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# The fight against domestic violence in East Timor. Forgetting the perpetrators

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## Permanent lenke

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## Åpne

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Master thesis  
Mastergradsoppgave

## Forfatter

Bye, Hanne Hovde

## Sammendrag

War is an extreme situation where nationalism and solidarity are decisive factors. With peace in East Timor, men and women are returning back to daily life, but whereas men are expecting to return to the more traditional way of living, women – having adapted to a new way of living and often have become more independent – seem to want to expand on the new roles they gained during the occupation. Moreover, traditions and patriarchy are not

only challenged by the East Timorese women; structural and institutional changes are also being introduced. With violence having become an intricate part of daily life through years of war, men's frustration and feeling of powerlessness often result in more violence against women. The thesis, which has three major themes, is based on qualitative research conducted during June-August 2004 in Dili, the capital of East Timor. I interviewed people working in the UN, the government, the Catholic Church, and various international and local (particularly women's) NGOs. In the thesis, I first of all set out to examine post-conflict East Timor, and specifically the high prevalence of men's violence against women. Why has the reported number of domestic violence cases increased since the end of the occupation? What implications do war and conflict have on a population concerning questions of attitudes to violence – and the use of it? Secondly I have looked at the more general phenomenon of violence against women. Why do so many men use violence against women, and what are the theoretical explanations for men's violence? The third theme of my thesis is the analysis of the domestic violence campaign in East Timor. I have attempted to assess its impact, both in terms of reduced violence and in attitude change. In conclusion, I present some suggestions that may secure a more sound approach for future campaigns. My study demonstrates how a substantial part of the domestic violence campaign has been aimed towards treating symptoms, overlooking the underlying problems. On the basis of my analysis I elaborate a three-fold argument: first, East Timor needs to protect the victims and make women independent both economically and socially, secondly East Timor needs to continue the strategy of advocacy and awareness-raising, and finally East Timor has to focus on men as perpetrators and what can be done to change their attitudes and violent behaviour. Currently only the first two are included on the domestic violence campaign.

## Forlag

Universitetet i Tromsø  
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## Metadata

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