropriate for restitution. The rift between local people's concern over land and livelihoods and the Timor-Leste's state goal to achieve 'development' falls outside the field of vision. In this case the underlying politics of space, how state power seeks to organise and occupy space, is sidelined (cf. Stepputat 1994: 177). As noted previously, the Portuguese and Indonesian administrations carried out a host of territorialisation practices and 'development' schemes that had the disciplinary effects of reshaping Timorese livelihoods and attitudes for 'modern' livelihoods. As I have outlined in Chapter Six, there has been much focus on clarifying land ownership as a product of conflict. However, there must be equal scrutiny of state

territorialisation practices through the creation of land registration and formal land law, the demarcation of physical and symbolic land boundaries and state expropriation of land in the name of the public's interest.

Similarly, the politics of land, that is, how the underlying power dynamics influence who has access to and control over land and its benefits (cf. Borras and Franco 2010: 2-3) are overlooked. The Atarak Laran case is not only a struggle between the state and people. Non-state actors have entered the scene, in this instance, an international oil company and the international development and aid community that are supporting the building of the national library, which have consequently shifted the situated fields of power. Residents in Dili – the administrative hub of the international development and aid industry – are encountering new 'development' projects in the name of improving local standards of living. State expropriation of land is therefore legitimised on the grounds of improving access to education and literacy – the hallmarks of a 'developed' nation-state by international development measurements. How land is controlled is therefore becoming more complicated as it involves more actors and can occur through non-violent ways with the approval of the international development community (Peluso and Lund 2011). Although the evictees have not organised themselves, their reluctance to leave the site can be read as a form of resistance that contests national 'development' goals. The local resistance creates a space, at least a discursive one, to consider alternative development pathways that prioritise the everyday concerns of the East Timorese (for example, see Gibson-Graham 2006; McGregor 2007).

8.2   UNDERSTANDING RURAL LAND AND LIVELIHOODS

'When I returned some months later, they had not planted the new variety.'

Dili-based Australian agronomist

In November 2009, I worked as a short-term consultant on an Australian aid-funded agricultural program; a program that had been running in the country since 2001, with a focus on improving household food security through the introduction of new and improved native staple crop varieties to Timorese farmers. The program has received high praise from the Timor-Leste and Australian governments as an effective bi-lateral aid program that will reduce food insecurity and malnutrition rates. The program's extension into the rural districts in 2005 has the potential to increase crop yields by up to 159 percent (AusAID 2011). The program is moreover improving rural livelihoods as the farmers sell surplus crop yields in

the markets, and the income earned is mainly invested towards children's education and other household expenditure.

I shared my preliminary research findings with one of the program's team leaders, an agronomist who has many years of experience working in Asia. In turn, he shared a recent experience of distributing a new rice variety (*nakroma*) in the districts which had left him puzzled. The agronomist explained that he had been driving out in the districts on one occasion and stopped at an area of wet rice paddy fields. He approached the farmers there and explained the objectives of the aid program and gave them some improved rice variety seeds to trial on their plots. The agronomist returned to the rice paddies several months later and was disappointed to find that the farmers had not trialled the new variety – the reason they gave was that they were sharecroppers, and thus, they could not plant the seeds without the consent of the customary landowners. The customary tenure arrangement in the anecdote closely resembles the sharecropping arrangements established between Mulia and Tekinomata, where the landowners provide seeds and land access, while the sharecroppers contribute labour.

Understanding local land and livelihoods can clearly benefit rural development interventions in East Timor, such as the above food security program. Improving local livelihoods, agriculture and food security requires more than just introducing high-yielding crops or improved agricultural techniques suitable for the local contexts. How people gain access to land, how they negotiate, contest, and maintain access, who controls land access, people's understandings of, and relationship to, the environment, are all significant dimensions to take into consideration for any external land-based intervention and programs. Li (1996: 515-523) referring to the state interventions on upland communities in Central Sulawesi, brings the notion of 'practical political economy' into discussion. She outlines:

> a practical political economy of planned interventions should aim therefore to strengthen (or at least avoid undermining) the position of those who are already struggling on their own behalf, taking operational cues from an understanding of their knowledge and strategies.

Li (1996: 515)

In Li's viewpoint, more ethnographic research on place-based livelihoods is instrumental not only to understand the complexity of livelihoods, but also to pay attention to local social relationships and context-specific processes to produce meaningful longitudinal empirical data that can inform development policy and practitioners. Indeed, as I have demonstrated

through the case studies in Mulia and Simpang Tiga, the negotiations of land and livelihoods need to be understood in their place-specific settings.

8.3   ONGOING AND INCOMPLETE DEVELOPMENT

In James Ferguson's (1994) seminal work, *The Anti-Politics Machine*, he shows that development projects may 'fail' overall, but the impacts they leave behind are concrete and powerful. Referring to a Canadian government-sponsored agricultural development program in Lesotho, Ferguson argues that the program's failure did not prevent powerful and lingering effects on local livelihoods (Ferguson 1994: 251-256). Although farmers in the Thaba-Tseka region did not adopt introduced crop farming or livestock keeping, the program facilitated the building of a road, and a host of public services were made available in the area to the benefit of the local people. The central government was also able to establish a local presence in Thaba-Tseka. Ferguson (1994: xiv-xv) notes that it is important to understand what development interventions do, for whatever the outcome may be, they bring about real social consequences. In doing so, mapping out the social effects of development brings the social scientist a step closer to critiquing the dominance of the 'development problematic'.

I have attempted to provide a lens to understand what displacement does, and its on-going social effects at the local level by examining historical state territorialisation processes in East Timor. Although the Portuguese and Indonesian regimes did not completely establish territorial control over the local populations, the New Order technocrats, and to a lesser extent colonial authorities, built roads, bridges, and basic government services in the rural districts. Furthermore, the advancement of 'modern' village life in the Indonesian resettlement sites has had far reaching effects. Displaced people in Mulia and Simpang Tiga prefer to remain in the resettlement sites, despite the lack of land tenure security, in order to gain better access to towns, health care, school, employment and telecommunications. Even displaced people who returned to reside permanently in their ancestral land are demanding the Timor-Leste government make basic services, such as piped water, electricity and sealed roads, available in the remote mountainous settlements.

Most of the rural Timorese constituency now espouse what they call *modernu* (modern) desires. These include good access to education, health care, clean water, reliable electricity, and information (including the internet); they want to be connected to transportation routes and towns; they want to earn a wage or study abroad. These local attitudes and aspirations are those which the Portuguese and Indonesian regimes precisely sought to cultivate in their respective 'civilising missions'. Paradoxically, the incomplete Portuguese state enterprise together with the unfinished New Order development agenda have laid the foundations

for the Timor-Leste government to expand its own power and territorial control over the populations and conversely, for the rural East Timorese to make what they see as legitimate demands upon their state.

By paying attention to the underlying politics of displacement, I have also demonstrated that 'development' processes have had a long and troubled history in East Timor. 'Development' did not begin in the 1999 post-referendum period with the fervent assistance of the international aid donors and their army of 'expert' consultants, and humanitarian and development actors. Rather, I have shown that it began in the final days of the Portuguese colony and intensified under the Indonesian 'New Order' rule.

Development imperatives that seek to improve on previous unsuccessful improvement schemes, as Li (2007) points out, are ongoing and incomplete. The Portuguese and Indonesian administrations departed East Timor hastily, bringing their respective development agendas and nation-building projects to an abrupt and incomplete end. As I have argued above, however, their colonial legacies have endured, and continue to shape rural Timorese livelihoods. Li (2007) argues that the failure of development projects to achieve what they set out to do ends up fueling the need for improved interventions and expert knowledge, and this becomes an endless perpetuating cycle of improving on failed projects. Li states that the *will to improve* these failed development projects is insatiable:

> The *Will to Improve* draws attention to the jarring gap between what is attempted and what is accomplished. It also highlights the persistence of this will – its parasitic relationship to its own shortcomings and failures. The will is stubborn, but it is no mystical geist or teleology (emphasis in the original).

(Li 2007: 1)

The persistence of this 'will to improve' is most evident in the Timor-Leste government's development strategy. The Timor-Leste Strategic Development Plan 2010–2030 (SDP 2011) reveals how contemporary development planning is simply following in the shadows of historical development undertakings. Foremost, the imagery of East Timor as a former 'neglected colony' and 'fledging' nation-state characterised by perceived poverty continues to pervade official thinking. The Plan envisions East Timor turning into an 'upper middle income' country within the next two decades, in which 'the development gap' with its prosperous Asian neighbours will be narrowed (SDP 2011: 200).

The Timor-Leste government proposes its development agenda as one that is 'harmonised within the region, applicable to the country context and based on the physical and cultural

fabric of the country' (SDP 2011: 3). In this sense, the government is most unlikely to take a violent and coercive approach to 'development' as did the previous two regimes. The government is being assisted by international donors and development institutions that have further shown a gradual shift in their post-conflict/post-independence engagement, in support of place-specific, local knowledge, bottom-up approaches. But it remains to be seen how well this discourse of 'post-development' intervention translates directly into a change in practice in East Timor (McGregor 2007).

The language used in the Timor-Leste Strategic Development Plan reveals an assumed linear, unidirectional, neo-classical economic path to progress.(2) Rural East Timor figures within this broader narrative as a 'subsistence' rural economy that requires commercialisation to improve the lives of 'progressive farmers' (SDP 2011:112). The Plan re-emphasises that approximately 75 percent of the East Timorese population reside in the rural districts. Agriculture makes up 30 percent of non-oil GDP and, consequently is a vital economic sector (SDP: 111-120). The Strategic plan thus envisions that the agricultural sector will transform dramatically over the next two decades into a 'high-yield' and 'commercialised smallholder' agriculture with the addition of light industries to service the high revenue generating oil and gas sector (SDP 2011: 9).

Whether the Plan has adopted a 'development' vision that is culturally fitting is questionable. For the most part, the document lays out principally a neo-classical economic development path; that is the integration of East Timor's economy into the global market, private sector partnership, and the commercialisation of agriculture to bring the country out of poverty. The United Nations Human Development Report (UNDP 2011: 7) similarly puts forth the need to make regulatory frameworks conducive to foreign investment to encourage growth in technologies, employment and labour skills. The dominant idea that private investment will lead to a direct increase in employment and wage income, which in turn reduces poverty, makes little mention of building on existing socio-cultural norms and place-based practices that underpin present rural livelihoods.

8.4 IMPLICATIONS OF DISPLACEMENT FOR RURAL EAST TIMOR

In this concluding section, I briefly consider the impacts of displacement in rural East Timor. Rural Timorese livelihoods are translocal to the extent that families remain geographically dispersed. In the next decade or so, this will increasingly be influenced by the introduction of formal land laws, and state agricultural and development programs. As I have discussed in Chapter Seven, some rural East Timorese have historically lived in a translocal manner in relation to their ancestral settlements with the impacts of state territorial control, civil strife,

and development have extended and intensified translocal relations. Rural families are now dispersed across wider geographical and social distances. New social, cultural, economic and political freedoms gained through independence will continue to extend and reshape rural life.

Although socio-economic mobility has expanded beyond familiar environments in the rural districts, these opportunities to improve local livelihoods are more readily seized by those endowed in specific places with inherited landed wealth and historically prominent social status −the customary landowners in Tekinomata are a case in point. Taking into account the fact that this research was undertaken during a time of political instability, there may have been a higher than conventional rate of mobility between rural-rural and rural-urban areas. What is clear from my empirical observations however, is that the scale and pattern of rural mobility are still not well-recorded. In particular, there are high rates of everyday and small-scale circular movements taken by youths as they travel between districts to reside with kin members in pursuit of (secondary, tertiary, and vocational) education as well as casual employment.

The longstanding circular patterns of rural-urban mobility attest to the extensive kin and social networks between the districts (Ranck 1977; Guterres 2003). Remittances flow back and forth through these social networks, and in doing so, create and maintain translocal relations, forming essential social and economic safety nets that are mobilised in times of socio-political uncertainty. The thesis has not explored East Timor's increasing integration into the global economy, but the process is likely to bring social and economic transformation in rural East Timor.

The emergence of extended translocal families and communities implies that return to former places of residence is less predicable among 'displaced people'. Furthermore, the East Timorese commitment to their ancestral land is increasingly unsettled. In particular, youth populations born and raised in the resettlement sites, and further afield, do not have tangible memories inscribed in the ancestral territory; they engage in material place-making strategies that restore the ancestral settlement with ritual potency only once or twice a year. Nevertheless, they still hold a strong sense of local identity and belonging, and the ancestral land remains the point of origin and ritual locus. Affective belonging, I suggest, comes ahead of actual material practices for this progressively mobile generation. The inter-generational impacts of displacement therefore warrant ethnographic research.

Elsewhere in the Rural South, contemporary studies of rural livelihoods suggest the heralding of a 'post-agrarian' future (Chambers and Conway 1992; Ellis 2000; Rigg 2006). Rural land use is increasingly converted and livelihoods are no longer solely tied to land-based resources, but instead becoming more diversified, mobile and less predictable. Longitudinal studies from Asia and Africa show a comparable pattern of an ageing demographic of farmers and a larger proportion of rural households receiving income from non-farm activities (Rigg 2006). In the case of rural East Timorese, I suggest that the foreseeable future remains one intimately linked to land and agriculture, for social, cultural, political and economic reasons. However, evidence from Mulia and Simpang Tiga suggest that translocal relations within and outside East Timor are beginning to transform rural life. For settlers in Mulia, they have begun to diversify their livelihoods into non-land based activities to overcome insecure land tenure. The out-migration of youth populations in both sites signals a 'greying' rural demographic, which will bring implications for the viability of smallholder agriculture in varied ways – in particular heralding a shortage in rural labour. If this were to motivate the Timor-Leste government to intensify agricultural production through mechanisation, improved crop varieties, or land leases, it may bring new challenges for 'displaced people', and the rural constituency at large.

Conducting his research in Dili in the final years of Portuguese rule, Ranck (1977) suggested that the rural districts are closely tied socio-culturally and economically to Dili. He writes:

> ...because information and resources were all flowing in both directions in some cases. Kinship ties were often maintained and strengthened between the rural and urban environments as the Dili migrant used his rural kin for discounted purchases of food stuffs and the rural kin might use the urban migrant as a base from which to educate their children. At this level, there was no rural-urban dichotomy, rather continued interaction, and communities thus stretched across the colony and would have served to further diffuse ideas of Westernisation.

Ranck (1977: 238)

What is relevant from Ranck's observation is that the rural 'hills' (*foho*) are never isolated or completely separated from the urban 'towns' (*vila*). Following this perspective, I suggest that the rural translocal networks meet with the urban diaspora at some spatial and temporal point, and that both in turn, intersect with the external Timorese diaspora spread across the globe. The impacts of internal displacement, over the long term, can therefore link with, or transform into, other modes of migration (Van Hear 2006). Adopting a similar viewpoint, Castels (2003) recognises that 'forced migration' is rapidly becoming a significant dimension to understand social transformation in the contemporary world. Castels (2003: 23-30)

advocates the need for 'forced migration' studies to expand their methodologies beyond 'nation-state boundedness' to include transnational social relations. This transformative aspect of displacement is instrumental to understanding the changes in East Timor's rural sociality.

As I sought to demonstrate in Chapter Seven, displaced families have relatives who are currently in the urban areas or abroad due to additional livelihood opportunities that have arisen in the last decade. The translocal circulation within these families includes material goods, capital, information, and cultural values which flow both ways; consequently shaping and reshaping the subjectivities of those living abroad as much as those left behind in the rural districts. In the context of rapid rural-urban migration, this trend of translocality will most likely intensify in the near future. Comparisons can be made with rural landscapes and livelihoods elsewhere in the Rural South which are equally transforming as a result of globalisation, transnational, and translocal linkages (for example, see Bebbington and Batterbury 2001; McKay 2003; Rigg 2006) (3). Taken together, these studies illuminate the complexity of contemporary rural life by noting the assemblages of actors, networks, organisations, and institutions across multiple scales and their material effects on particular places.

This research has explored how rural East Timor is transforming due to the legacy of internal displacement. In spite of the overriding national narrative of the rural districts as characterised by 'subsistence' and 'traditional' rural livelihoods, there have been radical changes made to rural landscapes and sociality in the most mundane ways. Rural East Timorese are not simply recovering from the impacts of occupation and conflict. They have had to contend with colonial visions of progress and the planned interventions to achieve those visions. They are mobilising independently, innovatively, and drawing on all possible avenues to gain access to resources to respond to displacement. If these changing local rural realities are not taken into consideration, new state territorialisation processes and 'development' interventions will intersect with the lingering effects of displacement to produce more unexpected and unintended outcomes for rural livelihoods.

Acronyms

ABRI	Armed Forces of the Republic of Indonesia (Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia)
FALINTIL	Armed Forces for the National Liberation of East Timor
FRETILIN	Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
UN	United Nations
UNTAET	The United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (provided an interim civil administration and a peacekeeping mission in East Timor)

Acronyms

AIRBI	Armed Forces for Liberation of National Bersenjata Revolusic Nasibonal
BALINTFIL	Armed forces for the Nacional Liberation of East ...
FRETILIN	Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
UN	United Nations
UNTAET	The United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (vested in the interim with administration and peacekeeping roles in East Timor)

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Glossary

Adat (Indonesian term)	Custom or ritual practices
Aldeia	Administrative hamlet
Chefe de Aldeia (Portuguese term)	Chief of hamlet
Chefe de Suco (Portuguese term)	Chief of village
Fetosaa	Wife-taking group
Funu	Conflict or war
Juramentu	Customary peace-making agreement; oath
Knua	Ancestral settlement or customary domain
Lia Nain	lit. Owner of the words (community elder or leader)
Lisan	Custom or ritual practices
Liurai	lit. Lord of the land (indigenous ruler, king, noble leader)
Lulik	To be forbidden; sacred; taboo; magic
Mestiço (Portuguese term)	Descendant of the marriage between Portuguese and East Timorese
Pancasila (Indonesian term)	Indonesian State Philosophy
Povoçáo (Portuguese term)	Hamlet during Portuguese times
Rai Lulik	Sacred land
Reino	Customary socio-political domain; subjects; commoners
Suco	Administrative village
Uma Lulik	Sacred house; ritual house
Umane	Wife-giving group

The above terms are in Tetun language unless otherwise stated.

GLOSSARY

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APPENDIX I

An example of ritual chant held during a rice harvest ceremony in Tekinomata.

MAKKASAE	ENGLISH
Hali! Wena Wehali, naga noi naga hali kairabu wa we'e were male male woi we'e-re	Be brave! Don't be afraid of the Men that are putting you into the baskets. For
Hai teni e'rei diwerei hai teni we labak ere	without you (rice), these men cannot live
Gi tna mutu'u de'I ou, Gi tana mutu'u basal ou	Stand your ground, don't be afraid!
Hau mi-mi la bou Hau na-na la ou	You have a sword, which you can use to stab the
Werau nau aga	men. He will be afraid and he will retreat.
Werau nau ria	Walk like a man, walk like a female, don't be
Ai si Girau ai oro girau nau tu deder la ou	afraid of the men who comes in front or behind
Nuu tu Lasi-Lasi la hou	you.
Lawa wali Gila'a warutana gila'a ou	Walk like a female with earrings (Lawa), walk like
Hali malikai! We na wehali naga na naga hali	a man with clothing. So don't be afraid.
kaira'buwa we'e were male-male wai we'e re	If you are tired, you can take a rest.
Seu ene gini bere nawu ene gini bere	Don't run away. You (spirits of rice) can arrive
Hai teni e'rei diurei hai teni e'rei ta'a ere	slowly, you can arrive at night, and you can arrive
Ai Si Girau Ai Oro Girau Nau Tu Deder	in the morning after you are clean
La Nau Tu La Si-La Si La	To the Spirits of rice already stored in homes,
Noi Gi La O Bei Gi La O	come and join your friends here (i.e. rice that is
Lawa Wali Gila Waro Tana Gila	still in the field being divided) and go back with
Rara La Ra Ba-Ra Ba La	them to their homes.
Hau Mi-Mi La Hau Na-Na La	(To all the spirits of rice) Come back here,
Werau Nau Ria	Enter from the edge of the mat, or enter from
Werau Nau La'a	the middle of the mat.
Kounu Dete Qerata Sare-Te Qerata	
Ai La Du Isi	
Ai La Oma Isi	
Ai La Iti Gata*	
Ai La Ara Gata**	
Leu Do'o Mau Qar Do'o Mau	
Biti Usu Mida Biti Qali Mida	

*Iti Gata = literally calve/lower leg – refers to rice which have been eaten by birds
**Ara Gata = literally thigh – refers to rice which have fallen to the ground unintentionally, let all of their spirits come here to this area

APPENDIX II

Sacred Houses in Daisua Village

Hamlet (*aldeia*)	Houses/Lineage Groups (*uma boot*)	Subsidiary Houses (*uma kiik*)
Lesuai	Dato-rai (*manê*) Caldat (*feto*) Nau-hul (*feto*) Luarpu Luley	Amiglau (within Caldat) Neutura (within Caldat) Aisaifu (within Nauhul) Sorlae (within Nauhul) Aidahafu (within Luarpu) Buifu'u (within Luarpu) Badae (within Luley) Fusu (within Luley)
Riatu	Rae Goulora Umaen Fusu Leonaro Arbau Ulu Hin Haet Lau Cab Heu Leol Sae Daot Nai Hael Airetlau	Undisclosed
Lesulau	Um Babulu Um Bei Um Manaru	Undisclosed
Daisua	Um Dato (*aman, manê*) Hamotuk/Tauloko (*feto*) Leulu Dairema	Kak (within Um Dato) Burot (within Dato) Betufu (within Hamotuk) Darpu (within Dairema) Heu (within Leulu) Lespu (within Leulu) Ulut Malaepu (within Leulu) Tarbab (within Leulu) Agarnora (within Dato) Hakoil (within Dairema)
Loti	Loto (*inan-aman*) Leo Ai Kiik Mane Ikun Tetek Mata Wa Bali Mau Buti – Ber lai (*maun-alin*)	Klara (within Kiik) Mau Lelo (within Kiik) Fahe (within Kiik) Cabu (within Kiik) Wa Bali (within Mane Ikun) Tetek Mata (within Mane Ikun) Rama (within Tetek Mata)

Sacred Houses in Daisua Village continued

| Hamlet (*aldeia*)	Houses/Lineage Groups (*uma boot*)	Subsidiary Houses (*uma kiik*)
Loti	Les Koli Mau Teni	Da Loko (within Wa Bali)
Roin	Babulu Sakan Tetimale Um Badain Usubu Opour Roin Herin Se'umali	Undisclosed.

APPENDIX III

The customary domains of Babulu and Leolako are featured as paired place names in this oral tradition that traces a series of place names across East Timor.

Nai Feto	Nai Mane
Gruto-Caldaitsi	Suru Rai Gulora (Ainaro – Riatu)
Rotuto-Boiloko	Loro Babulo*
Lucil Leomali-Letefoho	Uma luli - Tauardi
Huan Manufahi	Builit - Liurai
Cassa Lau-Usu	Trilolo - Lokbes
Tutulu-Maubis	Caltais- Sulhati
Alas-Kaluay Bereluay	Libluli-Ahimau
Fahe- Nia (Alas)	Luay-bere Maubisee
Uma Ai Ne Ci – Makerek (Alas)	Sitai-Bertai (Aileu)
Hat-Belihu (Alas)	Likidoai-Maula (Aileu)
Uma Luay mau-Bermau (Fateberliu)	Remexio-Uma Asmau
Luca Viqueque	Ciltai-Lokbako
Ossu-Hosurua	Tai Siri- Mau koli
Babulo-Be Soro	

*Leolako is represented by the senior most ritual house/lineage group of Loro. Refer to Appendix Two to see the lineages that constitute Leolako in present-day Loti hamlet in Daisua village.

APPENDIX IV

A local order of precedence in Daisua village.
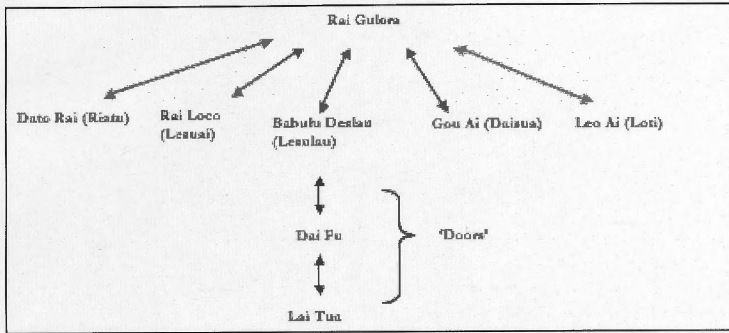
The order of precedence in ritual and political functions manifests in an actual territorial hierarchy in Daisua village. Low-ranked houses or lineage groups are referred to as 'doors' (*oda matan*), which lead the path to senior houses (*uma boot*). For certain ritual ceremony attendance, one may not directly enter the senior houses, such as Rai Gulora without passing through the 'doors' (cf. Corte-Real 1998: 73-74).