

**Anna Marjukka Rissanen**

**Island of Insecurity?**

**A critical examination of insecurity and its effects on  
emancipation in Timor-Leste**

**University of Tampere  
School of Management  
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## **ABSTRACT**

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This thesis studies the multiple meanings of insecurity in Timor-Leste with two core objectives: Firstly, to categorize the sources of insecurity from the individual's perspective and reveal any common root causes for these insecurities, and secondly: to expose 'bottlenecks' or 'constraints' that impede the emancipatory process in Timor-Leste. While attempts are made to categorize insecurity in the various ways in which it emerges from the personal narratives of a group of East Timorese, there is no intention to produce any generalizations about the country or make comprehensive theoretical claims.

The Welsh School theory of security and the postmodern feminist approach are drawn upon to establish the theoretical framework for the study. Both approaches are complementary in the critical examination of insecurities and acknowledge the individual as the primary referent object of security. This allows for the access of knowledge which can only be obtained from the experience and everyday life of individuals.

The primary source of data consists of the narratives of 17 East Timorese individuals and interviews with 4 foreigners. The method used to analyze the data adopts 'the analysis of narratives' as postulated by Donald E. Polkinghorne.

The findings of the study illustrate the benefits of assessing insecurity from an individual's perspective and the insights this may have on the constraints to an emancipatory process. The results make a strong case for the involvement of more 'bottom-up' approaches in research and non-state driven initiatives in emancipatory politics.

Key words: Timor-Leste, security, insecurity, Welsh School, emancipation, Postmodern feminism, gender, narratives.

## ACRONYMS

Brimob	Korps Brigade Mobil (Indonesian National Police – Mobile Brigade)
GBV	Gender-based violence
Falintil	Forças Armadas de Libertação Nacional de Timor-Leste
F-FDTL	Falintil-Forças de Defesa de Timor Leste (Timor-Leste Defense Force)
FRETELIN	Frente Revolucionária de Timor-Leste Independente
MAG	Martial Arts Group
NGO	Non-governmental organization
PNTL	Policia Nacional de Timor-Leste (Timor-Leste National Police)
POLRI	Kepolisian Negara Republik Indonesia (Indonesian National Police)
SSR	Security Sector Reform
UN	United Nations
UNMISSET	United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor
UNMIT	United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste
UNOTIL	United Nations Office in East Timor
UNTAET	United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor
UNPOL	United Nations Police
TNI	Tentara Nasional Indonesia (Indonesian National Armed Forces)

## **GLOSSARY**

Adat	Customary law
Bairo	Part of town, neighbourhood
Barlaque	Bride price, dowry
Suco	Village, district

# 1. INTRODUCTION

*“Timorese people - it’s been a brutal history, so they have been dealing with violence a lot.”<sup>1</sup>*

Timor-Leste<sup>2</sup> is a small, Southeast Asian half-island nation that lies in the eastern part of the Indonesian archipelago and north from the Australian continent. The country has a dramatic past which contains 450 years of colonialism, military occupation and since 2002, unstable independence.<sup>3</sup> The history of Timor-Leste is one of violence and conflicts which continued after their independence.

After a series of violent attacks launched by the Indonesian military in 1999 that killed about 900 civilians and left over 60,000 homeless, the United Nations embarked on a project to build the democratic republic of Timor-Leste.<sup>4</sup> Under the guidance of several UN-led peacekeeping missions Timor-Leste became the target of an extensive and challenging state building project. The new state had to be established from scratch due to the lack of any existing democratic state structures after centuries of colonial administration and foreign occupation, as well as the wrecked physical infrastructure which was destroyed after the referendum in 1999. Consequently, building a democratic republic of Timor-Leste has turned out to be a complicated process, especially with regards to security.

Security, one of the main concepts within the discipline of International Relations (IR), has been mostly studied through traditional, state-centric approaches that have constituted the ‘mainstream’ of the field. Such mainstream approaches have been concerned with topics such as state, power and anarchy which have often overshadowed the domination of the people who are affected by international politics but are not in positions to get their voices heard.<sup>5</sup> In contrast, Critical approaches reject the state as the only referent object of security because the security of the state does not necessarily imply the security of the people. One function of the state is to provide security to its citizen but history has

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<sup>1</sup> “Nicolas” (an East Timorese interviewee – 40 years old)

<sup>2</sup> In the study, I will use *Timor-Leste*, the official name of the country, instead of East Timor. The adjective form and the term used for the inhabitants of the country remains ‘East Timorese’.

<sup>3</sup> Myrntinen 2010, 18.

<sup>4</sup> TLAVA 2009, 2.

<sup>5</sup> Whitworth 2001, 150.



shown that the state often poses threats to their people either through direct (e.g. ethnic cleansing, genocides) or structural violence (e.g. apartheid regimes).<sup>6</sup>

This thesis investigates the multiple meanings of security in Timor-Leste from the individuals' perspective. My research approach emerges from the critical security studies tradition. In this study, I combine *the Welsh School approach* with *the postmodern feminist stance* to hopefully present a comprehensive IR research paper. Like Ken Booth suggests, issues relating to gender, security and insecurity should not be “dumped” on the feminist schools but the agenda of feminist politics concerning security should be integrated into other critical approaches studying security.<sup>7</sup> The combination of both theories allow me to adopt a bottom-up approach in my study, theorize from the micro level and draw on knowledge which can only be obtained from the experience and everyday life of individuals. By highlighting the insecurity in Timor-Leste in this way, I hope to “*question traditional notions of security whilst calling for new ways of thinking security*”.<sup>8</sup>

In summary, I argue that by studying insecurity from the individuals' perspective and adopting a bottom-up approach throughout analysis, it is possible to reveal threats and security concerns that cannot be identified through a state-centric perspective (e.g. top-down approach). Considering Timor-Leste for such an endeavor therefore serves to expose those hidden constraints on the emancipatory process within the country.

The history of Timor-Leste presents a thought-provoking challenge for an International Relations student interested in the region of Southeast Asia. I find its context very interesting especially as the political oppression, which took the form of colonialism and then occupation, has restricted the freedoms of people and now resulted in a record of recurring violence and conflicts.

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<sup>6</sup> Wibben 2011, 21.

<sup>7</sup> Booth 2005c, 271.

<sup>8</sup> Wibben 2011, 26.

## 1.1. Research objectives

The Welsh School theory of security offers an interesting starting point for my study which aims to identify insecurities experienced by individuals in the context of Timor-Leste and in so doing, expose the possible unfulfilled potentialities that exist in the East Timorese society. In line with the thinking of Welsh School advocates, such an expose may highlight areas that could drive the society towards emancipation. While I intend to show the advantages of a pluralist approach in identifying the situations where the emancipatory politics can take place, I am also keen to highlight some of the ‘bottlenecks’ that may be inherent to a purely state-driven change programs in Timor-Leste. Thus my objectives can be summarized as follows:

- (1) to deepen the security agenda by taking different actors into consideration and thereby, to include individuals as referent objects of security
- (2) to broaden the field of security studies by enlarging the scope of research topics to include the security concerns of individuals (instead of security threats of the state)
- (3) to pay close attention and question the meanings and impacts of security policies on the everyday lives of people
- (4) to identify the sources of insecurities of individuals as well as to reveal some of the ‘hurdles’ affecting the emancipatory process
- (5) to categorize insecurity in the various ways in which it emerges from the named context, without making generalizations or comprehensive theoretical claims

In order to explore these aims, I will answer to following research questions:

- *What are the sources of insecurity for the East Timorese individuals?*
- *What are the underlying commonalities – root causes – that can be identified as conjoining factors of the sources of insecurity?*
- *What can be identified as constraints that hinder the ongoing emancipatory process in Timor-Leste?*

- *What can the sources of insecurity and common root causes tell about the complexities that are entailed in the relation between security and emancipation in the context of Timor-Leste?*

## **1.2. Thesis structure**

Following the introduction, in chapter two, I situate my research within the wider literature on the critical IR theory and in particular, on the critical approaches of security. Here, I also present the research methodology which contrasts with the dominant, traditional way in which security is usually studied. In chapter three, I discuss the selected theoretical approaches in more detail: The Welsh School and the postmodern feminism. In chapter four, I introduce the analysis methodology which is based on the concept of Narrativity explaining the advantage of the methodology regarding to my approach and data. This is followed by an overview of the history of Timor-Leste in chapter five. Chapter six consists of three sections: a detailed presentation of the data (i.e. interviews) gathered during the field trip in Timor-Leste, the interview approach, the applied method and thirdly, discussion regarding the challenges of the fieldwork process. In chapter seven, I attempt to answer my research questions and present the findings of the analysis. Chapter seven makes a case for the relationship between security and emancipation. In the final chapter eight, a summary of these findings and conclusions are stated.

## 2. THE PREMISES OF THE STUDY

### 2.1. The concept of security

Security is an important but also ambiguous and controversial concept in the field of International Relations (IR). It can be described as one of the main concepts within the discipline and has therefore generated a variety of theoretical approaches and schools of thought. Generally these approaches can be grouped as *traditional approaches* or *critical approaches* or alternatively, based on the categorization of Robert Cox, '*Problem-Solving Theories*' and '*Critical Theories*'.<sup>9</sup>

Political Realism has been a determining approach in the study and practice of IR, and it partly constitutes what is referred to as the 'mainstream' position in the discipline. The Realist approach dominated the security debate for a long time, since the IR as a discipline began to evolve from the 1920's. Although, the political Realism has had a dominating position amongst the traditional approaches, the term 'traditional security studies' refers also to other perspectives in the study of security, such as the Liberal approach, Peace Studies and Strategic Studies.<sup>10</sup> Common to all these so called 'state-centred' approaches is that they prioritize the state as the referent object of security, and emphasize the risk of military threats to security of the state.<sup>11</sup>

The end of the Cold War brought about a change to the then dominant realist agenda in Security Studies, with more critical approaches starting to expose the ethical limitations of the mainstream concept of security.<sup>12</sup> Since the mid 1990's the narrow security concept defended by realists, where the sovereign states, their behavior, military power and the preservation of international order were the focus, became increasingly criticized.<sup>13</sup> Simultaneously, the critical approaches to security started to expand changing the long standing traditional conceptualization of security in a definitive manner.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Peoples – Vaughan-Williams 2010, 4,18.

<sup>10</sup> Peoples – Vaughan-Williams 2010, 4

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Buzan – Hansen 2009, 205-206.

<sup>13</sup> Booth 2007, 28.

<sup>14</sup> Peoples – Vaughan-Williams 2010, 3.

Critical approaches do not recognize the state as the only referent object of security but rather try to emphasize a more comprehensive analysis related to the questions of security and insecurity. The alternative approach to security requires taking different actors into consideration and enlarging the scope of topics and research objects in the field of security studies.<sup>15</sup> Thereby, the emphasis changed from the state security to the security of the individuals, groups and marginalized people.<sup>16</sup> The critical IR has focused more on examining, which research questions are asked as well as, those that have not been asked at all - what gets included and what remains excluded and why?<sup>17</sup> In light of this, the goal of critical scholars has been to re-theorize and re-conceptualize security by asking fundamental questions like: *What does security mean? Whose security should be prioritized and secured? What causes a threat and how threats are identified? Who or what is in danger? Who is responsible for security and by which means? How can in/security be studied?*<sup>18</sup>

This critical stance, which can be seen as the other extreme of the theoretical continuum of security is the concept I adopt in my study – a view of security based on the holistic perspectives of the critical schools. Thereby, the formulation of my research question and approach of studying insecurity have both emerged from the critical theorizing.

## **2.2. The origins of critical IR theory and tradition**

The proponents of the critical approaches do not support a common political program but the critical theories all share a critical attitude towards the mainstream approaches, especially towards realism.<sup>19</sup> While the critical theorists are not dismissive of the realist perspectives as such, these ‘so called’ alternative scholars consider realism, despite its iconic name, as an unrealistic, static and partial theory in which perceptions about the world *as it is* (emphasis in original) are no longer the source of the one true legitimate knowledge about international

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<sup>15</sup> Booth 1997, 104-105. Buzan – Hansen 2009, 205-206.

<sup>16</sup> Nuruzzaman 2006, 289-290.

<sup>17</sup> Whitworth 2001, 150.

<sup>18</sup> Valenius 2007, 146.

<sup>19</sup> Booth 2005a, 5-6.

relations.<sup>20</sup> Critical scholars want to perceive a broader understanding of the discipline. They are interested in examining the issues which the mainstream approaches have excluded from their research and study the existing silences in the field of IR.<sup>21</sup> Still though, the critical schools are yet to develop a comprehensive theory which could fully replace traditional theoretical views within the field of IR.<sup>22</sup>

Critical theories oppose the positivist conception of knowledge and truth. They do not believe in achieving objective knowledge from the world, neither do critical approaches consider truth as correspondence to the facts – the facts are rather seen intertwined with the values.<sup>23</sup> Robert Cox states that “theory is always *for* someone or *for* some purpose”<sup>24</sup> (emphasis in original) which indicates that knowledge can never be value free. All knowledge always reflects the pre-existing social purposes and interests.<sup>25</sup> Cox emphasizes that knowledge is socially and historically produced and knowledge-producers are bound to their identities, interests and the contexts they live in.<sup>26</sup> People whose interests are not served by the global political and economic structures are easily marginalized and unheard. Critical theory is therefore well suited for the examination of people who are excluded, powerless and silenced in the light of the mainstream research.<sup>27</sup>

Critical theorizing entails theoretical reflexivity which enables the breakdown of the subject-object-distinctions.<sup>28</sup> Cox classifies positivist approaches as ‘Problem-Solving Theories’, in reference to their aim to solve problems within the existing structures and hereby reproduce them, for instance, by assuming that states are key actors in world politics and perceiving war between the states as the central problem to be ‘solved’.<sup>29</sup> Whereas critical theories, according to Nuruzzaman, try to question these prevailing structures and power relations in order to explain,

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<sup>20</sup> Booth 2005a, 5-6.

<sup>21</sup> Hutchings 2001, 82.

<sup>22</sup> Wyn Jones 2001, 9.

<sup>23</sup> Wendt 2001, 205.

<sup>24</sup> Booth 2007, 48.

<sup>25</sup> Rengger 2001, 97.

<sup>26</sup> Booth 2007, 48.

<sup>27</sup> Murphy 2001, 70-71.

<sup>28</sup> Booth 1997, 106.

<sup>29</sup> Peoples – Vaughan-Williams 2010, 18-19.

how certain systems have been established and how it is possible to change social, economic and political power structures.<sup>30</sup>

For Booth, one objective of the critical theories is to uncover and identify the deep rooted oppressive structures. Critical theories contain a normative commitment to a progressive change which can be perceived as the only way to affect factors causing insecurity in the everyday life of individuals and groups.<sup>31</sup> Once again, the emphasis of some critical theories is in emancipation, even though the multiple definitions of emancipation exist amongst the various strains of critical approaches. However, it must be acknowledged that some of the critical approaches, such as postcolonial perspectives, criticize the salient role of the concept of emancipation.

### **2.3. Situating critical approaches of security in the discipline**

There are many definitions of what “being critical” in security studies means. These definitions differ in accordance with the diverse array of perspectives that have become associated with this term: *critical security studies*.<sup>32</sup> In this section, I provide a brief overview of the theoretical approaches that can be identified as core stances within the tradition of critical security studies. However, more emphasis is placed on those perspectives that are directly relevant to my study.

The common categorization of critical security studies is based on three ‘schools’: *The Welsh School*, *the Copenhagen School* and *the Paris School*. Critical security studies also encompass other perspectives such as one based around the book: *Critical Security Studies. Concepts and Cases*, co-edited by Keith Krause and Michael C. Williams. Krause and Williams do not offer a specific theory of security in the book, nor do they claim to form one. The authors are not willing to define a particular critical approach of their own but rather, endorse pluralism and include an influence from different perspectives (excluding the mainstream approaches) into theorizing that allows a flexible understanding of the term critical security studies.<sup>33</sup> Nonetheless, this tripartite

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<sup>30</sup> Nuruzzaman 2006, 293-294, 299.

<sup>31</sup> Booth 1997, 106.

<sup>32</sup> Peoples – Vaughan-Williams 2010, 1.

<sup>33</sup> Smith 2005, 40-41.

geographical distinction does not include all the significant critical approaches which scrutinize the subject of security and insecurity within the discipline of IR. Therefore, in addition to the three schools, I outline the contents and importance of following critical approaches: *feminist*, *postcolonial*, *poststructuralist/postmodern* and *human security theory*.<sup>34</sup>

The critical theory of security, likewise the broader critical IR theory, includes various approaches which have a certain common ground in the theoretical tradition but they differ partly in their thinking, emphases and definitions. Richard Wyn Jones has distinguished two different views embodying the critical security studies. According to the first conception, critical security studies are perceived as a distinct project which aims to formulate an emancipation-orientated understanding of the theory and practice of security. The second view considers critical security studies as a broad label which includes all those approaches of security studies which reject the narrowly defined ideas of mainstream security studies.<sup>35</sup>

### ***2.3.1. The Welsh School***

The term *Critical Security Studies* (CSS<sup>36</sup>), which is often used interchangeably with the term *the Welsh School* or *the Aberystwyth School*, stands explicitly for the emancipation-orientated conception of the critical security studies. The Welsh School aims to develop a coherent and focused critical theory of security and to define more specifically the contents of the critical security studies and the directions the orientation should be guided.<sup>37</sup> Ken Booth, Andrew Linklater and Richard Wyn Jones are pioneering theorists of the Welsh School.

Ken Booth defines critical theory of security as a political orientation concerned with the questions of world security. It is derived from the universalistic nature of the critical theorizing and the approach perceives a more extensive set of reference points for security, including

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<sup>34</sup> Peoples – Vaughan-Williams 2010, 11.

<sup>35</sup> Wyn Jones 2005, 215.

<sup>36</sup> *Critical Security Studies* (CSS) refers to the specific critical approach known as the Welsh School/the Aberystwyth School. Whereas *critical security studies* refers to the broader range of critical views of studying security, including theoretical approaches with different nuances and emphases.

<sup>37</sup> Booth 2005c, 260.



individuals and communities from all cultures.<sup>38</sup> Booth emphasizes that the aim of the Welsh School is to merge the theoretical commitments to political practices at all levels. Hence emancipatory politics can be seen as the means to enhance security and promote freedom worldwide, aiming to free individuals and groups from structural and contingent oppressions such as war, poverty and dictatorship.<sup>39</sup>

The concept of emancipation is one of the most significant but also one of the most controversial notions emerging from the Welsh School security studies. The fundamental criticisms of the Welsh School have targeted the concept of emancipation: Firstly due to the lack of a universal definition of emancipation and secondly, on the origins of the concept which are rooted in a Western philosophical tradition and liberal ideas of European Enlightenment that raise the question of emancipation's applicability outside of a Western context.<sup>40</sup>

### ***2.3.2. The Copenhagen School***

The Copenhagen School, like the Welsh School, has its roots in political theory and in IR debates. So, while like the Welsh School, it repositions itself in relation to peace research and strategic studies working more on the field of international security, it is perceived as more of an analytical approach in contrast to the Welsh School's more normative character.<sup>41</sup>

The Copenhagen School has focused on analyzing the political construction of insecurity, danger and examining security as a 'speech act'. The approach has broadened the concept of security beyond the traditional military issues to include the environmental, economic, societal and political 'sectors'. It has tried to develop an analytical framework to define what constitutes a security issue in these sectors and what does not.<sup>42</sup> The process, through which an issue, military

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<sup>38</sup> Booth 2007, 30-31.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Peoples – Vaughan-Williams 2010, 29-30.

<sup>41</sup> C.A.S.E. Collective 2006, 446, 449. Peoples – Vaughan-Williams 2010, 10.

<sup>42</sup> Peoples – Vaughan-Williams 2010, 87.

or non-military, begins to present an existential threat to a referent object, is called ‘securitization’.<sup>43</sup>

Scholars such as Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver and Jaap de Wilde developed the ‘Securitization Theory’ and defined the concepts ‘security sectors’ and ‘security complexes’ which all core to the Copenhagen school.<sup>44</sup> Despite these groundbreaking contributions to critical security studies, the concept of securitization has come under criticism by other scholars. For instance, Lene Hansen has argued that the theory is unable to identify ‘the silent security dilemma’ - the implications being that if the subject of (in)security has no, or limited, possibilities of speaking its (in)security problems, the subject is not recognized at all.<sup>45</sup> Furthermore, Hansen has pointed out the lack of attention to the mutual constitution between security and identity prevalent in the Copenhagen School theorizing.<sup>46</sup>

### ***2.3.3. The Paris School***

The third school associated with critical security studies, the Paris School, concentrates more on questions of internal security with its foundation in political theory, criminology, law and the sociology of migration and policing (in Europe).<sup>47</sup> Therefore, unlike the Welsh or Copenhagen schools, it is viewed more as a sociological approach.<sup>48</sup> The Paris School theorists, such as Didier Bigo and Jef Huysmans, derive their conceptualizations of security from the French tradition, from the work of Foucault and Bourdieu.<sup>49</sup> The approach stresses the role of the institutionalization of the field of security, where security technology and expert knowledge have a great influence on the formation of modern society.<sup>50</sup> The Paris School aims to study for instance, how security professionals, bureaucracies and private security companies ‘do’ security

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<sup>43</sup> Peoples – Vaughan-Williams 2010, 87.

<sup>44</sup> Van Munster 2007, 235-236.

<sup>45</sup> Buzan – Hansen 2009, 216.

<sup>46</sup> Van Munster 2007, 238.

<sup>47</sup> C.A.S.E. Collective 2006, 446, 449.

<sup>48</sup> Peoples – Vaughan-Williams 2010, 10.

<sup>49</sup> Buzan – Hansen 2009, 217.

<sup>50</sup> Buzan – Hansen 2009, 217. Van Munster 2007, 238-239.

in everyday practices, ranging from policing to border control.<sup>51</sup> The approach is also concerned with the questions of ‘(in)securitization’ and ‘unmaking security’.<sup>52</sup>

The categorization between the Welsh, Copenhagen and Paris school is characteristic for the European debate within the critical security studies. Ole Wæver recounts how the new European approaches do not differ only from the security studies conducted in the US but are also distinct from most of the research done in other parts of the world.<sup>53</sup> Western Europe has been the main site for the development of these approaches and as Wæver states, it is one reason why the approaches are not named the Amman, Philadelphia or Calcutta Schools. Essentially Wæver problematizes the degree of ‘localness’ of these theories. He questions the extent to which the theories are concerned with solely European problems and their ability to flourish outside of Europe and how adoptable the theories are globally.<sup>54</sup> The Paris School has been specifically criticized for having a Eurocentric focus which might restrict its usage and adoption in other geographical contexts.<sup>55</sup>

#### ***2.3.4. Feminist theories***

Feminist scholars began to have an influence in International Relations from the 1980’s and their questions relating to security have been important research topics since then. Feminist theories cannot be classified as one ‘school’ but rather a group of multidisciplinary theories that include a large variety of epistemological and methodological approaches.<sup>56</sup> Nonetheless, feminist theories form part of the critical approaches to the subject of security and they have had a significant contribution to the study. Although all feminist theories have a common starting point and share the convergent views with the other critical approaches, feminist theories are often misleadingly viewed as separate from the critical approaches.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Peoples – Vaughan-Williams 2010, 9-10.

<sup>52</sup> Van Munster 2007, 239.

<sup>53</sup> Wæver 2004, 1-2.

<sup>54</sup> Wæver 2004, 1-2.

<sup>55</sup> C.A.S.E. Collective 2006, 446.

<sup>56</sup> Steans 1998, 16-29.

<sup>57</sup> Mutimer 2010, 47, 52-53.

Feminist theories as a whole oppose the notion that the state is the protector of the citizens and secures the society. Phenomena such as “rape as a weapon in war” and “ethnic cleansings”, demonstrate that the actions of the state itself can threaten the security of its citizens. This can be achieved, either by means of direct violence or through the impact of structural violence, rather than the involvement of the external actors.<sup>58</sup> These reasons have driven feminist scholars studying security to criticize the state-centric security concept and led to the re-theorizing of concepts like power and security in order the concepts to “respond better the world we live in”.<sup>59</sup>

There is no comprehensive and overarching feminist theory in the field of IR, neither is there one feminist research method. Feminist theories can be grouped for example, into liberal, radical, Marxist, psychoanalytical, postcolonial and postmodern approaches. Within IR however, a common categorization of feminist theories exists based on the classifications made by Sandra Harding.<sup>60</sup> Harding divides feminist theories into three stances: *empiricism*, *standpoint* and *postmodern* approaches. The division is based on the epistemological differences between the various theories.<sup>61</sup>

The feminist approaches focus mainly on the concept of *gender*. Gender here refers to roles, identities, behavior and relations between men and women in different social, political, economic and cultural circumstances. Gender encompasses both men and women and is related to interpretations about womanhood and manhood, in other words to femininities and masculinities. These feminist authors see the definition of gender as changeable over time and its meaning variable across different cultural contexts.<sup>62</sup> Unlike traditional feminists, most of the feminist work within security, including standpoint and postmodern, have adopted a constructive approach to gender. They do not deny the biological differences between women and men but state that the differences are mainly a product of socialization.<sup>63</sup> The opposite, essential view considers sex categories to be natural and static, meaning that certain features and characters are expected to be

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<sup>58</sup> Wibben 2011, 21.

<sup>59</sup> Wibben 2010, 85.

<sup>60</sup> Steans 1998, 16-29.

<sup>61</sup> Ackerly – Stern – True 2006, 7-8.

<sup>62</sup> Buzan – Hansen 2009, 139.

<sup>63</sup> Valenius 2007, 16.

common and unchangeable for all people with same sex.<sup>64</sup> In feminist research, gender matters and it is taken into account whereas the absence of gender has been characteristic for the discipline of International Relations as a whole before the feminist critics.<sup>65</sup> Feminist theories also agree that research of security has largely been the study *of men by men* (emphasis in original).<sup>66</sup>

Feminist security studies (FSS) can be seen as a subfield in the crossroads of feminist International Relations and security studies. There is not one, uniform ‘feminist’ or ‘gender’ perspective on international security but rather a broad field of different perspectives. However, there can be identified certain general positions within the feminist security studies.

Another classification of theories is postulated by Eric M. Blanchard, who categorized four different theoretical phases to illustrate the evolution of the feminist security studies. During the first phase feminist scholars showed the invisibility of women in security politics which strengthened the conception of the masculine world politics. Secondly, they questioned the role of the state as a protector of women’s security during times of war and peace. In the third stage, the idea of combining women and peacefulness was criticized, and in the fourth stage, it is noticeable that scholars had moved from the “add women and stir”-phase towards analyzing their own gendered assumptions and the gendered nature of security studies within IR. The focus of the research had also shifted to include the examination of men and masculinity instead of only women and femininity. This is done in addition to the study of the meanings of masculinities and femininities related to the questions of in/security.<sup>67</sup>

Feminist security studies refer to a theoretically varied orientation, reflecting the broad spectrum of theoretical perspectives across feminist theories.<sup>68</sup> So, while FSS is not synonymous with the postmodern feminism stance which constitutes a part of my theoretical framework, its fourth phase in the Blanchard categorization is closely linked with the postmodern-influenced thinking in which gender is considered as a changeable social construction, and not solely attached to the

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<sup>64</sup> Väyrynen 2007, 130-131.

<sup>65</sup> Mutimer 2010, 47, 52-53.

<sup>66</sup> Peoples – Vaughan-Williams 2010, 35.

<sup>67</sup> Blanchard 2003, 1290. Valenius 2007, 146. Wibben 2011, 23.

<sup>68</sup> Booth 2005c, 271.

biological sexes. Thus, my theoretical approach can be seen to be situated in the fourth phase of feminist security studies.

### ***2.3.5. Postcolonial theories***

‘Postcolonial’ is a highly contested term which can be interpreted in multiple ways with the meanings varying in geographical, spatial and theoretical terms. Like FSS, no single, monolithic postcolonial approach to security exists but rather, a group of different, often contrasting, approaches that collectively criticize the Western/Eurocentric bias that both traditional and critical security studies have.<sup>69</sup> The postcolonial approaches perceive both traditional and critical security studies as Western-centric approaches that derive their salient concepts from European experience and from the Western political thought.<sup>70</sup>

Peoples and Vaughan-Williams state that *“postcolonial approaches can be said to draw our attention to the parts of the world, parts of theory, and perspectives that are usually only partially considered or even absent from both traditional and critical accounts of security”*.<sup>71</sup> The recognition of the postcolonial standpoint is extremely relevant in my thesis. Embedded in the point that I – a Finnish (Western) and Caucasian student – choose to study insecurity in Timor-Leste which can be termed a ‘developing’ or ‘Third World’ nation that has experienced the realities of colonial oppression. These facts demand the inclusion of a postcolonial perspective in my thesis. Furthermore, while the phrasing of my research question and subsequent analysis emerge from the Welsh School theory of security – a theory which has evolved in the European context and derived its concepts such as emancipation, from the Western philosophy – it is crucial that a postcolonial point of view is embodied in my theorizing and that its importance is acknowledged through methodological reflection.

As stated by Mohammed Ayoob, it should be acknowledged that security means something very different in the Third World countries, in comparison with the meanings of the concept in the

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<sup>69</sup> Peoples – Vaughan-Williams 2010, 47.

<sup>70</sup> Peoples – Vaughan-Williams 2010, 47, 51.

<sup>71</sup> Peoples – Vaughan-Williams 2010, 60.

other contexts.<sup>72</sup> Ayoob outlines ‘two set of states’, which consist of Western states and the “*Third World*” countries - that latter which characteristically have weak state structures. The difference in conceptualizing what are and are not deemed security issues is, according to Ayoob, related to the state formation process which is often ‘incomplete’ in the Third World countries.<sup>73</sup>

Tarak Barkawi and Mark Laffey also acknowledge the European centrality within the security studies and they call for ‘non-Eurocentric security studies’.<sup>74</sup> Instead of emphasizing the division between the colonial and the postcolonial, as well as between the North and South, they stress the ideas of *interconnectedness* and a *postcolonial moment*. The terms refer to the opportunity to increase the overlap between security studies and postcolonial studies to address the biases emanating from the traditional and critical security studies.<sup>75</sup>

In summary, the postcolonial approaches generally focus on the questions of identity and difference; they examine the notions of “otherness” and problematize the emergence of universal grand narratives in the literature. They also pay particular attention to race as a category of analysis, which has been a neglected aspect in the research of global security relations.<sup>76</sup>

### ***2.3.6. Poststructuralist theories***

Critical approaches of security entail a set of theories derived from the work of postmodernist and poststructuralist philosophers like Michael Foucault, Jacques Derrida, James Der Derian, Michael J. Shapiro and Julia Kristeva.<sup>77</sup> The terms ‘postmodern’ and ‘poststructuralist’ are often used interchangeably, and although they are closely related they are not similar. ‘Post modernity’ refers to a particular historical period, to the era we are currently living in, whereas ‘post structuralism’ encompasses an assemblage of the diverse social, political and philosophical thought that engages the ‘structuralist’ tradition.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Peoples – Vaughan-Williams 2010, 51.

<sup>73</sup> Peoples – Vaughan-Williams 2010, 52.

<sup>74</sup> Peoples – Vaughan-Williams 2010, 54.

<sup>75</sup> Peoples – Vaughan-Williams 2010, 56, 60.

<sup>76</sup> Peoples – Vaughan-Williams 2010, 57-58.

<sup>77</sup> Hutchings 2001, 80.

<sup>78</sup> Peoples – Vaughan-Williams 2010, 63-63, 73.

The poststructuralist approaches emphasize the meaning of identity in studying security. Scholars such as Barry Buzan and Lene Hansen have stated that the poststructuralist conceptualization of security is dependent upon the construction of identity which is not perceived as a stable and given entity but rather, as changeable and multiple.<sup>79</sup> Another salient concept in poststructuralist theorizing, drawing upon Foucault's work is power and its linkage with knowledge.<sup>80</sup>

Poststructuralists view security, as well as threats as discursive – the concepts can be reproduced and reproduced through language and practice.<sup>81</sup> The poststructuralist approaches pay attention to the construction of 'Other' and 'Self' and have pointed out the effects of security policies that are not only targeted against the external Other, in form of another state, but also against the internal Other which can be found, for instance, from the different sites of ethnicity, race, class or gender.<sup>82</sup> Due to the objective of my study, the poststructuralist position which reflect a rather macro view of security, do not feature prominently in my research.

### ***2.3.7. Human security theory***

The human security approach has gained significant recognition within global security discourse since the idea first emerged in 1994 when the United Nation Development Program (UNDP) introduced the concept through the publication of the first Human Development Report.<sup>83</sup> While its supporters have presented the concept as a new paradigm for thinking about security, the topics it addresses have been elaborated by critical scholars since the 1980s.<sup>84</sup> In addition, critics from both the critical and conservative circles have found it to be a vague security theory "of everything and nothing".<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Buzan – Hansen 2009, 219, 143.

<sup>80</sup> Buzan –Hansen 2009, 143.

<sup>81</sup> Buzan – Hansen 2009, 142-143.

<sup>82</sup> Buzan –Hansen 2009, 143.

<sup>83</sup> Peoples – Vaughan-Williams 2010, 132.

<sup>84</sup> Nuruzzaman 2006, 285, 299-300.

<sup>85</sup> Hudson 2005, 164.



As mentioned earlier, the critical theory and feminist schools are established on post-positivist traditions and both approaches do not support strict scientific analysis of social phenomena and human behavior. In contrast, it is unclear where the human security paradigm is situated in the methodological debate. While Nuruzzaman links it as closer to neo-realism than to critical and feminist theories in practice, the human security theory is sometimes categorized under the critical approaches.<sup>86</sup> Nuruzzaman states that the human security theory supports the global and national status quo and therefore, shares one of the basic commitments with the realist paradigm. He stresses that promoting the status quo makes it impossible for the human security theory to stand for the social transformation which is required in order to achieve a progressive change through emancipatory politics.<sup>87</sup> Nuruzzaman concludes that the human security paradigm aims to reform the prevailing system and social order which strengthens the position of socially powerful and connects it with the positivistic, problem-solving approaches.<sup>88</sup>

Based on the above criticisms I do not find the theory of human security aligned with the critical position I intend to adopt in my analysis.<sup>89</sup> Therefore it is not an approach that is included in my theoretical framework, although the approach entails some similar starting points with both the Welsh School and the feminist perspectives.

### **2.3.8. Summary**

In twenty years critical approaches have become an established part of the discipline. The varied group of critical theories has challenged the traditional approaches of security studies and thereby, influenced remarkably the field of International Relations. Instead of studying security and threats of the states, the focus has turned on studying security more comprehensively by ‘broadening’, ‘deepening’ and ‘opening’ the entire concept. Critical approaches have introduced different research topics (‘broadening’) and included more referent objects besides the state (‘deepening’) into studying security.<sup>90</sup> However, some scholars have lately criticized that the

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<sup>86</sup> For example, in Peoples – Vaughan-Williams 2010.

<sup>87</sup> Nuruzzaman 2006, 298-300.

<sup>88</sup> Nuruzzaman 2006, 298-300.

<sup>89</sup> Hudson 2005, 163.

<sup>90</sup> Peoples – Vaughan, Williams 2010, 4.

broadening and deepening is not enough. For example a feminist scholar, Annick T.R. Wibben has demanded for an ‘opening’ of the critical security studies in her work “*Feminist Security Studies. A narrative approach*”.

In conclusion, the critical theories of security can be viewed as a constellation of different approaches which have shared commitments regarding particular issues within the discipline. The purpose of this chapter was to illustrate the large variety of critical approaches in studying security within IR, as well as to acknowledge those critical theories that have a marked relevance in the context of my study. Also, as my intention is to combine several critical perspectives in my analysis, it is essential to define the theoretical premises of these perspectives, in order to be able to situate my study in the field of critical security studies.

## **2.4. Studies of security and insecurity in Timor-Leste**

State building process in Timor-Leste, led by the United Nations since 1999, has been an extensive operation. Reforming the security sector has been an integral part of the state building process and a great proportion of the research concerning the security studies in Timor-Leste are related to the concept of Security Sector Reform<sup>91</sup>. Various research institutions, civil society organizations and academics have produced studies and reports related to the development of the security sector in Timor-Leste that discuss the achievements and failures of the reform attempts led by the international actors.<sup>92</sup> The several UN-led operations have played a key role in building and reforming the security sector for Timor-Leste and as such, studies criticizing the UN-missions and evaluating causes for their failures are readily available.<sup>93</sup> Some of the studies, such as Richmond’s and Frank’s article “*Liberal Peace building in Timor Leste: The Emperor’s New Clothes?*” emphasize the fact that the local actors have been excluded from the state

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<sup>91</sup> The concept of Security Sector Reform (SSR) emerges from the notion that security and development are interdependent. It emphasizes that the approach to the security sector must be holistic in nature and takes into account all the main actors of the security sector. That is, “*all jurisdictions with a capacity to use force, both statutory and non-statutory; the authorities involved in their management; the parliamentary and judicial bodies that oversee them; and the civil society organizations that monitor, research and publicise and propagate ideas about the security sector.*” (Law 2006, 1.)

<sup>92</sup> For example: International Crisis Group (2008), Initiative for Peace building Security Cluster (2009), Peak (2009).

<sup>93</sup> For example: Hood (2006a), Hood (2006b), Lemay-Hébert, Nicolas (2009), Funaki (2009).

building process. In addition, in the course of the peace building process, the actual causes, which are deep rooted in the culture and power structures, are not resolved and the citizens' expectations of improved welfare have not been addressed.<sup>94</sup>

Most research about the security and insecurity in Timor-Leste is widely attached to the “lessons learned” -like debate which examines the role of the United Nations as a ‘state builder’ / ‘security sector reformer’ and criticizes the different phases, accomplishments and failures of the past and current UN-missions. This differs essentially from the aim of my study because in my thesis, the starting point is not in examining the institutions, structures and the international actors but the conceptions of individual East Timorese. Some scholars and reports<sup>95</sup> emphasize the need of studies that take into account the security needs and conceptions of the population at large. My sample is relatively small and I do not intend to make general claims. However, the aim is to analyze the causes of insecurity in the current Timorese society from the people’s perspective and consider the perceptions of individuals as the primary source of knowledge.

## **2.5. Notable critical studies of security and insecurity**

The branch of critical security studies started to evolve rapidly in the beginning of the 1990’s. One of the groundbreaking studies which emphasized ‘a holistic and non-statist’ approach to security and did not stress the use or threat of force, was Ken Booth’s article “*Security and Emancipation*” (Booth 1991).<sup>96</sup> In addition, Ken Booth and Peter Vale published an article “*Security in southern Africa: after apartheid, beyond realism*” in 1997 which illustrated the so called “new” critical security studies at that time. The apartheid regime in South Africa meant security, and simultaneously national security, for the white minority of the country whereas the same regime was the source of insecurity to the majority of South Africans.<sup>97</sup> This illustrates that the security of the South African state was not synonymous with the security of its entire

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<sup>94</sup> Richmond – Franks 2008, 197-198.

<sup>95</sup> For example: Myrntinen (2009), Richmond – Franks (2008), Initiative for Peace building Security Cluster (2009).

<sup>96</sup> Burke 2007, 6.

<sup>97</sup> Peoples – Vaughan-Williams 2010, 28.

people.<sup>98</sup> The study offered an example of the emancipatory struggle which eventually led to a fundamental change in the society. The end of the apartheid was a big change which did not axiomatically improve the lives of the majority of the South Africans. Still, according to Wyn Jones, a liberal democratic system is a better option than the totalitarian one, and even though it cannot be claimed that the end of the apartheid regime made all South Africans free but it at least made them freer.<sup>99</sup>

As stated earlier, feminist scholars have demanded ‘the opening’ of security studies which refers to, according to Wibben, questioning the history and meaning of the concept and practice of security in IR theory, as well as reassessment of the security politics.<sup>100</sup> An example of a study which strives for ‘the opening’ of security narratives, is a work of Maria Stern: *Naming In/Security – Constructing Identity: ‘Mayan-women’ in Guatemala on the Eve of ‘Peace’* (Stern 2001). Stern focuses on studying the myriad of ways in which the Mayan-women, who represent a group of the marginalized and silenced in the Guatemalan society, have experienced insecurity during their lives. She examines the relationship between in/security and identity. The analysis is based on life-history interviews with female leaders of different popular or Mayan movements in Guatemala. The actual fieldwork takes place in 1995 when the armed conflict in the country was ending and peace loomed in the minds of the people.

Stern analyzes how security as a discursive practice has impacted the identities of Mayan-women and explains how the identity formation has influenced the naming of threat and danger.<sup>101</sup> The study has a poststructuralist character, which differs from my study. However, as both studies combine the critical tradition of studying security with a feminist approach, they share a similar aspiration to find answers to questions: *Who should be secured from what? Who is it who threatens? Who should be doing the securing?*<sup>102</sup>

Another study which focuses on studying experiences of insecurity is Tami Jacoby’s “*Women in Zones of Conflict: Power and Resistance in Israel*”. The study was conducted in Israel and

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<sup>98</sup> Booth – Vale 1997, 287.

<sup>99</sup> Peoples – Vaughan-Williams, 27.

<sup>100</sup> Wibben 2011, 25, 81.

<sup>101</sup> Stern 2006, 182.

<sup>102</sup> Stern 2001, 23.

Palestine between 1996 and 2000, where Jacoby interviewed female activists engaged in some of the Israeli women's protest movements in the region. Jacoby's study, like Stern's, concentrates on the explicit examination of women's insecurity, although Jacoby stresses that the experience of being insecure is highly personal and can mean different things to different women.<sup>103</sup> Jacoby admits that experience is a problematic unit of analysis. She reflects the concept of 'experiencing insecurity' and raises questions that are also relevant to discuss within my study: *Can experience be written down and represented? Are experiences possible to be analyzed and interpreted by someone who comes from a different culture and context? Are there some other categories than gender, such as social, political or spiritual, that influence the experience of insecurity?*<sup>104</sup>

*"Insecure Spaces. Peacekeeping, power and performance in Haiti, Kosovo and Liberia"* is a work written by Paul Higate and Marsha Henry. It is a comparative study which critically examines the UN and NATO peacekeeping operations in the three countries, and analyzes how the peacekeeping missions have shaped the perceptions of security of the local people as well as the conceptualizations of the people working within the mission. Although, I am not studying peacekeeping operations, this research is relevant as the approach Higate and Henry adopt in their work, is very similar to the one I intend to apply in my thesis.

Their data consists of almost 300 interviews with female and male members of the host populations, together with foreigners working as a part of the peace building operations. They interviewed individuals and small groups in three different countries with the aim of interpreting what these people understand security to be. They focus on studying the notion of 'everyday security', emphasizing the importance of the mundane and routine aspects of security that people experience in their everyday life.<sup>105</sup> Their intention is to understand what '*being secure*' means to people and want to know how the interviewees, ranging from local taxi drivers to expatriates, *feel about security*.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Jacoby 2006, 155.

<sup>104</sup> Jacoby 2006, 154.

<sup>105</sup> Higate – Henry 2009, 18.

<sup>106</sup> Higate – Henry 2009, 3, 10.

Higate and Henry adopt the postmodern feminist perspective in their approach. They perceive the concept of gender in a constructivist way, emphasizing that the word gender is *not* a synonym for ‘women’. Postmodern feminist research in IR has focused on studying the masculinities and femininities that are partly bound to the male and female bodies but besides this, can be viewed as a part of a mindset, discourses or a set of practices.<sup>107</sup> Postmodern feminist studies aim to make sense how the different masculinities and femininities create models of women and men and the work of Higate and Henry convey the aim to a practical level by examining the types of masculinities and femininities peacekeeping operations as political practice produce.<sup>108</sup>

These three studies outline certain aspects I intend to include to my study about the causes of insecurity in Timor-Leste. My study is not linked explicitly to one theoretical approach as I intend to combine elements of the Welsh School, postmodern feminist and postcolonial approaches. The intention is to merge these theories in order to be able to analyze the data more comprehensively and overcome some of the criticisms associated with adopting a critical position towards security/insecurity in IR.

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<sup>107</sup> Väyrynen 2007, 138, 142.

<sup>108</sup> Väyrynen 2007, 137, 142.

### 3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter, I will discuss more in-depth the theoretical orientations which establish the theoretical framework of my thesis: *the Welsh School and the postmodern feminism*. Both approaches have compatible theoretical commitments and similar starting points with my research subject. They acknowledge the individuals and communities as primary referent objects of security and start theorizing from the micro level, based on knowledge which arises from the people's experiences and everyday lives. Thereby, the both approaches approve the premise of my research: *studying insecurity of individuals*.

The Welsh School and the feminist theories at large share the critical IR's commitment to *an emancipatory research agenda*. Political changes and the changes in relations of inequality and domination are possible by transforming the structures and reordering power in emancipatory ways.<sup>109</sup> 'Emancipatory' refers to the aim of critical theorizing that seeks to construct politics which promote freedom and does not convey oppressive ideas and practices.<sup>110</sup> However, the hope of changing the world is not for theory's sake but for the desire to improve the lives of real people in real places.<sup>111</sup>

Although the Postmodern feminism and the Welsh School are convergent epistemologically, both approaches differ partly at the level of the philosophy of science. However, this contradicting aspect is unlikely to present an obstacle in my analysis as both theories act as complementary tools of analysis. Merging the Postmodern feminist stance with the Welsh School theorizing complements the latter's security theory and offers a more comprehensive approach to analyze my data.

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<sup>109</sup> Whitworth 2001, 151.

<sup>110</sup> Booth 2007, 38.

<sup>111</sup> Booth 2005c, 269.

### 3.1. Common epistemology

*“Knowledge does not simply exist, waiting to be discovered like a glacier.”<sup>112</sup>*

From the perspective of the Welsh School, knowledge is seen as a product of a social process and it is always historical and contextual.<sup>113</sup> Theories cannot be neutral or objective because they exist in real worlds. Theories are written by theorists in certain times and circumstances in history, *“for someone or for some purpose”* (emphasis in original).<sup>114</sup> Similarly, postmodern feminism rejects the possibility of “objective knowledge” and shares the notion of knowledge and knowing being connected with time, place and person. In fact, feminist approaches emerged from the skepticism towards a universal, objective knowledge based on experiences and lives of privileged people – mostly men – during the history. For this reason feminist scholars have began to ask different research questions which aim to challenge and redefine the prevailing conceptions of knowledge.<sup>115</sup>

*“The post-modern state of mind is juxtapositional, multi-dimensional and multi-voiced, as well as ambiguous, incoherent and conflicted, which modernist science has always adamantly avoided.”<sup>116</sup>*

Both the Welsh School and the postmodern feminism conceptions of security can be categorized as *‘post-positivist’* approaches. The post-positivist approaches tend to oppose the positivist conception of knowledge and truth which state that objective knowledge can be produced from the social world in the same way as the natural world.<sup>117</sup> The post-positivist methodologies are based on the postmodernist idea that there are no ‘universal truths’ but several realities and truths

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<sup>112</sup> Booth 2005c, 262.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> Tickner 2006, 21.

<sup>116</sup> Heikkinen 2002, 21.

<sup>117</sup> Penttinen 2004, 44.



which changed throughout history.<sup>118</sup> The postmodernists view positivist science as a big meta-story which has started to fall into pieces with small stories replacing the universal truths.<sup>119</sup>

Accordingly, to post-positivist approaches, knowledge comprises a plurality of local and personal narratives which are constantly under reconstruction as the individual and the social are intertwined and continually interacting.<sup>120</sup> So an interpretive study can produce an authentic viewpoint to the reality without objective truth. The ‘truth’ depends on the viewpoint of the researcher. In its extreme, these assumptions can mean that any “knowledge” is defensible and any “truth” is acceptable and legitimate. So while the extreme relativist perception can side-track science to “anything goes”-thinking, the fact that the realist view that the world can be studied as it is, objectively also presents another extreme.<sup>121</sup>

### **3.2. The Welsh School**

The Welsh School seeks to move beyond the statist definitions of security that emphasize the notion of ‘national security’ which is not always consistent with the security of individuals.<sup>122</sup> Therefore, within the Welsh School individuals are perceived as the primary referent objects of security.<sup>123</sup> According to Ken Booth, the state should be a means, not the end to security. One task of the state is to facilitate the attainment of security, not to be its object.<sup>124</sup>

The Welsh School has been influenced by two traditions: (1) The Frankfurt School and (2) the work of Antonio Gramsci.<sup>125</sup> The Frankfurt School refers to a group of intellectuals who worked before and after the Second World War, including theorists such as Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, Herbert Marcuse and Jürgen Habermas. They sought to develop a form of ‘Critical

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<sup>118</sup> Penttinen 2004, 45.

<sup>119</sup> Heikkinen – Huttunen – Kaikkori 1999, 40.

<sup>120</sup> Heikkinen 2002, 14-15.

<sup>121</sup> Heikkinen – Huttunen – Kaikkori 1999, 40.

<sup>122</sup> Peoples – Vaughan-Williams 2010, 24.

<sup>123</sup> Buzan – Hansen 2009, 206.

<sup>124</sup> Burke 2007, 7.

<sup>125</sup> Peoples – Vaughan-Williams 2010, 24-25.

Theory'<sup>126</sup> in which the concept of emancipation was salient. The original advocates of the Welsh School - Ken Booth, Richard Wyn Jones and Andrew Linklater - developed an approach to security that draws upon the Marxian tradition of Critical Theory as well as interpretations of the Marxist tradition within IR more widely.<sup>127</sup>

The work of the Italian theorist, Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937), had a significant influence on both the Frankfurt and Welsh Schools of Critical Theory, in particular, Gramsci's thinking on the relationship between theory and practice.<sup>128</sup> The concept of '*praxis*' derives from the Marxist tradition and refers to "*the idea that theory and practice are inextricably intertwined*"<sup>129</sup> and additionally, it addresses the role of intellectuals in advancing emancipatory change.<sup>130</sup>

*Security*, *emancipation* and *community* emerge as the core concepts in the theories developed by the Welsh School scholars. They are the basic elements around which the theory of security is built. Van Munster refers to these three concepts as key components of *the conceptual triangle*.<sup>131</sup> In the following section, I expand upon these three concepts but as the focus of my thesis is mainly on security and emancipation, more attention is given to the relationship between these two notions and their relevance within the Welsh School tradition.

### **3.2.1. Security**

The Welsh School portrays security as a derivative concept. This denotes that the thinking on security is determined by the worldview of the thinker.<sup>132</sup> So, the way one thinks politics works and the perceptions one has about the priority of issues in world politics will have an influence on

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<sup>126</sup> 'Critical Theory' (upper case) refers to a theorizing which is linked to the Marxist tradition and includes elements of Marx's philosophy (especially the aim "not only to 'interpret the world' but to 'change it'") as well as attempts to reinterpret the Marxist ideas. (Peoples – Vaughan-Williams 2010, 18.)

<sup>127</sup> Peoples – Vaughan-Williams 2010, 18.

<sup>128</sup> Peoples – Vaughan-Williams 2010, 26.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

<sup>131</sup> Van Munster 2007, 236.

<sup>132</sup> Peoples – Vaughan-Williams 2010, 4, 22.

one's notions of 'threats', conceptions of what needs to be protected and therefore on the definitions of security.<sup>133</sup>

Security can be seen as the condition of being and feeling safe.<sup>134</sup> Booth states that security is a relative concept which can be understood subjectively (feeling safe) and non-subjectively (being safe). According to Booth, the starting point in defining security among the critical approaches should be in experiences, imaginings, analyses and fears of those who are living with insecurity. To be able to understand security requires knowledge of the causes and condition of people's insecurity.<sup>135</sup> Describing security is easier for people who have experienced insecurity (e.g. refugees, former combatants or victims of human trafficking), than for those who only know the state of being and feeling safe, and have lived without threats.<sup>136</sup>

### **3.2.2. Emancipation**

*"Emancipation is the freeing of peoples (as individuals and groups) from those physical and human constraints which stop them carrying out what they would freely choose to do. War and the threat of war is one of those constraints, together with poverty, poor education, political oppression and so on."*<sup>137</sup>

The term emancipation is derived from the Latin word of *emancipare* which means "to release from slavery or tutelage".<sup>138</sup> While emancipation is a central concept in the Critical Security Studies it is important to note that the concept has been theorized diversely by the critical scholars over time – that is, the meanings and emphases of the concept have varied.<sup>139</sup> Human emancipation is an important theme within the Welsh School and scholars working within the tradition also have differing views about emancipation. The concept has not been applied in a uniform way among the Welsh School theorists.<sup>140</sup> For instance, Booth, Wyn Jones and Linklater have each formulated a different conceptualization of emancipation, discussed multiple meanings

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<sup>133</sup> Peoples – Vaughan-Williams 2010, 22.

<sup>134</sup> Booth 2007, 110.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

<sup>136</sup> Booth 2007, 98.

<sup>137</sup> Booth 1991, 319.

<sup>138</sup> Booth 2007, 110.

<sup>139</sup> Browning – McDonald 2010, 11.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

concerning the concept and the means by which emancipatory change can be achieved. The various conceptions do not preclude each other but rather, they stress different aspects of the notion. They all share a common feature in that they aim to fundamentally re-conceptualize “*security as the emancipation of individuals and communities from structural constraints*”.<sup>141</sup> Extensive structural changes based on the ideas of emancipation, social justice and human progress are required in order to achieve security.<sup>142</sup>

For my study, the emphasis will be on Booth’s interpretation of emancipation. Emancipation symbolizes the individuals’ freedom of any kind of social, political, cultural and economic restrictions which restrain them from acting as they want without fear and constraints.<sup>143</sup> The multiplicity of the forms of oppression makes the concept itself extensive and challenging to define precisely. Booth underlines the fact that emancipation has various definitions and its meaning can shift over time.<sup>144</sup>

Booth has written extensively on the concept of emancipation with a noticeable shift from his position in his earliest statements (at the beginning of the 1990’s).<sup>145</sup> In Booth’s first publication on emancipation<sup>146</sup>, the concept and its role in the security studies is defined in a forthright manner, implying that emancipation is more an end-state or condition of existence.<sup>147</sup>

In *Theory of World Security* (Booth 2007) Booth restates his conceptions of emancipation in the study and practice of security in a more comprehensive way. Compared to his earlier work, his debate on emancipation and the definition of the concept had moved with emphasis leaning towards perceiving emancipation as a set of processes rather than an end-state.<sup>148</sup> Nevertheless, Booth did not reject his earlier stance on the relation between emancipation and security which he has described as:

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<sup>141</sup> Burke 2007, 6.

<sup>142</sup> Burke 2007, 7.

<sup>143</sup> Booth 2007, 110-111.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid.

<sup>145</sup> Browning – McDonald 2010, 11.

<sup>146</sup> For example: Booth 1991.

<sup>147</sup> Browning – McDonald 2010, 11.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid.

*“Security and emancipation are two sides of the same coin. Emancipation not power or order, produces the true security. Emancipation, theoretically, is security.”<sup>149</sup>*

In more recent writings, Booth adds new elements in determining the core concepts of his theory. He redefines *security as a practice*, identifying security more with something that should be practiced rather than achieved.<sup>150</sup> For Booth, the practice of security (freeing people from the life-determining conditions of insecurity) is linked with creating spaces where people can be free from oppressions and can realize emancipation. Realization offers them opportunities to ‘explore being human’ and eventually entails ‘becoming more fully human’.<sup>151</sup> People’s self-realization should evolve from the idea that security is practiced not *against* others, but *with* them (emphases in original).<sup>152</sup>

Emancipation and security can be achieved by creating spaces where ‘the voiceless, unrepresented and the powerless can have voices of their own.’<sup>153</sup> However, emancipation as used within the Welsh School does not mean that in “empowerment’s name” others would be entitled to speak on behalf of the silenced and marginalized people.<sup>154</sup> Instead, as Browning and McDonald state, emancipation is about *creating spaces for people to speak for themselves and define the conditions and contents of their own security*. Imposing a particular perception of security and development and defining the security needs of people without giving them a chance to express themselves, is not what emancipation is about from the Welsh School point of view.<sup>155</sup>

Individuals do not necessarily need political leaders to show them how to practice cosmopolitan values, pursue equality, human rights or promote sustainable lifestyles – individuals can choose to do it themselves.<sup>156</sup> Booth encourages people to use the ‘spaces’ they have available (e.g. spreading the word among your friends, choosing a particular research topic or supporting certain movements and organizations) to make change possible.<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> Booth 1991, 319.

<sup>150</sup> Browning – McDonald 2010, 12.

<sup>151</sup> Booth 2007, 115. Browning – McDonald 2010, 12.

<sup>152</sup> Booth 2007, 114.

<sup>153</sup> Browning – McDonald 2010, 12.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid.

<sup>156</sup> Booth 2007, 249.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid.

In order to achieve progressive change and enhance security through emancipatory practices, the particular insecurities experienced by groups and individuals within a given context must be identified. Unfortunately, the Welsh School does not offer scholars or practitioners any blueprints for realizing emancipation, so most adopt the ‘immanent critique’- a strategy utilizing critique which enables one to reveal root causes in concrete situations (such as key sources of oppression, agents, positive dynamics) that may entail emancipatory possibilities.<sup>158</sup> Although these root causes or ‘potentialities’ are imminent, they are unfulfilled and, according to advocates of the Welsh School, can be strengthened through politics (tactics and strategies) and thereby serve as a guide towards emancipation.<sup>159</sup> Such statements imply that within the Welsh School, politics is seen as an arena of emancipation.<sup>160</sup> Also implicit is the fact that the Welsh School proponents perceive emancipatory practices, which aim to achieve change and promote freedom, as state-driven, political actions that are generated through political programs and reforms.

### **3.2.3. Community**

As stated earlier, the Welsh School positions individuals as the ultimate referent objects of security whilst it acknowledges that individuals do not exist in vacuum: Individuals are always part of wider social contexts.<sup>161</sup> Individuals can be members of different social groups and political communities and therefore, they can ascribe to various, overlapping and changeable identities.<sup>162</sup>

The concept of community is an essential component in the pursuit of security and emancipation mostly because the questions of security emerge from community related queries: *What are ‘we’?*, *What are ‘they’?* and *what do ‘we’ want to be secured from?*<sup>163</sup> As salient as the concept of community is to any comprehensive security study, it falls out of the scope of my research agenda which hopes to examine how the dynamics between the notions of security and

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<sup>158</sup> Peoples – Vaughan-Williams 2010, 24, 32. Booth 2007, 250.

<sup>159</sup> Peoples – Vaughan-Williams 2010, 24.

<sup>160</sup> Booth 2007, 45.

<sup>161</sup> Wyn Jones 1999, 114-115. Peoples – Vaughan-Williams 2010, 26.

<sup>162</sup> Booth 2005b, 109.

<sup>163</sup> Booth 2007, 134. Peoples – Vaughan-Williams 2010, 26.

emancipation are construed when an individual's perspectives of insecurity is considered. Consequently, despite the fact that the individuals who provide my data belong to different communities and ascribe to multiple identities, the concept of community remains an uncovered aspect in the framework of this research.

### **3.2.4. Criticism**

While the Welsh School is intended for the study of 'real phenomena' and 'real people' through the merging of solid theoretical stances, it has not been without criticism. Many acknowledge its grand aim of reducing the gap between academia and practice by achieving a progressive change within the structures of society, as well as its core objective, the generation of '*praxis*'.<sup>164</sup> However, the writings around what the linkage of emancipation and security mean in practice or what '*progress*' entails in reality, are very abstract.<sup>165</sup> This may be why some have labeled the approach as 'too theoretical'.<sup>166</sup> Booth responds to such critiques by emphasizing that the purpose of the theory is not to provide clear answer but to promote emancipatory aims by saying something meaningful, which may have a direct or indirect impact for the improvement of the security of people, individuals and communities in villages and cities worldwide.<sup>167</sup> Consequently, one could describe the Welsh School theory of security as an idealistic approach which presents a challenge when applied to studies like mine that engage individuals in a very practical way.

The relationship between security and emancipation is an equally controversial construct with the role of emancipation within security studies particularly criticized by realists, poststructuralists and postcolonial scholars.<sup>168</sup> Within the Welsh School's perspective, 'security' has a positive connotation, and the idea of achieving security through emancipation is linked to the improvement of the individual's well-being. It can be said that the Welsh School approach promotes a commitment to progressive politics with roots that lay in the spirit and ideas of the

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<sup>164</sup> Booth 2005c, 272.

<sup>165</sup> Browning – McDonald 2010, 13.

<sup>166</sup> Booth 2007, 200.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid.

<sup>168</sup> Peoples – Vaughan-Williams 2010, 29, 47.

eighteenth century Enlightenment.<sup>169</sup> Nonetheless, the idea of emancipation has been labeled “confusing”, “dangerous” and “an elitist expression of Western notions” which are not applicable globally.<sup>170</sup> Several poststructuralist authors of security have remarked on the possibility of being critical and challenge the traditional approaches of security without emphasizing a broad and abstract idea such as emancipation as a main concept.<sup>171</sup> In addition, as emancipation does not have a universal definition, sometimes the concept can be misused to legitimize oppressive practices (or regimes).<sup>172</sup> As João Reis Nunes states: “*The emancipation of one can be another one’s oppression.*”<sup>173</sup>

Mohammed Ayoob and other postcolonial scholars have been concerned with the concept of emancipation and its applicability to non-Western security contexts. Can the idea of emancipation be applied at a global level or is the interpretation of emancipation, which allows every ethnic group a right to self-determination and freedom, only a recipe for disorder and anarchy as Ayoob suggests?<sup>174</sup>

Instead of totally rejecting the idea of emancipation, Hayward Alker calls for a more comprehensive view, one that includes the multiple Western *and* non-Western perspectives, what the meaning of freedom entails and still maintains the demand for human improvement and emancipatory development (emphasis in original).<sup>175</sup> Similarly Browning and McDonald emphasize the applicability of the emancipatory project outside the Western circumstances as crucial for the Welsh School concept. They predict a loss in credibility if the idea of emancipatory politics is not developed and carried out in a way that is relevant to people living in the global South or to the problems they face.<sup>176</sup>

Another criticism leveled against the Welsh School is its failure to address the deeper meaning of the individual. The approach links a particular meaning of emancipation to an individual as a

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<sup>169</sup> Peoples – Vaughan-Williams 2010, 29.

<sup>170</sup> Booth 2007, 115-116. Peoples – Vaughan-Williams 2010, 29.

<sup>171</sup> Peoples – Vaughan-Williams 2010, 29.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid.

<sup>173</sup> Reis Nunes 2005, 12.

<sup>174</sup> Peoples- Vaughan-Williams 2010, 30.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid.

<sup>176</sup> Browning – McDonald 2010, 11.



referent object to the concept of security.<sup>177</sup> The individual (and his or her security) becomes the focus, but Reis Nunes asks: which individuals we are talking about?<sup>178</sup> Nunes argues that authors like Booth take the individual for granted and assume it to be an ‘ahistorical’ character.<sup>179</sup> He perceives the lack of development of the individual’s position as both a subject and object of emancipation as a large theoretical gap. Nunes shares a similar normative commitment to emancipation but argues for a new understanding of the individual, and as such, a broader and deeper conception of emancipation itself.<sup>180</sup>

### 3.3. Postmodern feminism

Although the Welsh School acknowledges the importance of gender and encourages uncovering its role in studying the world politics, the including of the concept into a practical level is still widely missing.<sup>181</sup> For example, Hudson has stated that “*there is no guarantee that gender would be routinely included as a category of analysis*” in the other critical security theories, such as the Welsh School theory.<sup>182</sup> The Postmodern feminist stance acknowledges that *gender* is only one factor among others (such as class, race and ethnicity) which interacts with security. However, it emphasizes the importance of adopting gender as the unit of analysis because it can reveal the complex linkages of gendered knowledge constructions and practices across the different sectors of security.<sup>183</sup>

Penttinen refers to feminism as a theme which is still seen as a form of exclusion in IR.<sup>184</sup> Thus, feminist contributions are not always taken seriously and the possibility of use of the feminist critique for the understanding of IR, or what it could be, is low.<sup>185</sup> The Postmodern feminist stance attempts to challenge the power relations within the discipline and provides an alternative

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<sup>177</sup> Peoples- Vaughan-Williams 2010, 29.

<sup>178</sup> Reis Nunes 2005, 5.

<sup>179</sup> Reis Nunes 2005, 5-6.

<sup>180</sup> Reis Nunes 2005, 6.

<sup>181</sup> Hudson 2005, 161.

<sup>182</sup> Hudson 2005, 161-162.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid.

<sup>184</sup> Penttinen 2004, 29.

<sup>185</sup> Ibid.

view of what counts as IR, what can be defined as subjects of IR and how IR can be studied and written.<sup>186</sup>

In the Postmodern research tradition language has a salient position. Language does not only represent reality but it also produces it.<sup>187</sup> According to Väyrynen, it is not a neutral element but rather influenced by different power mechanisms. Language appears often as a reflector of reality and through reproduced discourses we begin to see things as self-evident and static.<sup>188</sup> Postmodern feminism aims to question the discourses reproducing, for example, gendered concepts in the discipline which may evolve to be “taken-for-granted-facts”. The postmodern research aims to break down the dominating narratives and to reveal the mechanisms which are privileging and strengthening certain discourses and narratives whereas alternative narratives are ignored or silenced.<sup>189</sup>

Postmodern feminism differs from the other feminist perspectives in the emphasis of women not representing a unified global collectivity. To the postmodern feminist, the different situations in which women are involved in and the different types of experiences felt, make it impossible to define a universal category of ‘women’, ‘women’s experience of oppression’ or ‘women’s voice’.<sup>190</sup>

### ***3.3.1. The concept of gender***

The postmodern feminists postulate social relations, culture and constructions of power as concepts full of different shades of meanings and complexities which have an influence on how the relations between the sexes should be examined.<sup>191</sup> Hence, the Postmodern feminism tends to refer more to ‘masculinities’ and ‘femininities’ rather than ‘men’ and ‘women’, especially since gender is not only considered as a biological fact but also as a social construction. These masculinities and femininities are seen to form part of a subject’s mindset or a set of practices,

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<sup>186</sup> Penttinen 2004, 30-31.

<sup>187</sup> Väyrynen 2007, 139.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid.

<sup>190</sup> Penttinen 2004, 27.

<sup>191</sup> Steans 1998, 177.

and often a subject does not represent only one kind of masculinity or femininity but various forms of these which the subject can enact simultaneously.<sup>192</sup>

Gender on the other hand refers to a grouping of culturally defined features and meanings that can be connected to masculinity and femininity. It is perceived as a malleable social construction which is composed of a matrix of particular customs, practices and discourses.<sup>193</sup> Individuals possess several different identities which are subject to change in time and across places bearing a strong influence on forming the individual's gender and the conceptualization of what it means to be a woman or a man.<sup>194</sup>

The Postmodern approach aims to study intersecting, overlapping and even opposing realities in the framework which takes gender into account.<sup>195</sup> Postmodern feminism rejects the idea of static sex identities which are bound to biology. Instead, it discusses fragmented, nomadic identities which transform in different situations.<sup>196</sup> The acceptance of these nomad identities allows for the unraveling of binary oppositions such as war/peace, man/woman, us /them, perpetrator/victim, which the postmodern feminism authors consider overlapping concepts rather than well-defined categories.<sup>197</sup>

The Postmodern feminist theory of 'women' (and 'men') hopes to avoid reproducing the traditional power hierarchy or establishing new forms of exclusion. As there is no coherent identity – 'identity of women' or 'identity of men' – the Postmodern feminist stance encourages writing from the position of multiple 'gender' selves which allows for more diverse categorizations along race, class and ethnicity to be included in a particular subject's position.<sup>198</sup>

Proponents of the Postmodern feminist stance criticize 'feminism' as a white, western project which values this position over others.<sup>199</sup> According to Penttinen the danger is that so-called

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<sup>192</sup> Väyrynen 2007, 138, 142.

<sup>193</sup> Steans 1998, 179.

<sup>194</sup> Sylvester 2002, 177-181.

<sup>195</sup> Sylvester 2002, 178.

<sup>196</sup> Väyrynen 2007, 138.

<sup>197</sup> Väyrynen 2007, 139-140.

<sup>198</sup> Penttinen 2004, 27.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid.

liberated Western feminists try to save the “oppressed” women in postcolonial countries by imposing Western ideologies and solutions.<sup>200</sup> In my thesis, I intend to avoid this feminist inclination by drawing on the conceptions of nomad identities, the non-universal definition of the woman’s condition with regards to security and complexities in gender makeup.

### ***3.3.2. Experiences – truths – narratives***

Unlike most feminist scholars that acknowledge “an experience” as a valid source of knowledge and starting point for theorizing, the Postmodern feminism considers such experience-based information as a problematic source of knowledge, in particular in cases where the data intends to make generalizing conclusions.<sup>201</sup> My data consists mostly of experience-based knowledge but as stated earlier, the aim of the thesis is not to generalize, but to interpret conceptualizations and experiences reflected through narratives and produce meanings from them. The objective is to picture different realities and possibly, alternative security narratives existing amongst East Timorese. There are always many ways and purposes of storytelling and multiple interpretations that can be made of the stories of others.<sup>202</sup> Therefore, the people’s experiences are reflecting multiple truths that exist, not any absolute truth. To be able to find alternative stories, one must examine the subjective, lived experiences of people. As Tami Jacoby states, experience should not be understood as truth, but as a narrative which represents the choices and priorities of the particular individual or group.<sup>203</sup>

### ***3.3.3. Summary***

The Postmodern feminist stance plays a covert role in my research as it is embedded within the data and methodology whereas the Welsh School theory plays a more visible role in the final presentation of my findings. Nonetheless, the Postmodern feminist stance has various impacts on the study particularly regarding the methodological choices, the adopted data collection technique and the applied writing mode. The Postmodern feminist approach is a required part of the

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<sup>200</sup> Penttinen 2004, 27.

<sup>201</sup> Väyrynen 2007, 137-138.

<sup>202</sup> Wibben 2011, 2.

<sup>203</sup> Jacoby 2006, 162.

theoretical frame because it guards against the production of any universalizing tendencies by emphasizing the multiple, overlapping identities and differences within 'groups' categorized based on factors such as class, race or gender.<sup>204</sup> According to Hudson, the Postmodern feminist stance helps to overcome the dichotomy between universalism and cultural relativism by connecting the individual experiences in a particular context to wider structures and processes.<sup>205</sup>

As this study is not limited to the causes of insecurity experienced by men or women, or the difference between the insecurity experienced across genders, but more to understand which factors affect people's (both men and women) conceptions about security and insecurity in Timor-Leste, the Postmodern feminist stance is a perfect fit for my research agenda.

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<sup>204</sup> Hudson 2005, 157-158.

<sup>205</sup> Hudson 2005, 158.

## 4. NARRATIVITY AS A METHODOLOGY

### 4.1. A narrative turn

Over the last few decades there has been an increased interest in the use of narratives – in describing and interpreting people’s experiences – from researchers of various disciplines, including International Relations. Some see this interest falling in line with the general trend of postmodern knowledge production (the post-positivist stance), which has challenged the traditional positivist philosophy of science.<sup>206</sup> Penttinen states that the narrative turn in IR is a turn towards plurality. The aim is to clarify that there is not one master narrative but a space for multiple narratives that try to avoid positions of privilege and hierarchy.<sup>207</sup> The feminist IR scholars<sup>208</sup> have especially used the approach in their studies because Narrativity as a means to collect and analyze data has, for instance, enabled the data gathering from marginalized and silenced groups. Cynthia Enloe<sup>209</sup> is a feminist IR theorist who is famous for her narrative writing style which aims to move away from the hierarchic position of a scientist by highlighting the lived experiences of the women living and doing IR in the margins.<sup>210</sup>

Heikkinen, Huttunen and Kaikkori categorize the narrative approach as a loose methodological framework. A characteristic of the approach is the focus on the narratives as a transmitter and producer of reality.<sup>211</sup> Heikkinen states that people want to make sense of the world and themselves through narratives, by telling stories and listening to other people’s stories. Life is experienced through narratives and people tend to situate their experiences in a narrative form.<sup>212</sup> Narratives help to contextualize, explain and give meaning to the experiences.<sup>213</sup>

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<sup>206</sup> Heikkinen 2002, 13-14. Murray Thomas 2003, 38.

<sup>207</sup> Penttinen 2004, 42.

<sup>208</sup> For example: Christine Sylvester, Marysia Zalewski, Maria Stern and Elina Penttinen.

<sup>209</sup> For example following works: *Does khaki become you? The Militarization of Women’s Lives* (1988), *Bananas, Beaches, and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics* (1989), *Maneuvers – The International Politics of militarizing Women’s Lives* (2000).

<sup>210</sup> Penttinen 2004, 49.

<sup>211</sup> Heikkinen – Huttunen – Kaikkori 1999, 40.

<sup>212</sup> Heikkinen 2002, 15.

<sup>213</sup> Penttinen 2004, 53.

Narratives are not static, they shift and slide. According to Wibben, a narrative approach is an ideal way to uncover a multitude of alternative scenarios to a particular normality or reality, in this way, the approach can be used to present a richer and more diverse security perception.<sup>214</sup> There are always numerous stories to be told and all narratives, together with the “normality” arising from them, are contextual.<sup>215</sup> Wibben emphasizes the fact that Narrativity acknowledges the differences among stories and storytellers and she likens the personal stories to windows into somebody else’s life, to the “positionality” and perspectives on life of the narrators.<sup>216</sup> Nevertheless the researcher still needs to consider whose personal narrative she/he will focus on and to document how narratives will be collected and interpreted.<sup>217</sup> Murray Thomas also considers the uniqueness of the narratives as an advantage of the methodology.<sup>218</sup> Although narratives are unsuitable for the creation of generalizations, they provide unique information which can function, as Wibben states, as a window for the researcher to develop a more in-depth understanding and participate in other people’s thoughts and emotions.<sup>219</sup>

Narrativity aims to expose the myth of the objectivity of the researcher and language. As Laurel Richardson proclaims “*no writing is innocent and language is far from neutral*”.<sup>220</sup> The question of power is deeply rooted in writing any research report. Firstly, the researcher has the power to choose the research topic and the questions of interest that she/he decides is worthy of research.<sup>221</sup> Penttinen argues that writing the report itself has consequences in relation to the ‘other’ that is, the object of the research. For instance, the written report can reproduce binary oppositions as well as the hierarchical relations between the researcher and those being researched leading to a reproduction of their “otherness”.

Narrativity can also be a form of empowerment for those who have been the objects of the research.<sup>222</sup> As Wibben states, the use of a narrative approach is not trouble-free, and she warns

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<sup>214</sup> Wibben 2011, 109-110.

<sup>215</sup> Ibid.

<sup>216</sup> Wibben 2011, 86, 110.

<sup>217</sup> Wibben 2011, 110.

<sup>218</sup> Murray Thomas 2003, 39.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid.

<sup>220</sup> Penttinen 2004, 52.

<sup>221</sup> Penttinen 2004, 45.

<sup>222</sup> Penttinen 2004, 49.

of the danger of being seduced by the myth of an empowerment narrative which entails an idea of “giving a voice” to someone. It is not a task of the researcher “to give a voice” to subjects of a study because as a researcher, one should not speak on behalf of the others.<sup>223</sup>

I am aware of the power of language and the certain inevitable power positions that will exist between me, a researcher from a Nordic country and the East Timorese citizens that I interview. This is especially so, since Timor-Leste is a developing country with a history of a brutal colonial rule followed by 24 years of foreign occupation. Timor-Leste has been an independent state since 2002 but its recent history is marked by several internal crises which have tested its weak democratic state structures. The ‘otherness’ between me and my interviewees is inevitable but despite these different starting points and power positions, I as a researcher will try to avoid reproducing these binary oppositions, hierarchical relations and the so called ‘otherness’ in my writing. As Penttinen states below, a narrative writing can be a means to avoid the extremes of both the relativist and realist views.

*“Writing in a narrative form is then a method and strategy that operates in between the binary universalism and relativism. It is then also a matter of transcending boundaries and creating possible spaces that have been determined as unlivable or uninhabitable before.”<sup>224</sup>*

I am also aware that one of the objectives of my study is to avoid giving a voice to the East Timorese people, not even to those that I interview. The analysis I conduct in my research will be my interpretation of their stories and the meanings behind their narratives. This is not to say that I am speaking on behalf of the interviewees or representing any thoughts or ideas that they may have. My analysis aims to make an interpretation of realities in which the interviewees live in and write about the security narratives that emerge from their stories.

## **4.2. Narrativity in my study**

Narrativity is employed in various ways in my research: Firstly, it is connected to the theoretical approaches I adopt in my analysis and it shares a similar epistemology with my theoretical framework. According to Heikkinen, Narrativity can be seen as a process of knowing which links

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<sup>223</sup> Wibben 2011, 110.

<sup>224</sup> Penttinen 2004, 53.



it with the constructivist research approaches (in which the Welsh School and postmodern feminism approach can also be included).<sup>225</sup> The constructivist approaches emphasize that one objective truth or single, dominant reality does not exist. Instead there are multiple realities that individuals' construct in their minds through social interactions.<sup>226</sup> The constructivist conception of knowledge depicts knowledge as relative and dependent upon time, place and the position of the observer. Value-free and neutral knowledge is considered impossible because a perspective is always given from a certain point of view.<sup>227</sup>

Heikkinen states that *“narrative research does not aim at objective or generalized knowledge, but, rather, at a local, personal and subjective knowledge”*.<sup>228</sup> The aim of narrative research is to give more space to smaller narratives which are more multi-voiced and hereby, allow people's voices to be heard authentically, thereby avoiding the reproduction of the universal stories of the “grand narratives”.<sup>229</sup>

*“The use of intimate detail in the narrative is especially a way to overcome the role of the scientists as a distanced spectator and the treatment of data as the other, which is central to the narrative turn.”*<sup>230</sup>

Secondly, the interview material as data is narrative by its character and therefore, well suited for this methodology. In producing narratives, the researcher can also reveal themselves by sharing personal experiences related to the topic.<sup>231</sup> Penttinen stresses that the researcher is not a neutral observer but is very much involved in the data. Mainstream studies are written in a way that aims to place the writer on neutral ground while placing the reader in a passive position. On the contrary, narrative writing attempts to go beyond this by drawing the reader into the text to compel and affect her or him.<sup>232</sup> The goal is to write in a way that it brings the reader closer to the

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<sup>225</sup> Heikkinen 2002, 17-18.

<sup>226</sup> Ibid.

<sup>227</sup> Ibid.

<sup>228</sup> Heikkinen 2002, 18.

<sup>229</sup> Ibid.

<sup>230</sup> Penttinen 2004, 56.

<sup>231</sup> Penttinen 2004, 57.

<sup>232</sup> Ibid.

context and issues allowing them to feel and experience the story. When the reader is engaging with the text in this way, she/he cannot remain as a distanced bystander.<sup>233</sup>

In summary, the concept of Narrativity combines the major elements in my study and as a methodological frame it conforms to the theoretical foundation of my thesis.

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<sup>233</sup> Penttinen 2004, 56.

## **5. A BRIEF HISTORY OF TIMOR-LESTE**

### **5.1. Independence after the colonial rule and occupation**

Timor-Leste was under the Portuguese colonial rule over 400 years which was interrupted by a short occupation by the Japanese from 1942 to 1945. When the colonization ended in November 1975, the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste was declared for the first time. The independence lasted for nine days after which Indonesia invaded the territory.<sup>234</sup> A brutal occupation ensued and lasted 24 years. It became a protracted and bloody conflict during which a large number of incidents such as arbitrary detentions, torture, forced displacement and gender-based violence occurred.<sup>235</sup> It is estimated that more than 102,000 East Timorese lost their lives during these 24 years.<sup>236</sup> The Timorese resistance movement Falintil, was engaged in an armed struggle against the Indonesian army throughout the occupation.<sup>237</sup>

In 1999, East Timorese voted for their independence in a referendum proposed by Indonesia. Majority of the population resisted the integration with the occupier (78.5%) and Timor-Leste became officially independent in May 2002. After the referendum an extremely violent attack was launched by the pro-Indonesian militias and Indonesian army, this caused large-scale casualties and destroyed most of the infrastructure in the country.<sup>238</sup>

### **5.2. Building the new state – the era of the UN operations**

The United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) was established in 1999 to administer the territory until Timor-Leste became officially independent. As a UN peacekeeping mission, UNTAET differed from the other operations because in Timor-Leste the

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<sup>234</sup> Lothe – Peak 2010, 3.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid.

<sup>236</sup> Ibid.

<sup>237</sup> Ibid.

<sup>238</sup> Ibid.

mandate of the mission was colossal.<sup>239</sup> The country had no state structures: no ministries, no security institution or justice system. As the state needed to be built from scratch, the task of the operation was demanding.<sup>240</sup> The security institutions, the defence (F-FDTL) and the police (PNTL) forces were hastily established in 2001. The army was established to disarm and integrate the former guerilla fighters but the new institution was not able to employ all former combatants. A national police force was also set up hastily by trained police officers that had served with the Indonesian national police forces (POLRI) during the occupation.<sup>241</sup> This close bond to the Indonesian police led to a lack of legitimacy in the eyes of both the citizens and the army. The relationship between the army and the police force can be said to have been strained from the start, with both institutions also having to contend with serious internal problems. Many have cited the unresolved tensions and undefined roles of the security institutions as triggers of the internal crisis that erupted in 2006.<sup>242</sup>

After independence, a large UN presence remained in the country. The role of UNTAET became to serve as a follow-up mission of the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISSET). A smaller mission of the United Nations Office in East Timor (UNOTIL) eventually replaced this in May 2005. UNOTIL was scheduled to withdraw from Timor-Leste in May 2006.<sup>243</sup> At the time, the state building process in Timor-Leste was described as a UN success story with some of the Security Council member countries claiming that the peacekeeping phase was almost complete.<sup>244</sup> However, in 2006 Timor-Leste drifted to its most serious post-independence crisis.

### **5.3. The 2006 crisis**

During the years after its independence economic and social instability increased and a political crisis in Timor-Leste seemed evident. Violent-prone youth gangs, martial arts and ritual arts

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<sup>239</sup> Lothe – Peake 2010, 4.

<sup>240</sup> Ibid.

<sup>241</sup> Funaki 2009, 4.

<sup>242</sup> Simonsen 2009, 580. Funaki 2009, 4.

<sup>243</sup> Myrntinen 2010, 37-38.

<sup>244</sup> Lothe – Peake 2010, 6. Richmond – Franks 2008, 190.

groups started to proliferate in major cities and once again, fear and insecurity captured the East Timorese society.<sup>245</sup> In the spring 2006 a crisis erupted. The violence, which took place mainly in Dili between April and June 2006, resulted in 37 deaths and about 100,000 fled their homes and became internally displaced people (IDP). Several IDP camps were established around Dili and as recently as 2009 these camps have had been home to inhabitants displaced during this crisis.<sup>246</sup>

Many feel the crisis was triggered by the dissatisfaction of a large amount of soldiers from the western parts of the country who felt discriminated and marginalized in the army.<sup>247</sup> The disregarded complaints they made to the government caused these ‘so-called’ petitioners to start to protest. Step by step demonstrations turned in to violent confrontations and hostilities even escalated between the army and the police force.<sup>248</sup> According to Myrntinen, the wave of violence in 2006 was the rise of an east-west divide which refers to more a geographical division of the population than an ethnic conflict.<sup>249</sup> The crisis brought down the security institutions and the UN’s plans to exit the country was postponed as the government of Timor-Leste requested assistance from the international community in improving the security situation in the country.<sup>250</sup> In August 2006, the UN Security Council authorized a fifth UN mission to assist Timor-Leste.<sup>251</sup> The United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) is still an ongoing, multidimensional mission with a far-reaching mandate to restore the peace and security.

After the crisis in 2006 the gangs, martial arts and ritual arts groups still engaged in spats of urban violence and killing on a small scale. In February 2008 this politically motivated violence reached a new level when the President José Ramos-Horta and the Prime Minister Xanana Gusmão became targets of two assassination attempts. Although the attack on the president was nearly fatal, both men survived the assaults. The government declared a state of emergency and a strict curfew was put in place. This curfew was imposed until May 2008.<sup>252</sup>

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<sup>245</sup> Myrntinen 2010, 38.

<sup>246</sup> Myrntinen 2010, 64-65.

<sup>247</sup> Simonsen 2009, 580.

<sup>248</sup> Simonsen 2009, 580. Funaki 2009, 4.

<sup>249</sup> Myrntinen 2010, 40-41.

<sup>250</sup> Simonsen 2009, 580. Funaki 2009, 4.

<sup>251</sup> Lothe – Peake 2010, 7.

<sup>252</sup> Myrntinen 2010, 44. Funaki 2009, 3.

## 5.4. Timor-Leste today

The year 2011 has marked a break in the cyclic spate of internal violence which has occurred every two years since the independence. At the moment, Timor-Leste can be described as a post-conflict country where democracy is still fragile. The peace prevailing in Timor-Leste can be characterized as “non-war” in terms of Pierre Allan. Allan states that the peace stemming from an absence of war, still remains as a state of war in the background of people’s minds because the possibility of a new conflict is constantly imminent.<sup>253</sup> There is not an ongoing conflict in Timor-Leste at the moment, but a new conflict can erupt again because the prevailing peace is fragile and the root causes of the past conflicts remain unsolved. Therefore, Allan’s description of peace as “non-war” is accurate for Timor-Leste. One of my interviewees, Nicolas, describes the current state of the Timorese society and the nature of peace as following:

*“It’s always fighting each other, now we are calm. We are very calm, it doesn’t mean we are in peace. It’s calm because it’s calm, but it’s no guarantee. Any time it can be explode, anytime.”*

There is no denying that the violent history has affected the culture and society of Timor-Leste. Myrntinen stresses that the way the East Timorese society has developed echoes the different events that have taken place in the past. According to him *“the long history of violence has reshaped society, left a legacy of lingering conflicts and led to a normalization of violence as a legitimate tool for addressing grievances”*.<sup>254</sup> However, Myrntinen reminds that the conflicts do not take place in a vacuum and the different types of conflicts (for example, political conflicts, land rights, other socio-economic conflicts, communal conflicts and gang fighting) are interlinked and have affected each other and impacted on the current state of the East Timorese society, as well as how for instance, expectations on gender roles have been shaped.<sup>255</sup>

The next year, 2012 is important for Timor-Leste as a nation for two reasons: Firstly, the East Timorese will participate in two elections, the Parliamentary and Presidential, for only the third

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<sup>253</sup> Allan 2006, 109.

<sup>254</sup> Myrntinen 2010, 49.

<sup>255</sup> Myrntinen 2010, 68-69.

time since gaining their independence and secondly, the UNMIT-mission plans to finalize its exit strategy and withdraw the last forces from Timor-Leste by the end of the year. The peaceful development of Timor-Leste is expected to continue after the UNMIT has withdrawn and a political culture in which democratic principles are respected is hoped to be strengthened by the third elections. However, the year 2012 can also be described as a 'showcase' for Timor-Leste to prove to themselves and to other countries its ability to stand on its own feet and strengthen the peace and democracy in the country.

## 6. DATA COLLECTION, METHOD & CHALLENGES

### 6.1. Interviews as a mean of collecting data

Over a 4-week period from April to May 2011, I interviewed a total of 21 people in Dili, the capital city of Timor-Leste, and the village of Pala in the island of Atauro. 17 of the 21 interviewees were East Timorese originated from different parts of the country and the remaining 4 interviewees were foreigners, involved in active field work related to the subject of my study. 13 of the interviews were one-on-one sessions conducted in Dili, and the interview I conducted in Atauro island was a group workshop involving 4 people. I also interviewed one Atauro resident in Dili. I conducted most of the interviews in English. However, during two interviews the discussion was translated between English, Tetum and Bahasa Indonesia.

I chose to apply an open-ended, thematic interview structure because it is a useful way to collect data that appreciates the everyday life knowledge of the interviewees. It offered a better method to collect in-depth data from the respondents than, for example, survey-interviewing since in the latter the researcher decides beforehand the essential questions to be asked.<sup>256</sup> My interviews were based on a loose structure and guidelines that I followed or deviated from whenever it seemed necessary. Conversations were natural and did not conform to a strict order or sequence of themes. The duration of the interviews varied from 35 to 70 minutes and apart from one exception, all the interviews with the East Timorese interviewees were recorded.

I aimed to be as open-minded as possible and to conduct the interviews in a way that limits the influence that the perceived ‘privileges’ that I have as a foreign researcher may have on the interview process. For example, the researcher has enormous power already entailed in the fact that she or he has the freedom to travel to a far-away country to conduct field research and leave the field at anytime.<sup>257</sup> During my stay in Timor-Leste I recognized the freedom to “step in and out” as a researcher and the privileges I had. I was able to travel to Timor-Leste and conduct my

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<sup>256</sup> Oinas 2004, 214.

<sup>257</sup> Penttinen 2004, 65.



field research there and leave the country anytime I wanted whereas most of my interviewees did not have the same opportunities.

## **6.2. Selection criteria – Who are the interviewees?**

One of the preconditions for my field work was that I wanted to conduct most of the interviews myself without an interpreter. That is, I wanted to be able to communicate directly with the interviewees. As a result, most of my interviewees were educated to a diploma level: 11 of the interviewees had a Bachelor's or Master's Degree either from a Timorese university or from abroad and two of the youngest interviewees are currently studying in the National University of Timor-Leste in Dili. Only 4 of the interviewees had not studied at the university level. It must be acknowledged that in general, the education level in Timor-Leste is low and about a half of the adult population is illiterate.<sup>258</sup> However, the literacy rates are higher amongst the younger generations.<sup>259</sup> Only 15% of East Timorese above the age of 18 have a high school diploma and only 2% have a university degree.<sup>260</sup>

Being able to interview people in English removed a communication barrier between me and my interviewees. The language barrier would have been an inevitable fact if I had interviewed people who speak only Tetum or Bahasa Indonesia. The interviewees that spoke fluent English were able to express their concerns, opinion and feelings in a detailed manner directly to me. I considered this to be invaluable because while communicating directly in this way, misunderstandings are less likely to happen.

While the fact that I chose to conduct the interviews myself restricted my sample to consist of mainly English-speaking, educated East Timorese, the output would prove to be more beneficial

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<sup>258</sup> UNFPA Timor-Leste:  
[http://countryoffice.unfpa.org/timor-leste/2009/11/02/1482/timor-leste\\_democratic\\_republic\\_of/](http://countryoffice.unfpa.org/timor-leste/2009/11/02/1482/timor-leste_democratic_republic_of/) (Read 13.10.2011)

<sup>259</sup> Ibid.

<sup>260</sup> Plan 2009-2010 Timor-Leste. (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies)  
<http://www.ifrc.org/docs/appeals/annual09/MAATP00109p.pdf> (Read 13.10.2011)

for my research considering the time frame for completion, financial restrictions and the objective of my study which does not require large sample sets.

Gender difference is also considered with a good balance between the interviewees (an almost equal number of women and men). The population of Timor-Leste can be described as young, with over half (53%) of the population below the age of 18 whereas the elderly (people over the age of 65) form only 3.6% of the entire population.<sup>261</sup> Though the population is currently about 1.1 million, Timor-Leste is one of the fastest growing nations in the world: It has one of the highest fertility rates, with each woman having an average 6.95 children.<sup>262</sup> The median age in Timor-Leste is 22.5 years whereas in most of the European countries the figure is 40 or more (in Finland 42.5<sup>263</sup>).<sup>264</sup> My interviewees fall between the ages of 22 and 40 which reflect the young age structure of the country.

Most of the interviewees were born and raised in different parts of Timor-Leste, in places such as Baucau, Maliana, Lospalos, Same, Viqueque, Pala (Atauro) and one interviewee in Indonesia (See Appendix 2. Map 1.). This was intentional as I wanted the selection to include perspectives from the different parts of Timor-Leste. In addition, I aimed to select interviewees who live in different areas, *bairos*<sup>265</sup> within Dili.

Dili, the capital of Timor-Leste, is the administrative and economic centre of the country. The population of Dili is around 200,000 and it is growing rapidly due to a steady increase in migration from rural areas.<sup>266</sup> Many of the inhabitants of these semi-urban areas are first- or

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<sup>261</sup> The World Bank: Timor-Leste, Youth Brief: <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/EASTASIAPACIFICEXT/TIMORLESTEEXTN/0,,contentMDK:20877757~pagePK:141137~piPK:141127~theSitePK:294022,00.html> (Read 11.10.2011)

Timor-Leste Age Structure: [http://www.indexmundi.com/timor-leste/age\\_structure.html](http://www.indexmundi.com/timor-leste/age_structure.html) (Read 11.10.2011)

<sup>262</sup> UNFPA Timor-Leste: [http://countryoffice.unfpa.org/timor-leste/2009/11/02/1482/timor-leste\\_democratic\\_republic\\_of/](http://countryoffice.unfpa.org/timor-leste/2009/11/02/1482/timor-leste_democratic_republic_of/) (Read 11.10.2011)

<sup>263</sup> Finland Median Age: [http://www.indexmundi.com/finland/median\\_age.html](http://www.indexmundi.com/finland/median_age.html) (Read 11.10.2011)

<sup>264</sup> Timor-Leste Median Age: [http://www.indexmundi.com/timor-leste/median\\_age.html](http://www.indexmundi.com/timor-leste/median_age.html) (Read 11.10.2011)

<sup>265</sup> Dili is divided to several parts, *bairos*. Myrntinen refers to 'bairos' as semi-urban areas that are village like centers scattered around the city. (Myrntinen 2010, 60.)

<sup>266</sup> Myrntinen 2010, 62.

second generation migrants and the new city dwellers tend to move to the same areas previous migrants from the same region have settled.<sup>267</sup>

12 of the interviewees currently live in Dili, most moved to the capital to either study or to find work. Half of the interviewees living in Dili work within the NGO sector (non-governmental organization). Only one interviewee works for an international organization though several interviewees had worked for different international organizations and NGO:s previously. The rest of the interviewees were involved in private, public or service sector professions.

The upper class and social power groups were also excluded from my study, so high-level politicians and industrial decision makers and leaders were avoided. Attempts were however made to include the so-called “middle-class East Timorese”. This sampling agenda aligned my focus with that of my thesis, which is to gain an understanding of issues relating to security and insecurity from people’s perspective (not from the perspective of a state or a government).

In Timor-Leste there are a few urban cities and Dili is the densest. 64% of these urban dwellers live in the capital but most of the East Timorese live in rural areas – in total 74% of the population.<sup>268</sup> I was keen to conduct interviews in the rural area in order to examine any differences in security concerns the rural residents have. Over the Easter, I travelled to the island of Atauro which is within the Dili district but is located about 30 km north of the capital city.<sup>269</sup> The island is very sparsely inhabited and the population of the entire island is around 8,000 people. The island is divided to five districts: Biqueli, Beloi, Macadade, Maquili and Vila Maumeta (See Appendix 2. Map 2.). I conducted my interviews in a village of Pala which is located in Biqueli district in the northern part of the island. Pala is a village where everybody seems to know each other and the communal cooperativeness was notable already during a short visit to the village.

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<sup>267</sup> Myrntinen 2010, 63.

<sup>268</sup> UNFPA Timor-Leste:

[http://countryoffice.unfpa.org/timor-leste/2009/11/02/1482/timor-leste\\_democratic\\_republic\\_of/](http://countryoffice.unfpa.org/timor-leste/2009/11/02/1482/timor-leste_democratic_republic_of/) (Read 12.10.2011)

<sup>269</sup> Ministry of State Administration & Territorial Management:

<http://www.estatal.gov.tl/English/Municipal/dili.html> (Read 12.10.2011)

To get a comparative perspective of the context (from a western standpoint), I also interviewed 4 foreigners who work in a field related to my study. Though these interviews were more informal and not recorded, I was able to make notes during the sessions. I intend to use this data as a complementary material to offer multiple insights to the topic of insecurity in Timor-Leste. The foreigners I interviewed were all based in Dili and employed in different organizations. One of the interviewees, the UN Police Commissioner for the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste, represents the views of the United Nations which still is an integral actor in the state building process in Timor-Leste. The rest of the foreign interviewees work for following aid or development organizations: the New Zealand Aid -program, an international civil society organization called the Asia Foundation and an NGO called Belun.

### 6.3. Method

As mentioned previously in the chapter 4, Narrativity is the method I selected to interpret the data collated whilst in Timor-Leste. Narrativity can be used as means of analysis and can thereby refer to a particular method applied in examining field data. Donald E. Polkinghorne distinguishes two ways to analyze narrative styled data such as interviews (1) *the analysis of narratives* and (2) *narrative analysis*. The distinction is based on Jerome Bruner's division between paradigmatic and narrative modes of thought.<sup>270</sup>

(1) *The analysis of narratives* refers to the studies in which data is collected in a form of stories and the analysis produces *paradigmatic categories*. The analysis aims to identify common themes and conceptualizations that exist amongst the collected narratives and bring up the repeated elements. The analysis typically produces pragmatic typologies and different taxonomies then examine the relationships between these categorizations.<sup>271</sup>

(2) *The narrative analysis* is applicable for studies in which data consists of descriptions of actions and events that can be shaped into a story. The researcher organizes the data elements in

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<sup>270</sup> Polkinghorne 1995, 5.

<sup>271</sup> Polkinghorne 1995, 5, 12-13.

order to create a new narrative (or set of narratives) with a plot that links these elements together. The outcome is a new story, for instance, in a form of biography, history or case study.<sup>272</sup>

In my analysis of the data, I intend to apply the first of these descriptions: the analysis of narratives.

### ***6.3.1. The analysis of narratives***

The analysis of narratives, defined by Polkinghorne, is the method I adopt in my analysis. The objective is to examine the data for common themes, group them and produce categorizations aligned with the theoretical approaches that underpin my research – the Welsh School and Postmodern feminist approaches. This is achieved through *paradigmatic cognitions* that will help to organize the data, identify the relationships between the defined classifications and analyze how the categories are interconnected that is, determining what kind of similarities, contrasts and discrepancies exist. By applying paradigmatic cognition to the narratives produced during interviews, the notions that appear across the different stories can be uncovered.<sup>273</sup>

Polkinghorne's analysis of narrative is similar to a method called content analysis. Content analysis, like the analysis of narratives, can be seen described as a tool which provides information about the beliefs, motives and relationships of the objects of the study.<sup>274</sup> According to Hermann, content analysis "*involves developing a set of procedures to make inferences from text*" and in addition, is a method that enables to reveal which symbols are used in communications and the meanings behind them.<sup>275</sup>

The nature of the content analysis can vary depending on several factors: *the kind of a research question is asked, the type of material has been selected for study, is the analysis qualitative or*

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<sup>272</sup> Polkinghorne 1995, 6, 12.

<sup>273</sup> Polkinghorne 1995, 10-11. Murray Thomas 2003, 39.

<sup>274</sup> Hermann 2008, 166.

<sup>275</sup> Hermann 2008, 151.

*quantitative in nature and is the data representative or instrumental and lastly, what are the units of analysis?*<sup>276</sup>

My analysis will be qualitative in nature and the data is instrumental as it refers to the notion that the data is not examined at its face value but the message and meanings emerging from the interviews are attached to the given context and circumstances. As many have remarked, what is *not* said may be as important as what is said.<sup>277</sup> Similar to the analysis of narratives, in content analysis the researcher must select the units of analysis to be used. Hermann specifies the units of analysis as *codes*.<sup>278</sup> In my study, I will not search systematically certain words, phrases or sentences (i.e. codes) from the data. As I do not intend to adopt content analysis, the units of my analysis are composed of the different themes that are highlighted in the course of the interviews. The units include themes such as: personal security in the community, the role of the police force and justice sector, elections in 2012, and domestic violence.

The main risk associated with this method is that the knowledge generated from the data in this way may be seen as a generalization and/or is abstract, concealing the unique and particular aspect of each interview.<sup>279</sup> However, it must be remembered that personal stories as a main source of data, despite the method applied, often include the limitation that they may not explicitly reveal how certain cultural or social characteristics, like education, wealth, ethnic background, religion are distributed throughout the population.<sup>280</sup> The challenge therefore is to focus on the examination of the compiled narratives and desist from common generalizations.

Another risk lies in the search for common patterns within the data which might result in the researcher ignoring marginal features that distinguish each narrative. While such risks are acknowledged, the fact that the paradigmatic analysis will be aligned to the theoretical framework should ensure that any common themes revealed through the process remains focused on the research agenda. In addition, as the intention of the thesis is to highlight a community's security situation (a practical and concrete construct) through the presentation of an alternative

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<sup>276</sup> Hermann 2008, 152-157, 167.

<sup>277</sup> Hermann 2008, 156.

<sup>278</sup> Hermann 2008, 157.

<sup>279</sup> Polkinghorne 1995, 14-15.

<sup>280</sup> Murray Thomas 2003, 39.

approach, an extreme constructionist stance is unwanted and it is expected that certain marginalized and unique views of individuals will be neglected.

## **6.4. The challenges of the fieldwork**

### ***6.4.1. Power of the researcher***

Field research in the tradition of IR has often meant interviews with elite decision makers who have power. The focus of many studies have been on presidents, secretaries of defense and chief executive officers instead of the people with relatively less power, that are situated in the margins of the society - the ‘so called’ average citizen. Critical approaches, such as the Welsh School and feminist perspectives, consider such marginalized people as a meaningful part of the world politics such as, for instance, influential politicians.<sup>281</sup>

The power relation between the researcher and objects of the study is one of the biggest challenges in collecting data as part of field research in developing countries as mentioned earlier in this chapter (6.1.). The researcher has the power to determine the purpose and the object of the study since the researcher defines the issues that are relevant for discussion despite the fact that interviews are open-ended. The researcher also decides how the collected data will be processed and used, by highlighting certain aspects while suppressing others. How the subject of study is represented in the final report lies entirely in the hands of the researcher. The written sentences are also expressions of power, used through language.<sup>282</sup> Whitworth problematizes the phases of field research as follows:

*“We ask people for their time and their stories, which we take away (we steal them) and write up in a language we (but not necessary they) understand, in a manner that serves our (but not necessary their) research interests and political agendas. After we write up their stories, we become famous or, at the very least, get tenure, promotion, more money, a book contract, and so on.”<sup>283</sup>*

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<sup>281</sup> Whitworth 2001, 157.

<sup>282</sup> Oinas 2004, 215, 217, 222-223.

<sup>283</sup> Whitworth 2001, 156.

### **6.4.2. Power of the subject**

Another challenge which might be faced is the power of the interviewees during the research process. Henri Myrntinen states in his study *“Histories of Violence, States of Denial – Militias, Martial Arts and Masculinity in Timor-Leste”* (Myrntinen 2010) that even he wielded the power of pen/laptop, the objects of his research (the members of militias, gangs, martial arts and ritual arts groups) wielded the power of the sword/machete/assault rifle. He continues by saying that he had the privileged access to political and economical power structures, privileges that they, the objects of the study, did not possess and the power to portray them through his work to people and institutions which could have a direct impact on their daily lives. However, the interviewed men had unique knowledge of secret rituals, martial arts skills, East Timorese culture and history that he would never be able to possess in the same way.<sup>284</sup>

This excerpt highlights the fact that the people being researched have power derived from the unique knowledge of the context which is unreachable for the foreign researcher (that is, without their cooperation). Moreover, the interviewees have the power to decide what to tell and what information to withhold during the interview.<sup>285</sup>

One of the reasons I travelled to Timor-Leste to collect my data was to experience the Timorese culture and way of living. I perceived this to be the best way for me as a foreigner, to understand the security situation of the country in a more in-depth manner. Thus far, most of my knowledge on Timor-Leste is based on previous studies published about the country but in order to be able to answer my research question comprehensively, the knowledge which only my interviewees possess as East Timorese citizens living in the country is required. As such, as a researcher I am very dependent on the cooperation of the interviewees and their willingness to share their unique knowledge. Their knowledge about the everyday life in Timor-Leste and their experiences construct the power position for them that I can never possess as a foreigner – more so, as the subjects are educated and aware.

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<sup>284</sup> Myrntinen 2010, 85-86.

<sup>285</sup> Oinas 2004, 224. Stern 2006, 186.



However, like Whitworth states, field research will always produce dichotomies and opposite positions such as ‘us/them’ and ‘researcher/researched’ but that this is not a sufficient reason to dismiss the field research.<sup>286</sup> Similarly, Diane L. Wolf describes fieldwork as an important process which challenges the researcher to witness and try to understand the different circumstances and open vistas into the issues which would maybe not otherwise be revealed.<sup>287</sup> Like Wolf encourages, I intend to complete the field research staying aware of my positionality and confront such power dilemmas without naivety.<sup>288</sup>

### **6.4.3. Feminist position**

*“The narrative turn is a means by which the researcher can be open about the context and situatedness of the knowledge produced and about her own biases and values that she brings into the text.”<sup>289</sup>*

Reflecting upon the position and subjectivity of a researcher is a characteristic of the feminist approach. Combining personal experiences to the study has traditionally damaged the scientific reliability of the research in social sciences. Nonetheless for the feminist schools, recognizing one’s position and consciousness during the research process strengthens the credibility and objectivity of the research.<sup>290</sup>

*“What do we do as researchers in countries such as Cambodia?”<sup>291</sup>*

Sandra Whitworth raises the above mentioned question in her article “The practice, and praxis, of feminist research in International Relations” in which she examines the influences of the UN-operations in Cambodia after the peacekeeping missions between the years 1991-1993. When I was planning my trip to Timor-Leste, the question “*What do I do as a researcher in a country such as Timor-Leste?*” seemed extremely relevant.

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<sup>286</sup> Whitworth 2001, 158.

<sup>287</sup> Wolf 1996, 3.

<sup>288</sup> Wolf 1996, 38.

<sup>289</sup> Penttinen 2004, 62.

<sup>290</sup> Tickner 2006, 28.

<sup>291</sup> Whitworth 2001, 156.

My background is very different from the life situations of the people I have interviewed. I am a 26-year-old Caucasian woman studying International Relations at the University of Tampere. Based solely on the fact that I was born and raised in Finland, I have been privy to a set of opportunities in life that are very different from most of the people in Timor-Leste. These starting points create certain power positions and make the attempt for an equal relationship between the researcher and the interviewees very difficult.

Furthermore, the country is a patriarchal society where traditional gender roles are strongly rooted in the culture. As a female researcher, I am aware that gender perceptions may influence how the interviewees regard me and what kind of information they are willing to share with me. I expect that there is a strong chance that there may be challenges related to interviewing men. In my case however, it is likely – as Wolf states – that the foreign ‘otherness’ of a Caucasian, female researcher will provide more license and flexibility for me to cross gender boundaries. In other words, although I may have a secondary level of status in the East Timorese society due to my biological sex, I may still be perceived as privileged through other categories such as race, class and Western culture.<sup>292</sup>

#### **6.4.4. Language**

This field trip represents my first visit to Timor-Leste and although I have an intermediate understanding of Bahasa Indonesia, which is a commonly spoken language in Timor-Leste, I have no understanding of the official languages: Tetum and Portuguese. While I expect that the lack of the local language skills may place me as an ‘outsider’ of the society, I hope to compensate by being open and honest about myself: telling my interviewees who am I, where I come from, what I am doing in their country, what my research is about and why I need help from them. I hope that the sharing of such personal information combined with the attempt to speak one of the unofficial Timorese languages during interviews is a way to reduce the challenges that the “label” of an outsider often bring.

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<sup>292</sup> Wolf 1996, 8.

### 6.4.5. *Summary*

Gender can be placed on the center of the axis of power but it is not the only influential factor in the power relations. Race, class and culture can also affect social interactions occurring in the course of fieldwork.<sup>293</sup> Some studies have shown that a common racial or ethnic background between the researcher and the people being studied can be a binding factor in certain circumstances and irrelevant in others.<sup>294</sup> A researcher can, for example, share the same gender, language, age, culture, nationality and race with her/his interviewees but the differing factor can be the class. A “superior position” due to class can still label the researcher as an outsider even if the fieldwork is conducted in the home country of the researcher.<sup>295</sup>

According to Wolf, a researcher who belongs to the same group with the people being studied can have a more balanced view of the people/society under examination and she/he can be privileged to a more intimate view.<sup>296</sup> The native/indigenous researcher tends to offer more often a critique of colonialist, racist and ethnocentric perceptions and practices because of their special standpoint and double consciousness. Such critiques might easily be overlooked by “white”, “western” researchers.<sup>297</sup> Wolf argues that the advantage of so called ‘outsider’ can be that she/he is viewed as a more neutral by the local people and therefore, has better access to gain knowledge particularly from sensitive issues. ‘Outsiders’ can also have more objective conceptions and a better ability to see patterns, whereas the ‘insider’ can be too immersed in her/his own culture. In addition, as stated earlier, in highly patriarchal setting, an ‘outsider’ might have more flexibility regarding the roles prevailing in the society.<sup>298</sup>

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<sup>293</sup> Wolf 1996, 10.

<sup>294</sup> Ibid.

<sup>295</sup> Wolf 1996, 11.

<sup>296</sup> Wolf 1996, 15.

<sup>297</sup> Ibid.

<sup>298</sup> Ibid.

## 7. ANALYSIS

In this chapter, I present the findings from my analysis of the field data and assess the validity of my research questions. The analysis is presented threefold: In the first section, I categorize the sources of insecurities emerging from the personal narratives adopting the Narrativity methodology. These sources can be divided to two main categories: “*Concrete fears*” which in turn are further divided into four groupings: (1) “*Fear of harassment*”; (2) “*Domestic violence*”; (3) “*Anxiety within the communities*” and (4) “*Elections 2012*”; and “*Structural fears*” which discusses *structural problems* that generate insecurity in the society. In the following section, I examine the commonalities across the categories of the sources of insecurity defined in the first section. That is, I will search the data for any common patterns that can be seen to act as an influence behind the sources of insecurity uncovered in the previous section.

In the third and final section, I will discuss the impacts of these findings on the emancipatory process that is taking place in Timor-Leste. Here, I intend to clarify how the notions of emancipation and emancipatory practices, defended by the Welsh School proponents, are applicable in the East Timorese context. The intention is to try to reveal the ‘bottlenecks’ that affect a state-driven emancipatory process and point out any limitations the Welsh School approach may have when the relationship between security and emancipation is examined from an individual’s perspective.

### 7.1. Concrete Fear: Fear of harassment

*“[...] I don’t want to go out lonely. Maybe I call my friend, but not a girl, I should call a man and say I want to go work and go by car. I don’t want to go lonely and at night time when I go out, I don’t bring the wallet or bag. If I bring money, I use my pocket. And maybe it works, because they see, she doesn’t bring nothing, so they don’t do nothing.”*

*Clarissa, 29*

The fear of harassment is a recurring theme that emerged from the narratives amongst majority of the interviewees. For the women living in Dili, this was expressed as the fear of moving around after dark. The concern of being robbed, sexually harassed or raped was cited as reasons which restrict the mobility of women after dark. Most of the female interviewees expressed their fear of walking or even riding a motorbike alone after sunset.

The origins of these concerns can be partly described as remnants from the crisis and civil unrest that took place in 2006, 2007 and 2008. One of the interviewees, Andre, describes this as a change that intensified in the course of the 2006 crisis: During the crisis and after it, it became very risky, for men and women, to walk outside in the city after dark. The security situation has improved from the conflict times and during my stay in Dili, the city appears safer and there are, for instance, no official curfews enforced. While burning houses and random shooting are no longer a constant feature, the recommendation for women is to be at home after the sun goes down (around 6pm) still remains. The narratives from the interviewees presented strong distinctions across gender as most commented on the mobility of men being less restrictive than for women who experience the 'state of emergency' as a 'normal state'.

*“If you are a woman, you have very tight attention focus on your security. You cannot go out at the night time or in daytime, if you want to go that place, somebody should guide you or somebody go to watching you.”*

*Nicolas, 40*

Distinctions across locations were evident with some neighbourhoods, *bairos*, perceived by the interviewees as more dangerous than others, but overwhelmingly, the advice that women should travel accompanied with others (preferably men) when they go to places in the evenings was emphasized. The concerns for a woman's security applied to foreigners as well. As a personal illustration, on my arrival to Dili, my host, a British homeowner who had lived in Dili for the last 10 years, explicitly told me not to go out on my own in the evenings. As a result, I was regularly accompanied by male acquaintances for dinner or late afternoon trips.

*“Men and women is different. Different concern, different feeling about security, how they think about security. [...] Women, sometimes they are afraid, they are worried about the harassment, sexual harassment. They are worry about that. Men, they don’t care about that.”*

*Julia, 36*

While the violent events in Timor-Leste’s recent past can be cited as an explanation for the fear of harassment and its particular focus on women, the issue must be placed in the larger historical and cultural context in order to understand the expression of fear around gender-based violence (GBV)<sup>299</sup>. Gender-based violence was prevalent in Timor-Leste during the Portuguese colonial times and this continued through the Japanese and Indonesian occupations. During the 24 years of Indonesian occupation, it is estimated that 40% of females were victims of rape and sexual assault.<sup>300</sup> In the post-conflict, gender-based violence in the independent Timor-Leste has remained a widely recognized and increasingly problematic issue that generates insecurity which in turn impacts both women and girls.<sup>301</sup> Sexual abuse has been experienced by many Timorese women across several generations and their communities have been forced to witness the suffering of these women.<sup>302</sup> Although men have also been victims of sexual violence in the course of the history, women are more often the target.<sup>303</sup>

Many studies also define the patriarchal culture as one factor which increases violence towards women although other social factors such as poverty, the lack of education, economic dependence due to unemployment are influential.<sup>304</sup> Traditionally the role of women in the Timorese society has been subordinate to men. Women are viewed as “second class” citizens and their roles are mainly in the private and domestic sphere.<sup>305</sup> The growth of the western influence in cities Dili present a challenge to these traditional views as more women are studying in the

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<sup>299</sup> *Gender-based violence* (GBV) is directed at a person on basis of gender or sex or gender role in a society or culture. It can be targeted to both women and men. GBV includes acts that inflict physical, mental or sexual harm or suffering, threat of such acts, coercion and other deprivations of liberty. *Sexual violence* and *domestic violence* are forms of gender-based violence. Sexual violence, including exploitation and abuse, refers to any act, attempt or threat of a sexual nature that results, or is likely to result, in physical, psychological and emotional harm. (UNHCR 2003, 10.)

<sup>300</sup> Ferguson 2011, 54.

<sup>301</sup> Ibid.

<sup>302</sup> Asia Pacific Support Collective Timor-Leste (APSCTL) 2009, 18.

<sup>303</sup> Myrntinen 2010, 275.

<sup>304</sup> Asia Pacific Support Collective Timor-Leste (APSCTL) 2009, 14, 16.

<sup>305</sup> Asia Pacific Support Collective Timor-Leste (APSCTL) 2009, 16.

university and working outside the home. Nonetheless, gender roles remain strongly rooted in the culture and how is socially accepted to perform as a girl or as a boy differs significantly.

*“It’s different to be a boy. Because it’s different because for girls if you go out some of the boys and mens are drunk and can do the sexual harassment or sexual abuse with a girl and sometimes do because they are stronger than the girl.”*

*Emilie, 23*

As Emilie’s citation illustrates, women consider the sexual harassment and abuse as serious risks for their personal security. Increased alcohol and drug use are social problems in Timor-Leste that are linked to the fear of harassment. Several of the female interviewees specifically named the drunken men as threats that made them feel more insecure.

The interviewees did not reveal any personal experiences they all seemed to have a story about a ‘sister’, ‘friend’ or ‘friend of a friend’ that had experienced harassment in some way. Sexual and gender-based violence are common phenomena in Timor-Leste and as in many other countries facing the same problem, the violence seems to be more intensified when the inequality between genders is high.<sup>306</sup> In 2009, a total of 679 cases of sexual and gender-based violence (excluding domestic violence cases) were reported to the police but as often cited in Timor-Leste studies<sup>307</sup>, the majority of such cases are never actually reported.<sup>308</sup> Also, according to Myrntinen’s study on the issue, there is no reliable database on GBV crimes and as such, many incidents are wrongly classified as assault, battery or murder.<sup>309</sup> Myrntinen also states that both the PNTL and UNPOL do not have enough trained staff to deal with the issues related to GBV.<sup>310</sup> Many of the reviewed narratives reinforce Myrntinen’s statement and several interviewees expressed considerable doubt on the local police capacity to handle such cases.

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<sup>306</sup> Asia Pacific Support Collective Timor-Leste (APSCTL) 2009, 12.

<sup>307</sup> For example: Gender-based violence in Timor-Leste. A Case Study.  
[http://www.unfpa.org/women/docs/gbv\\_timorleste.pdf](http://www.unfpa.org/women/docs/gbv_timorleste.pdf) (Read 18.8.2011)

<sup>308</sup> Ferguson 2011, 59-60.

<sup>309</sup> Myrntinen 2010, 283.

<sup>310</sup> Ibid.

*"[...] they [police] not really respond this kind of problems. [...] They maybe are not working so professional yet. They need training. If I would go, they would listen, listen, listen and then I know that no action."*

*Manuela, 22*

## **7.2. Concrete Fear: Domestic violence**

*"I went everywhere in Timor, the problem is the same. Yes, rape same, abuse same, crime like kill same."*

*Carina, 37*

Domestic violence is a prevalent problem in the East Timorese society and all the interviewees acknowledged its existence. In 2009, in total of 1095 domestic violence cases (more than 3 per day) were reported. However, it is estimated that for each reported domestic violence case, there are at least 10 unreported incidents.<sup>311</sup> The tendency of not reporting was repeatedly expressed during my interviews.

Not one of the interviewees claimed to have been a victim of domestic violence. While this could be true, there is the possibility that the interviewees did not want to share such sensitive and private information with me. However, many of them knew cases of domestic violence from within their own families, circle of friends, occurrences that they had witnessed in the community or had dealt with by helping the victims. Although the interviewees did not explicitly state domestic violence as a source of insecurity, I have included the theme because so many emphasized the enormity of the problem in Timor-Leste.

Domestic violence only became a public criminal offence in Timor-Leste in May 2010 when the Law Against Domestic Violence<sup>312</sup> was passed.<sup>313</sup> The classification of domestic violence as public crime in the legislation was intended to empower people other than victim of domestic

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<sup>311</sup> Ferguson 2011, 59-60.

<sup>312</sup> The law defines domestic violence to include physical, mental, economic and sexual mistreatment. It guarantees protection to family members, including spouses and ex-spouses, ascendants/descendants and domestic workers. (Ferguson 2011, 54.)

<sup>313</sup> Ferguson 2011, 53.



violence event, to report the incident to the police. In spite of the reform, the implementation has been slowly adopted in practice, as a majority of the Timorese people still view domestic violence as a family matter which should be solved within the family, or with the help of elders or through the traditional justice processes (*adat*) rather than through the formal justice system.<sup>314</sup>

Another indicator of the powerful impact of cultural habits was expressed by the fact that although all of my interviewees disapproved of domestic violence, the traditional notions of the issue being a personal were evident in thinking of some interviewees. For instance, Clarissa 29, revealed that she had heard her neighbour being beaten up by her husband several times, but instead of reporting this to the police, she keeps quiet in her house, so that she will not be noticed. She does not want to get involved in the affairs of another family although she admits that she feels sorry for the wife. Despite Clarissa's boyfriend being a policeman, the course of action remained the same once she brought the issue to his attention – he declined to get involved in another's family business. So while Clarissa believes that domestic violence is wrong, she still considers it a private issue in which she as an 'outsider' should not get involved.

Another reason for the negligence in pursuing this issue, is the risk/fear of making your family problems known in the community which is perceived as shameful. Many victims do not want the community to know about their family problems which is likely to occur when you report a domestic violence case.

*"[...] sometimes in the legally good to call the police but otherwise my problem will be known all the communities." [...] why I want to make this problem open and then everyone knows me that I have the problem with the husband or my family. This is the - I think that many women thinks like this."*

*Julia, 36*

*"[...] the negative impact are coming from the patriarchal culture because some of the women thinking that the domestic violence cases still internal problems, family problems. They don't want to go to make the men to the public or to the police institution. It's educated to the family that when they bring their husband to public, it's not good, it make the family name- [ruin the family name]."*

*Ricardo, 32*

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<sup>314</sup>Gender-based violence in Timor-Leste. A Case Study.  
[http://www.unfpa.org/women/docs/gbv\\_timorleste.pdf](http://www.unfpa.org/women/docs/gbv_timorleste.pdf) (p. 15) (Read 18.8.2011)

In addition, some refrain from reporting such crimes for the fear of losing their spouses to jail where they cannot work and thus cannot help to provide for the family. Another fear of reporting and making the crime public expressed by the interviewees was related to losing the children. According to the Timorese law, in a divorce, the children go to the husband which forces many to remain in violent marriages.<sup>315</sup>

*"[...] sometimes women feel afraid to report if they will be beating by her husband. She cannot report because she can be intimidated by the husband. That if you report, I will divorce you, if I divorce you, I will not leave any of the kids with you, I will take all the kids."*

*Andre, 33*

### **7.3. Concrete Fear: Anxiety within the communities**

*"My home or the area where I live in is not a safe place because still, since the independency until now they are still fighting."*

*"[...] till now sometimes people are scared too to come to our area, Comoro. Yeah, if you say to the taxi that I want to go to the Comoro area, the only taxi, sometimes they just want to go in the Comoro area only till five or five thirty. [when it is still light outside]"*

*Manuela, 22 from Comoro*

More than half of the interviewees mentioned that they do not consider the area where they live in Dili as safe. Many of them acknowledged that the security situation has been worse in the past but some still feel insecure in their neighbourhood. Fighting between the gangs and other groups in the past (1999, 2002, 2006, 2007 and 2008) had taken place mainly in the poorer parts of the town, particularly in the western part of the city, in *bairos* such as Comoro, Bairo Pite, Delta, Pantai Kelapa and Fatuhada. In addition, Becora at south-eastern end of Dili, has been traditionally a tense area from the time of the Indonesian occupation. (See Appendix 2.Map 2.)<sup>316</sup>

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<sup>315</sup> Ferguson 2011, 60.

<sup>316</sup> Myrntinen 2010, 62-63.

The interviewees who expressed their worry regarding insecurity of their neighbourhoods lived in West Dili (three of them in Comoro, two of them in Bairro Pite, one in Pantai Kelapa, one in Fatuhada and one in Becora) – however, there were some other interviewees who lived in Pantai Kelapa and Fatuhada that considered their neighbourhood safe.

*“But the year 2008, I was crying because I felt so - because they said that they are going to burn our house and all of us inside the house. They said: ‘Just burn them!’”*

*Manuela, 22 from Comoro*

It seemed evident that the root cause of the anxiety was the history of violence. The neighbourhoods in which the fighting and unrest had been constant during the years of crises seemed to still be more prone to violence. Also, the underlying problems of the outbreaks have remained despite everyday life appearing calm. Andre, 33 who lives in Becora describes the current situation:

*“Now the situation is very calm but in terms of the relationship, like I said before, it’s not solved yet. People are still hiding their anger, and it will come up.”*

During the 2006 crisis approximately 100,000 people fled from their homes because the unrest in Dili escalated to a violent conflict. Many, like Carina and her family, left the city in order to wait for the situation to calm down. She describes the situation in the Comoro area back in 2006 as follows:

*“Now it’s safe but not in the crisis, in 2006 is very dangerous. During the crisis there is very, very dangerous to stay there. So we move about three months to Lospalos and then come back. [...] we have very good relationship with neighbours and after three month then we go back to live there.”*

*“[In 2006] the houses was empty and some people came from west to occupy and that make us not feel safety anymore. We can’t sleep when the night time. [...] it take almost 2 years to face this kind of difficulties.”*

The origins of these feelings can be traced back to the crisis where many left their homes to avoid the violence only for these houses to be occupied by those fleeing from other parts of the country. Most of the occupied houses have since been returned to their rightful owners but in consequence

of the crisis, some neighbourhoods, such as Comoro and Becora have become more ‘mixed’ in a sense that there are people from both the western and eastern parts of the country living in the same communities. Studies have stated that the increased migration from the rural areas to Dili, and the ensuing lack of social cohesion, can be identified as a key factor causing instability in neighbourhoods and thus, more prone to anti-social phenomena like gang violence.<sup>317</sup>

*“[...] the issue of east and west still remain. People still feel unsatisfied with the crisis in 2006, because they lost their houses, they lost their properties and they came back and their relationship between the people not same as before. It change automatically with the 2006 crisis. There is not so much talk between the neighbourhoods, and people try to ignore each others in the daily interactions.”*

*Andre, 33 from Becora*

Andre’s description illustrates the dynamic in communities in areas where the internal migration has been extensive. The interviewees who live in more unstable areas are not only afraid of random strangers but many do not trust all the people who now live in the same community because they feel that they do not know them. The distrust and suspicion towards fellow citizens who are the so called “new neighbours” has remained deep. Furthermore, it is not uncommon in Dili that families do not want to move to other areas even though that would, for instance, enable them to build a bigger house. The families want to stay in the familiar neighbourhood, especially if they know the community members. Moving to a new area, amongst people you do not know (and thereby, do not trust) was expressed as another cause of insecurity.

*“For me, when I feel safe, is there is no like harm. Then I feel that there is, there is no one to hurt me. I don’t trust the other, the other community that they can make me safe. Sometimes they can start with, they can throw [stones] or they, at least can make me like violence and harassment sometimes [...]”*

*Julia, 36 from Comoro*

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<sup>317</sup> Myrntinen 2010, 63.

*"[...] like my neighbours, new people, they are not really friendly with us. We don't know why but maybe the attitude or the way they think or the way like... The most of them are not working, maybe also the educational background and that's why have the different level. Maybe because of this "level" and the educational background they cannot understand some, like in 2008, I remember they yelling at us and say: 'Oh, every day I work hard and you guys go with car!' Maybe it is jealousy. Jealousy in the society."*

*Manuela, 22 from Comoro*

The situation seems to be very different in the areas where there has not been so much migration and the communities have remained same for years, even decades. People who live in the more peaceful neighbourhoods feel secure and there is a strong sense of solidarity which links the families. In addition, the social jealousy between the families is not so extensive whereas in the more tensed areas inequality, in terms of education opportunities, wealth and employment, causes more envy and even anger within the communities.

#### **7.4. Concrete Fear: Elections in 2012**

*"This is also the worry of the community right now and most people don't think it will be calm. [...] I don't really believe or I don't really trust that it will be calm. That's why we sometimes need to be careful."*

*Julia, 36*

The last concrete fear expressed through the narratives was around the East Timorese plan to vote for the Parliamentary and Presidential elections for only the third time since their independence (in 2012). The upcoming elections is perceived by many as a 'political test' for Timor-Leste as a nation to show the international and regional observers that the country is progressing and that the campaign, election and the post-election activities can be carried out in a peaceful manner. To most of the interviewees, there is a possibility that the elections might trigger a new cycle of violence and all worry about the chance of a new conflict erupting in 2012 while some feel certain that these conflicts will be violent in nature. However, a few like Daniel, are optimistic and believe that the election processes will go peacefully.

*“People have been worrying because its just 2002 there was crisis, after about four years, another 2006 crisis, maybe after this 2012 elections coming come another violation, another civilian war. For me, I believe there is no, any major issue about election.”*

*Daniel, 37*

Based on the narratives, to the East Timorese, the upcoming elections are a real cause for increased feeling of insecurity and uncertainty. This concern is purely based on historical experience - Timor-Leste has attempted seven national elections since the independence referendum in 1999 and as in many post-conflict societies, these have led to repetitions of electoral violence<sup>318</sup> in its different forms and severity.<sup>319</sup>

Electoral violence in Timor-Leste can also be linked to the country’s colonial history and social factors, such as the fragility of its political institutions.<sup>320</sup> The intensity and scale of the electoral violence has varied considerably during the different elections but it has always caused deaths, injuries, displacement and property damage.<sup>321</sup> As TLAVA (The Timor-Leste Armed Violence Assessment) records indicate there were 900 civilian deaths and 60,000 displacements after the referendum in 1999 and at least 7,000 family displacements in 2007. In addition, the conflict in 1999 was accompanied with accounts of extensive torture and other forms of physical harm, such as sexual violence against women and men, as well as destruction of public infrastructure.<sup>322</sup> The most widespread effects of these events however are the increased fear and stronger perceptions of insecurity among civilians.<sup>323</sup> This fear was clearly identified within the narratives of most of the interviewees.

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<sup>318</sup> Electoral violence is defined by The International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) as *“any act or threat of physical or psychological harm to a person or damage to prosperity, directed at anyone directly involved in electoral process (voter, candidate, election worker, journalist etc.), which may disrupt or attempt to disrupt any aspect of the electoral process (campaign, registration, voting, counting etc.”* The electoral violence includes causing physical harm, threats, intimidation, destruction of property and forced displacement. (TLAVA 2009, 1.)

<sup>319</sup> TLAVA 2009, 1.

<sup>320</sup> Ibid.

<sup>321</sup> TLAVA 2009, 5.

<sup>322</sup> TLAVA 2009, 2.

<sup>323</sup> TLAVA 2009, 5.

*“Sometimes [violence] can happen before elections. Before in Viqueque, Baucau, there is a big violence: people killed, some houses burned. The police is there, you know but to some people is very hard to manage, because of the emotions. Some political party, some political participants, they really got, like when they got lost, have big emotions, you know to do the violence.”*

*Carina, 37*

In terms of sources of these insecurities, many identify proponents of the political parties and in some degree the political leaders as the primary agitators for the electoral violence - with the exception of 1999 when the instigators were the Indonesian army (TNI), the Indonesian mobile paramilitary police, Brimob and the pro-Indonesia militias.<sup>324</sup> While there are no official reports about political leaders encouraging their supporters for violence but the verbal attacks and provocative language they use against competing candidates has had a direct impact on supporters and their actions.<sup>325</sup>

*“Most afraid is the political decision. Like 2006, the political decision, like they created the problem: fighting, using the ‘arte marsial’ [martial arts groups]. It will be most the problem and make us afraid. People say: ‘Hey, now is election is coming, what will be happen? I’m not build my house yet until the elections.’ This is one thing that people are afraid of: the political decision.”*

*Carina, 37*

Additionally, the role of the police and army as security institutions and informal groups - such as martial arts groups and gangs, are also poorly documented. However, authors repeatedly state the significant role these groups played as perpetrators of electoral violence according.<sup>326</sup>

*“Conflict [in 2007] between political parties members and also involve some MAG:s [martial arts groups]. Some of the MAG:s, they are attached to political parties, so quite easily influence them, quite easily they engage in killing them and each others.”*

*Andre, 33*

Like the remarks made by Andre above, most of the narratives passionately call for a fundamental change in the behavior and attitudes of political leaders and politicians to ensure the

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<sup>324</sup> TLAVA 2009, 2, 5.

<sup>325</sup> TLAVA 2009, 5.

<sup>326</sup> Ibid.

elections take place without violence. One of them is Oscar who perceives the role of the politicians as extremely crucial in the 2012 elections:

*“It is depend on politicians, how they want to ‘drive’. I think this is depend on political leader because they are behind the destruction. If something like 2006, they all behind the destruction, they create the destruction to reach their goals. Depending on them, some maybe disagree because they lost, they don’t have any more members, like supporters, they become angry, start doing violence so it is, the situation now is still not exactly - probably it’s going be like - maybe, it depends on political leaders.”*

*Oscar, 29*

The attitudes of the political leaders and prominent politicians have typically shaped the character and guidelines of the elections. History has shown that when the political leaders provoke each other in public during the campaigns the result is violent clashes between the supporters of different political views. Some of the interviewees expressed their doubts on the maturity of the political culture and naturally offered this as reason for their concern of the 2012 elections.

*“[...] government is very young, politicians are also very – what we call it, very irresponsible – politicians will focus, they want to get the power. They can do everything every means, they can do to get the power. Have to be aware of that.”*

*Ado, 35*

According to IR authors like Myrntinen, one can always identify two factors that play a major role in the violent conflicts in Timor-Leste: fear and rumor.<sup>327</sup> Myrntinen states that the “pervasive atmosphere of fear” in Timor-Leste is partly a product of the country’s violent history but that this is also intensified by the spreading of rumors.<sup>328</sup> Several studies have implicitly corroborated Myrntinen’s position on the issue and the role of rumor in Timor-Leste conflicts in particular. According to Cynthia Brady and David Timberman, a strong reliance on informal communication networks has always been prevalent in Timor-Leste. They point to the legacy of the guerilla warfare against Indonesia and the tribal-based nature of the society as reasons for this. Brady and Timberman stress that the mixture of poor communication infrastructure, high illiteracy, language barriers and the lack of access to reliable information especially in the rural areas all serve to

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<sup>327</sup> Myrntinen 2010, 71.

<sup>328</sup> Myrntinen 2010, 72.



increase the possibility of the emergence of misinformation and a rampant rumor mill spreading throughout the country.<sup>329</sup> Despite the weakness of the truth-value of such rumors they present an effective way to increase the fear and insecurity within the Timor-Leste communities.

*“People still a little bit scared of this so that’s why we don’t know exactly, there are rumors, people say the 2012.”*

*Oscar, 29*

As Oscar’s comment above illustrates, the rumors of the 2012 elections have already started – a year before the elections actually take place. Speculating and reinforcing these rumors in this environment undoubtedly increases the atmosphere of fear and insecurity felt by the community.

## **7.5. Structural Fears**

*“[...] I said ‘why problem arise?’ because people are jobless. Jobless become, you know, frustrated. [...] They make problems against other people, for example, foreigners, foreigners coming outside, they have better life, they have good a car, good house, the people who are living in this country, we were struggling to get independence but we get nothing.”*

*Ado, 35*

Besides the concrete fears discussed above, a number of structural fears or problems exist in Timor-Leste that can lead to the type of widespread insecurity that overcome factors such as gender and class. These structural issues have less direct effect on inhabitants in Dili but they were verified by the narratives of the interviewees. They constitute issues that would result in more long term social problems if not improved or addressed. All of my interviewees acknowledged that the neglect of these structural issues would cause frustration and dissatisfaction amongst the people and most likely lead to future conflict if not resolved. These structural fears are grouped as recipes for dissatisfaction and lack of basic infrastructure.

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<sup>329</sup> Myrntinen 2010, 72.

### 7.5.1. The ‘recipe’ for dissatisfaction

*“[...] if people have all the basic needs, then they will be able to stay away from violence and conflict. If they have job opportunities and employment opportunities available, then they will stay away from violence and conflict.”*

*Andre, 33*

The combination of *poverty, high unemployment rate, limited education opportunities and the fast growing population* form what can be termed a ‘recipe’ for a deepening inequality and an increase in frustration and dissatisfaction in a country like Timor-Leste. Timor-Leste is one of the poorest countries in the world and there has been little change in poverty conditions or quality of life of the Timorese since their independence.<sup>330</sup> About half of the population lives below the poverty level (0.88 USD per day per person) which is drop from 2001 when the figure was 36%.<sup>331</sup> Timor-Leste has gone through a raft of economic, social and political changes since 1999 and the transitions and political crises explain the statistic.<sup>332</sup> Underemployment is widespread and the unemployment rate is about 20% amongst the youth.<sup>333</sup>

When these factors are combined, they can cause frustration and dissatisfaction amongst people and thereby, increase tensions and instability in the society which have a high tendency of resulting in violence. As one of the interviewees illustrates: The cycle of “*no job – no money – no food*” is widespread in Timor-Leste and it can easily push young people, mostly men to get involved with the youth gangs. When the history of violence and the culture of impunity feature the society, it is easy to understand that the frustration and despair might continuously be expressed through violence.

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<sup>330</sup> The Millennium Development Goals, Timor-Leste 2009, 17, 20.

<sup>331</sup> The Millennium Development Goals, Timor-Leste 2009, 8.

<sup>332</sup> The Millennium Development Goals, Timor-Leste 2009, 8, 17.

<sup>333</sup> Myrntinen 2010, 59.

### 7.5.2. *The lack of basic needs as a source of insecurity*

*“[...] Most of the time that go to my village, go to my district, sub-district, they ask for water and sanitation, they ask for health facilities, they ask for school facilities.”*

*Andre, 33*

About 74% of the East Timorese live in rural areas and a majority of the population is dependent on agriculture.<sup>334</sup> Many of the interviewees expressed their worry regarding the poor living standards of the people in the rural parts of the country. The scarcity of basic needs such as water, electricity, sanitation, health care services combined with poor infrastructure and transportation possibilities are also heavily linked with the feelings of insecurity.

*“For women hard to face, like there is no clinics, no hospital and they feel- also the road condition feel, make people feel not secure. Because of like long distance, like the girl from long distance to go to the school, sometimes take two hours, three hours to go to school and they feel not secure because some men can rape them and then not secure. [...] In rural area the woman who walk in long distance, of course the increase, they feel afraid.”*

*Carina, 37*

The lack of freedom of movement due to the poor infrastructure conditions can be linked with the questions of security that Carina raises. Higate and Henry stress that the threat of armament is not the only source of insecurity for people.<sup>335</sup> The authors confirm the notion through an illustration of a Liberian taxi driver:

*“[...] Insecurity is not only about the presence of arms but about travelling. The road should be passable and bridges should be safe - that's my general sense of safety.”<sup>336</sup>*

If individuals are not able to go about their everyday life chores because of poor condition of infrastructure, it can be directly linked to questions of security and insecurity.<sup>337</sup> The statement made by Higate and Henry are also applicable to the East Timorese context. As Carina's

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<sup>334</sup> UNFPA Timor-Leste.

[http://countryoffice.unfpa.org/timor-leste/2009/11/02/1482/timor-leste\\_democratic\\_republic\\_of/](http://countryoffice.unfpa.org/timor-leste/2009/11/02/1482/timor-leste_democratic_republic_of/) (Read 21.10.2011)

<sup>335</sup> Higate – Henry 2009, 75.

<sup>336</sup> Higate – Henry 2009, 75.

<sup>337</sup> Higate – Henry 2009, 83.

comment demonstrates, in the rural areas of Timor-Leste, where the majority of the people live, the long distances and weak infrastructure can make travelling troublesome and increase the insecurity, especially amongst women.

## **7.6. The security concerns in Atauro**

Five of the interviewees live in the village of Pala, on the island of Atauro. The security concerns of these interviewees differ slightly from the ones expressed by the Dili residents. In general, people consider Pala as a safe place to live where the cooperative spirit within the community tends to bring a sense of security to the people. The people in the village are religious (Protestant) and the interviewees consider that to be one of the reasons why alcoholism and thus violence is not as big a problem as in the urban areas. However, these same interviewees point out similar problems of domestic violence which take place in Atauro. Two of the female interviewees living in Pala also did not express concrete fears related to harassment or sexual violence. Magda, a 24 year old who is originally from Same and studied in Dili, emphasized the difference by stating:

*“They do some things no good. It happen a lot. A lot of girls they are pregnant without father. We don’t have to be afraid this [in Pala]. I would like to be here.”*

The most serious security concerns on the island are related to food insecurity and the scarce resources of the island – issues which all the interviewees from the island emphasized. People living in Atauro are not self-sufficient as the island is a scarce source of food products. As a result, islanders have to buy most of their food from the mainland. Any instability in Dili therefore drastically impacts the everyday life of the people living in Atauro. This is a reason why people on the island are anxious if the upcoming elections which they feel will cause unrest in the city.

*"[...] now people are in suffer, suffering, many kind of like no food. This time is like bad weather and people lack of food, in Atauro island is totally no food."*

*Oscar, 29*

The potential lack of food is a cause of insecurity for the people living on the island. Currently the situation is described as alarming as Nina explains that the scarcity of food causes conflicts within the families because people are afraid that there is not enough food for the children. In addition, the structural difficulties related to water supply and amount of fresh water and sanitation are identified as serious problems in the island.

The narratives of the inhabitants of Pala assert conceptions that were respectively reflected in the narratives of other interviewees: The rural areas need more assistance and improvement especially guaranteeing the basic needs for the people (i.e. structural fears). Although, the narratives illustrate only a narrow glimpse of the people's distress, the same problems are verified in many comprehensive studies about the topic.<sup>338</sup>

## **7.7. Common root causes**

*Fear of harassment, domestic violence, anxiety within the communities, elections in 2012 and structural problems* are the five categories that emerged from the narratives and give an overview of the sources of insecurity. By analyzing the meanings behind the narratives through an examination of the root causes, it may be possible to determine if there are any associations between these categories or causes of insecurity.

These associations take the form of common features that connect, in varying degrees, the sources of insecurities categorized above. I have classified these associations into three

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<sup>338</sup> For example: The Millennium Development Goals, Timor-Leste (2009): [http://www.tl.undp.org/MDGs/MDGs\\_File/UNDP\\_MDGReport\\_Final.pdf](http://www.tl.undp.org/MDGs/MDGs_File/UNDP_MDGReport_Final.pdf) (Read: 21.10.2011)  
Food Insecurity and Vulnerability Analysis Timor-Leste (2005). <http://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/vam/wfp067434.pdf> (Read: 21.10.2011)  
Thematic Report on the Right to Food in Timor-Leste. (2008). [http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/UNMIT2008\\_Dec.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/UNMIT2008_Dec.pdf) (Read: 21.10.2011)

categories: (1) *History*; (2) *Patriarchal culture and Power relations* and (3) *Fragile democracy and peace* from which the latter includes a sub-category of *inefficient law enforcement*. In this section, I will expand upon these common root causes that can also be described as the underlying triggers for the sources of insecurities that rise across the all the narratives.

### **7.7.1. History**

*“But sometimes you cannot control people’s anger and you know, particularly in a post-conflict country where people just, you know, came off from different kind of conflict cycles and this still remain their own mind and particularly there were the different political views in the past from the Timorese.”*

*Andre, 33*

The influence of history is pervasive when the sources of insecurities are categorized as previously. The historical context is a recurring factor while attempting to answer the “why-questions”: Why do people have a fear that they will be sexual harassed?, Why do people believe that domestic violence is a widespread problem?, Why do the elections generate insecurity?, Why are structural fears perceived as sources of insecurity?

An aim of the analysis is to understand and point out the reasons the categorized sources are a cause of insecurity to people in Timor-Leste, especially when in a different context, the same issues may not have the same effect - ‘The impact of the history’ always seems to lay amongst the answers.

This can be seen under the fear of harassment for example, where in Timor-Leste, sexual violence has historically been a taboo topic for public discourse. The Tetum term ‘*ema estragafeto*’ for sexual violence literally means “someone destroying woman” or “the woman is destroyed”. The word is used particularly in cases of rape and incest.<sup>339</sup> Throughout its history people have often kept silent on sexual crimes and still do, the incidents of sexual violence

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<sup>339</sup> Asia Pacific Support Collective Timor-Leste (APSCTL) 2009, 15.

therefore have a tendency to be “hidden” within the families because it is shameful for the victim and for her or his family.<sup>340</sup>

In the case of the insecurity around domestic violence, historically, the Timor-Leste authorities do not seem to react to domestic violence as a crime and this in turn affects people’s willingness to make reports to the police. Justifying reporting to oneself becomes difficult when there are so many stories of the police ignoring these crimes have happened. Carina and Ricardo both work for local NGOs that provide advice to the victims of domestic violence. They recount episodes of the unprofessional attitude of the police officers towards domestic violence victims.

*“According to the law domestic violence cases is crimes, it’s a public crime. Most of the domestic violence cases happen in the community, they have the obligation to make the complaint, ask the police to intervene. And also the members of the police officers can doing the investigations properly for this cases but some of the police say: ‘Oh, domestic violence is a private case, I didn’t have the competence to investigate, to intervene.’”*

*Ricardo, 32*

In the same way, the insecurity around the upcoming elections and shortage of food products all emanate from historical occurrences that serve to reinforce these insecurities. The long period of oppression, in the form of colonial rule and foreign occupations, has also left deep “scars” in the East Timorese people, their culture and society. The impact of centuries of hardships is visible in today’s East Timorese society. The resistance and struggle for the independence divided the nation (pro-integration with Indonesia vs. pro-independence) and although the independence and freedom may seem to have united the people, mistrust, suspicion and jealousy are strongly ingrained in their social life. This has been strengthened by the political crises which have taken place in the recent history and many times escalated to violent conflicts. This is echoed by the following words of one of the interviewees:

*“Based on the experience in the past, during the elections in 2007 and in 2002, we have many of violence happen during the election process and then also many of the political party, they didn’t respect for the democracy, the principle of the democracy. They didn’t follow the rule of law because they have power [...] they didn’t care about what is the rule of law, they didn’t understand. They just thinking how to become the government.”*

*Ricardo, 32*

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<sup>340</sup> Asia Pacific Support Collective Timor-Leste (APSCTL) 2009, 15.

### 7.7.2. Patriarchal culture and power relations

*“Man is not really [victims of domestic violence and sexual abuse] because, you know, in Timor we are patriarchal system. For men have a more power to do decision making [...]”*

*Carina, 37*

The patriarchal culture which is dominant in Timor-Leste can be perceived as a factor which reinforces power dynamics that are favorable to the physiologically powerful and thus a source of insecurity for those not as strong. This usually expresses itself through the gender dynamics. Gender roles in Timor-Leste can be described as very ‘traditional’ and influenced by patriarchy which refers to a social system based on the dominance of men over women.<sup>341</sup> Women’s rights activist Manuela Leong Peirera has described the gendered power relations in Timor-Leste as follows:

*“In East Timor, patriarchal values and culture are very strong. Patriarchy views women as inferior to men. It leads to parents prioritizing sending their sons to school as daughters can lead to a high bride-price if they are married young. As a wife, a woman is expected to obey her husband, without asking questions or expressing any disagreement. Women are expected to do all the work in the house while the men are heads of households and look for money outside the home.”<sup>342</sup>*

The picture is however more complex when examined closer as some ethno-linguistic groups such as the Bunak and Tetum-Terik-speaking communities are traditionally matrilineal.<sup>343</sup> In addition, besides gender other factors such as class, ethnicity and age have an impact on social hierarchies and should not therefore be overlooked.<sup>344</sup> According to Myrntinen, the views on gender roles and hierarchies are not static but constantly contested during the events over the past 35 years.<sup>345</sup> The Portuguese and Catholic influence, the ideals of socialism and equality supported by FRETELIN, the modernization program initiated by Indonesia, urbanization, the influences from the globalised western and Indonesian popular cultures (through the media), returning exiles, the presence of the UN and international NGO community and the vast group of students

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<sup>341</sup> Myrntinen 2009, 12.

<sup>342</sup> Myrntinen 2010, 270-271.

<sup>343</sup> Myrntinen 2009, 12.

<sup>344</sup> Myrntinen 2010, 271.

<sup>345</sup> Ibid.



studying abroad can be cited as factors that have influenced and shaped the traditional notions of power.<sup>346</sup>

Myrntinen emphasizes that there cannot be defined a fixed system of “East Timorese patriarchy” although the overall ‘patterns’ can be seen privileging men over women and certain groups of men over other.<sup>347</sup> Furthermore, it must be acknowledged that women living in the patriarchal system can be sub-ordinate to men but also to other women. The different types of femininities and masculinities are not in equal positions of power and therefore, the hierarchies exist also within the gender lines.<sup>348</sup>

However, the power relation features of patriarchy can be seen to influence the social practices and attitudes of the people within both the private and public sphere an often legitimizing male supremacy. Otherwise neutral patriarchal customs, such as the culture of dowry or “*barlaque*” which is still common in Timor-Leste, can reinforce the gender inequality and the perception of women as ‘property’.<sup>349</sup> So when such patriarchal constructs reinforce the conceptualization of women as “second class” citizens, they can extend similarly negative implications for the use of violence.<sup>350</sup> Several studies<sup>351</sup> stress the role of patriarchal power as one of the most visible factors linked to the rising number of serious crimes of violence, particularly sexual and gender-based violence.<sup>352</sup>

### ***7.7.3. Fragile democracy and peace***

*“This is one big problem, corruption and nepotism and that’s why this country cannot growing well. Believe me, if the government still doing this, nothing! Development is nothing, there is nothing development in this county.”*

*Oscar, 29*

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<sup>346</sup> Myrntinen 2009, 12-13.

<sup>347</sup> Myrntinen 2010, 271.

<sup>348</sup> Myrntinen 2010, 280.

<sup>349</sup> Ferguson 2011, 59.

<sup>350</sup> Asia Pacific Support Collective Timor-Leste (APSCTL) 2009, 16.

<sup>351</sup> For example: Ferguson (2011), Asia Pacific Support Collective Timor-Leste (APSCTL) (2009).

<sup>352</sup> Myrntinen 2010, 284. Ferguson 2011, 59.

Weak democratic structures and the fragile nature of peace can be seen to cause and reproduce some of the anxieties that emerge from the narratives. The nature of the political culture in Timor-Leste is corroded by corruption and nepotism which increase the mistrust of citizens, in particular, towards the politicians, the police force and the justice system. Many of the interviewees believe the principles of democracy are not assimilated and the rule of law is not respected by the leaders, decision makers and other civil servants. The constitution of Timor-Leste is meant to be progressive and the legislative framework can be described as democratic<sup>353</sup> but if it these are not applied, the actual impact of the “good” laws on people’s lives is limited. One of the interviewees, Nicolas, describes the current situation as follows:

*“[...] the first thing, we have to apply the rule of law but for the time being there is no rule of law. Here is only the ‘rule of the deals’. [...] ‘Rule of Horta’, ‘rule of Xanana’, rule of the big guys.”*

*Nicolas, 40*

### **7.7.3.1. *Ineffective law enforcement***

*“Yes, the police come but I never see that they will arrest anybody who did the problem. And then after the people just disappear. And then they come back. The police just make people scared.”*

*Manuela, 22*

The local police force, PNTL is the institution which is responsible for enforcing the law in accordance with the justice system. The police force as a security institution has gone through turbulent phases and despite the reforms many interviewees describe PNTL as an unreliable institution.

I categorize the weak law enforcement as one element which generates insecurity in Timor-Leste both directly and indirectly. The images of the police force illustrated by the interviewees were varied but the general notion was that PNTL officers do not do their work professionally and

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<sup>353</sup> For example, Luis Carrilho (The UN Police Commissioner for the UNMIT-operation) emphasized this during the interviews conducted with him.

therefore render the institution unreliable. The lack of resources, equipment, and knowledge combined with low officer salaries are repeatedly identified as the underlying factors that affect the police. Police officers seem to lack an understanding of their role and responsibility, are nonchalant and unaware about the laws they are supposed to enforce and are unmotivated by the low wage received. It is not uncommon for the police officers to get involved with other business, including illegal activities, in order to increase their incomes.

For instance, the passed Law against Domestic Violence gives hope for the future but the a stronger law enforcement is needed in order to resolve the problems. The new legislation itself is progressive but the law enforcement is weak. There is a serious lack of knowledge within the police who should implement the law and in addition, the mindsets and attitudes of the people might need to change in order to the law to be respected. Therefore, it is unlikely that something punitive or corrective happens or at best it takes a very long time before the judicial process is gone through.

*“They [police] should follow the law properly because some police also involve in rape, do rape, some police also involve in crime and also their attitude to resolve the problem. Like when we have sex abuse from phone call and when would report that and then they say: ‘No, we cannot do anything, this is not crime.’”*

*Carina, 37*

The formal justice system is viewed as ineffective, slow and inefficient and therefore, the traditional justice system, *adat* is still often perceived as a more effective way of providing justice. The language of the formal justice system (laws and courts) being Portuguese - which is spoken by less than 10% of the population - plays a big role in ensuring its slow adoption and generally creates a feeling of inaccessibility. Many of those who participate in the trial process find the judicial process incomprehensible, intimidating and expensive. These reasons often reduce the willingness to even start the process.<sup>354</sup> Furthermore, the corruption is a prevalent problem also in the judiciary that reduces the accountability and transparency of the formal justice system.

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<sup>354</sup> Ferguson 2011, 60.

*“It is really hard for you to get the justice. [...] If you have money, it will be better for you. You can pay the lawyers, if you pay the lawyers a good price, of course they will help you. Otherwise no, no one will help you.”*

*Manuela, 22*

Although the *adat* can be more effective way of settling minor dispute, especially in the case of more serious crimes including sexual crimes, the informal justice practices are more strengthening the culture of impunity and mitigating the responsibility of the perpetrator than dispense justice for victims.<sup>355</sup> This conception is strengthened by several narratives. Carina criticizes the use of *adat* practices as a way of settling the disputes in particular, when the crime in case is, for instance, rape or killing:

*“I think should implement justice, law, properly rather than using the traditional way. Because like traditional way, they have the some people saying: ‘Oh, I will do this because I have a lot of buffalo to give’, like rape or kill. They say: ‘I have money, I have buffalo, so it’s okay!’ So when I did again, then we can sit together with stakeholders to resolve this problem. We can just give some money and buffalos, so it’s never resolved. So the punishment and appropriate justice should be in place. Because like rape, one man can rape, that can happen and happen and happen again.”*

## **7.8. The impacts of insecurity on the process of emancipation**

### **7.8.1. Emancipation as a process**

*“Even if a more emancipated order is brought into existence, the process of emancipation remains incomplete. There is always room for improvement; there is always unfinished business in the task of emancipation.”<sup>356</sup>*

The proponents of the Welsh School perceive emancipation as a process, as ‘a direction rather than destination’ as the Wyn Jones’ quotation above illustrates.<sup>357</sup> The concept of emancipation is challenging to define because the oppressions, constraints and insecurities suffered by individuals

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<sup>355</sup> Ferguson 2011, 60.

<sup>356</sup> Wyn Jones 1999, 78.

<sup>357</sup> Peoples – Vaughan-Williams 2010, 27.

vary across time and space.<sup>358</sup> Therefore, the goals of emancipation are not static but continuously in flux. Reis Nunes states that the end-state of emancipation is impossible to achieve because new threats and constraints constantly emerge from human interaction and therefore, the condition of a ‘total absence of threats’ will never occur.<sup>359</sup> By examining the state of affairs within the East Timorese society, the process-like nature of emancipation and the emergence of new constraints can be identified.

### ***7.8.2. Emancipatory process in Timor-Leste***

Based on the above definition, one can say that the process of emancipation is ongoing in Timor-Leste. The independence has been the embodiment of freedom for the majority of the Timorese people. By gaining the independence Timor-Leste became free from one of the most fundamental forms of oppression: the Indonesian occupation. This marked the end to the era of the foreign powers governing the territory. However, with this major constraint overcome, as this analysis shows, new constraints have steadily emerged in post-independence Timor-Leste.

The extensive state building process driven by the UN laid the foundation for the democratic state structures and offered a new political, social and economic ‘space’ from where the emancipatory practices could evolve. The independence can be likened to a ‘window of opportunity’ for the East Timorese to expedite the process of emancipation in the different sectors of their society. However, it must be acknowledged that even the act of gaining independence can be described as an accelerator for emancipation, and not a starting point. As mentioned earlier, emancipation can be realized in various forms and retrospectively, emancipatory practices can be identified in the history of Timor-Leste before the independence. For instance, the independence struggle, which was fought as a guerilla war, and the entire resistance movement have had ‘emancipating impacts’ on the East Timorese.<sup>360</sup> In a sense, the size of the ‘spaces’ for emancipatory practices has varied in the course of the history, with certain events representing different opportunities for progress.

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<sup>358</sup> Booth 2007, 111. Peoples – Vaughan-Williams 2010, 27.

<sup>359</sup> Reis Nunes 2005, 49.

<sup>360</sup> Myrtilinen 2009, 15.

### **7.8.3. Structural “bottlenecks” in the emancipatory process**

Booth states that structural constraints - such as war, a threat of conflict, political oppression, poverty, famine, poor education - that prevent the freedom of individuals should be overcome through emancipation.<sup>361</sup> Similar structural constraints categorized as sources of insecurity in the East Timorese society emerge from the narratives. The most prominent problems that seem to be embedded in structures of Timor-Leste are: poverty, unemployment, poor education, health care system, poor infrastructure and the lack of reliable transportation, especially in the rural areas. For some people these structural problems are direct threats of security (e.g. the lack of food products due to agricultural shortcomings, poor infrastructure and transportation on the island is a direct cause of insecurity for Atauro residents) whereas for others (including most of my interviewees) such structural problems cause insecurity indirectly. As these problems are pervasive amongst the society the risk that they will function as ‘triggers’ that spark unrest, violence and new conflicts is high.

It can be argued that in order to overcome such structural problems, some form of state-driven action is mandatory. The structural problems cannot be improved if the state of Timor-Leste is not engaged or in support of the reform work. State-driven political acts are needed in order to strengthen the emancipatory possibilities and to establish legitimate ‘spaces’ where the emancipatory practices can take place and evolve. By emancipating, freeing people from the conditions of insecurity, security of the individuals can be enhanced.

### **7.8.4. Concrete “bottlenecks” in the emancipatory process**

The concrete fears which emerge from the individuals’ narratives: “*Fear of harassment*”, “*domestic violence*”, “*anxiety within the communities*” and “*elections 2012*” illustrate the fact that state-driven political actions cannot remove all the constraints within a particular context (e.g. sources of individuals’ insecurity). One can see state-driven solutions as a first or mandatory step to be taken, but as the findings highlight, in order to cultivate the emancipatory progress,

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<sup>361</sup> Booth 1991, 319.

action from the micro level may also be required. The contributions of state in advancing the structural change process are crucial and necessary for the emancipatory practices emerging from grass roots level to be enabled. The analysis shows that in order to improve security of individuals and advance the emancipatory process, non-state or individual-driven solutions - for example, solutions initiated by civil society organizations or social movements – need to be taken into consideration and acknowledged as relevant.

The common root causes that underlie these “concrete fears”: *(1) History, (2) Patriarchal culture and Power relations* and *(3) Fragility of democracy and peace* must also be acknowledged as issues that must be improved. Due to the long term impact associated with these common root causes, neglect will ultimately result in great difficulty in overcoming insecurity experienced by people in their everyday lives. In order to resolve such common root causes, state-driven political action are required in collaboration with individual-driven acts to create the spaces which in turn can progress emancipation.

Domestic violence is another category in the analysis that is identified as a source of insecurity. Domestic violence is considered by many to be an extensive problem in the East Timorese society. One that causes considerable insecurity for individuals despite the enactment of the “Law Against Domestic Violence”. In this scenario, the law is the result of successful state-driven action. The political action which embodies negotiations and strategy has resulted in a law which should normally guarantee that the perpetrators of domestic violence are convicted in the legal process and that the victims of domestic violence receive the sufficient protection and assistance. In this sense, the Law against Domestic Violence can be seen as the first step to achieving progressive change regarding the domestic violence issue and is arguably the first action to be done, in order to remove the constraint and its impact on society. As the analysis has shown earlier in this chapter, there are still problems related to domestic violence that the legislation on its own cannot resolve. So while the state-driven action, the law in this case, lays the foundation for the emancipatory process, the realization of emancipation can only take place or be advanced with further acts pushing for the enforcement of the law as defined , initiatives promoting the new ‘principles’ or ‘laws’ passed and acts encouraging this information is internalized at the individual level.

Other forms of gender-based violence, such as sexual violence, abuse and sexual harassment can also be regulated by just legislation that aims to enhance security and strengthen the emancipatory possibilities. However, as the case for domestic violence illustrates, the passage of legislature may not be sufficient action to improve the security situation and remove an emancipatory constraint. For instance, a bottom-up action from the grass root level might also be needed to impact the root causes of the problem: the scars from history that reproduces a culture of violence and legitimizes the use of violence, the negative influences of patriarchal culture and the inefficiency in the law enforcement etc.

*“So many kind of aspect can give the people feel secure. It’s not only the guns and the number of police.”*

*Ricardo, 32*

Insecurity emerging from the tensions within the communities forms the third category of the sources of insecurity. In order to be able to correctly identify an issue as a ‘constraint’ that causes insecurity to some individuals, one may have to adopt a bottom-up approach. In addition, to be able to resolve the problem identified, one may also have to adopt a bottom-up methods. A state can ensure the security of a community, for instance, through the passage and enforcement of sound laws (i.e. policing), but some narrators warn against disregarding the community members own responsibility in enhancing their security. As stated earlier in the chapter 7.3., the community tensions felt in Timor-Leste emanate from multiple sources, and all of the anxieties may not be solved solely by arrangements made by the state. For instance, the issue of increasing the mutual trust between individuals does not only lie in the hands of the police. As Ricardo’s quotation above illustrates, the feeling of security is not always commensurate to the visibility of the police force, individuals and groups also have a responsibility in the attainment of a secure community.

The final fear category uncovered in my work is the insecurity associated with the upcoming elections. Like the others, this insecurity indicates the need for both state and micro level change from the relevant actors. Free and fair elections are an integral part of a democracy and should not be the source of fear or insecurity per se. Although the election process is regulated by



electoral laws and the security will be provided by the local police force, PNTL and the UNPOL during the poll, many of the narratives imply the feelings of insecurity and uncertainty related to the election phases. It seems that in such cases, state-driven acts needs to be supported with some form of community based initiative that reinforces the change message.

“*Adat*”, the customary law practices provide an illustrative example of the insufficiency of the state-driven political actions for promoting the emancipatory process. The system of *adat* was the traditional dispute resolution system within Timor-Leste but was replaced with the formal justice system when the independent Timor-Leste was founded in 2002. However, the system of *adat* is not abolished and so the formal justice system does not handle all the administration of customary law practices.

In this scenario, a structural change has been realized from the state level - by the implementation of a new judicial system, based on written laws that ensure an equal and just hearing for everybody in the court. However, as citizens do not have easy access to the formal judicial processes - in terms of understanding and knowledge - combined with the limitations (e.g. language, costs) inherent with the system; most individuals prefer to use the trusted *adat* system rather than the formal justice system. There are several ‘bottlenecks’ that exist within the formal justice system and if these are not bypassed, the formal system may not be strengthened or internalized by the people of Timor-Leste. In line with previous themes, the establishment of the formal justice system is a state-driven political act aimed at creating a ‘space’ where the realization of emancipation can take place. The ineffective use of this ‘space’ due to the listed root causes drove individuals to search for alternative judicial platform in the form of the *adat* system. The process of emancipation therefore remains stagnant and will not progress unless such bottlenecks are acknowledged, then overcome.

## 8. CONCLUSION

The main aim of the research has been twofold: Firstly, to identify the sources of insecurities of individuals and distinguish the underlying common root causes impacting on the emergence of the insecurities. The findings from this provide me the instruments to be able to achieve the second aim: To reveal some of the ‘hurdles’ or ‘bottlenecks’ impeding the emancipatory process in Timor-Leste.

The Welsh School theory of security combined with the Postmodern feminist approach constructs the template for my study and offers a robust starting point for the analysis. Through the analysis I followed the ‘guidelines’ of the Welsh School theory and adopted the concept of ‘immanent critique’. Acknowledging the existing structural constraints that are a cause of insecurity for the East Timorese whose personal narratives form the basis of my analysis, exposing the core and underlying sources of insecurities, I have tried to highlight some of the ‘bottlenecks’ in the development process which aims to advance the emancipation through politics. Although as a political process this construct can be perceived as a struggle or the result of extensive negotiations between a number of parties, the process is fundamental to the concept of emancipation, and is a mandatory requirement in order to advance the emancipatory process despite its inherent limitations.

### 8.1. The summary of analysis and concluding discussion

Having analyzed the narratives of 17 East Timorese, using the method formulated by Donald E. Polkinghorne (Polkinghorne 1995), I identified a number of paradigmatic cognitions, or common notions that appear across the data. These repeated elements, common themes and conceptualizations fall into two main categories in which the sources of the individuals’ insecurity can be grouped: “*Concrete fears*” which in turn is categorized to further four groups: (1) “*Fear of harassment*”; (2) “*Domestic violence*”; (3) “*Anxiety within the communities*” and (4) “*Elections 2012*”; And secondly “*Structural fears*” which encompass “*structural problems*”.

These groupings illustrate the main drawbacks and sources of insecurity experienced by the interviewees.

While the intention is not to make generalization or claims, the identification of common factors that repeatedly appear across the various categories of insecurity, makes a case for an examination of the effect that these may have on a progressive security agenda. Under further scrutiny, evidence showed that these common factors (root causes): (1) *History*; (2) *Patriarchal culture and Power relations* and (3) *Fragile democracy and peace* (which is reinforced by the *inefficiency in law enforcement sector*), seemed to have an undesirable impact on the emancipatory practices within Timor-Leste.

In summary it can be said that the findings of my research have revealed a significant number of ‘hurdles’ that affect the emancipatory process in Timor-Leste. Based on the pervasive nature of these constraints, it is unlikely that their true impact could be revealed from a top-down or state-oriented approach. Also, the fact that these constraints co-exist with established state-driven emancipatory practices reinforce the ‘stealth’ and unnoticed nature of these constraints.

I would therefore call for more extensive research to be conducted around the use of bottom-up approaches as a way to reveal restrictions to security agendas or indeed as a means to expose ineffective emancipatory practices/actions. These findings may also indicate a shortcoming in the Welsh school theory as there are no tools that guide the interpretation of immanent critiques to meaningful contribution to the emancipatory political process.

This research also underlines the fact that state-driven political action is necessary in order to achieve structural change, progress to structural change initiatives or to enable the creation of the ‘spaces’ where the realization of emancipation can occur. This is in line with Booth who states that while the individual may be the referent object, the state is the vehicle that executes this. As political actors are given the authority and power through the democratic process to develop the society they are therefore obliged to do so either by the enactment of legislature or through the support of social movements or civil society activities that may enhance the security of the citizens.

However, in order for the realization of emancipation to fully take place, the change must also emerge from the individual and communal level. The research also indicates that a purely state-driven political action may not be enough to strengthen the emancipatory potentials as these ‘bottlenecks’ can establish barriers for enhancing security of individuals and hinder the emancipation process. In the same note it is acknowledged that in the cases where the political actions of the state are not aligned with the improvement of the majority (for example, the apartheid regime in South-Africa until 1994), the emancipatory process cannot attain its full potential. Thus it is possible for the process of emancipation to be continuously hindered by the state or individual reducing or sometimes closing completely, the ‘spaces’ where emancipation can be realized.

While in general, my findings partly confirm the conceptualizations of emancipation presented by Welsh school advocates such as Ken Booth and Richard Wyn Jones, they are also aligned with Welsh school critics like João Reis Nunes who challenges some dimensions of the notion of emancipation. To Reis Nunes, emancipation must be perceived as a process, not as an end-state. The Welsh School perception of emancipation as the “freeing” of individuals and communities from structural constraints that cause insecurity to people seems either unattainable or an incomplete state of freedom. The view that the emancipatory process can be advanced by exposing the immanent constraints that hinder it, as proposed by my paper, acknowledges emancipation as a process. The analysis shows that the theory is partly in line with the findings revealed from the context of Timor-Leste: “Structural problems” that cause insecurity amongst the East Timorese should be resolved by state-driven reforms that can advance the realization of emancipation at the micro level.

The findings also illustrate that some of the sources of insecurity: Fear of harassment, fear of gender-based violence like domestic violence, anxiety within the communities and the insecurity arising from the upcoming elections, emerge partly from the threats posed by individuals and communities to each other. These sources of insecurity will not be overcome only by realizing political action like implementing institutional reforms. The commitment of the state in advancing the emancipatory process and creating the ‘spaces’ for realization of emancipation is

always important but as my findings indicate, in the case of Timor-Leste, more attention must be paid to the underlying root causes which require an adaptation of a more comprehensive notion of emancipation in which the increasing the consciousness and responsibility at the individual/communal levels are acknowledged, prioritized and combined to forge a solution. That means that there should be more engagement that reinforces the change from the grass roots as true change start from the individuals' changing attitudes, mindsets, socially and culturally adopted practices and expectations.

*“Emancipatory change can only be brought about with a problematization of the individual – precisely because the individual is part of the problem.”<sup>362</sup>*

Reis Nunes has called for a more comprehensive analyzing of the concept of emancipation and in so doing may have exposed a limitation of the Welsh School theory of security. My findings are aligned with his emancipation critique which highlights the fact that individuals and communities can also pose threats to each other – the ‘constraint’ or ‘form of oppression’ should not be restricted to include only structural restraints or external aggressions such as war, torture, famine, diseases or the poor education.<sup>363</sup> Reis Nunes emphasizes that individuals themselves must in some circumstances also be acknowledged as ‘threats’ and as *“a field of struggle and a site for emancipation”*.<sup>364</sup>

## **8.2. Directions for further research**

As stated previously, my research was not aimed at the production of generalizations or comprehensive theoretical claims on IR or security but to critically examine security within a specific context (Timor-Leste) from a bottom up approach. In so doing, I had hoped to produce a greater understanding of the complex relationship between security and emancipation within the East Timorese society.

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<sup>362</sup> Reis Nunes 2005, 16.

<sup>363</sup> Reis Nunes 2005, 49.

<sup>364</sup> Reis Nunes 2005, 48.

On completion of my research, I hope that the veracity of my findings encourage the adoption of a bottom-up approaches when examining the state of security within a given context. In addition, I hope that my findings can revive the discussion of emancipation and in particular, the establishment of more holistic collaborations between state, communal and individual security initiatives.

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## **APPENDIX 1: Primary sources of data**

### **List of Interviewees in Timor-Leste (April-May 2011)**

1. Ado           Dili
2. Andre       Dili
3. Carina       Dili
4. Clarissa     Dili
5. Daniel       Dili
6. Emilie       Dili
7. Irene        Dili
8. Juan          Atauro
9. Julia         Dili
10. Magda       Atauro
11. Manuela     Dili
12. Miguel      Atauro
13. Nicolas     Dili
14. Nina         Atauro
15. Oscar        Atauro
16. Rafael      Dili
17. Ricardo     Dili

18. The UN Police Commissioner for the UN Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT)
19. A representative of the Asia Foundation
20. A representative of the New Zealand Aid –programme
21. A representative of the NGO, Belun

## APPENDIX 2: Maps

### Map 1: Timor-Leste

Source: <http://www.un.org/Depts/Cartographic/map/profile/timor.pdf>



**Map 2: Dili ('sucos') and Atauro**

Source: [http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/f0/Sucos\\_Dili.png](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/f0/Sucos_Dili.png)

