CHAPTER FIVE

PEACE OPERATIONS INTERVENE 1999–2006

In the middle of internal conflict developments, and as a result of negotiations at the international level, the first UN operation, UNAMET, was created in June 1999. From that time, UN operations were to remain involved in Timor-Leste’s creation, and consolidation, of independence. This chapter continues to describe developments relevant for understanding gender power-relations while identifying and tracing effects on these power-relations from UN peace operations in Timor-Leste from June 1999 up until March 2006.\(^1\) After delineating the general structure of the operations, focus in this chapter is directed at the creation of security from violence and building political structures. These are areas where we would expect to find particularly fruitful suggestions for theory building.

5.1 The mandate and structure of UN operations

The United Nations Assistance Mission in East Timor (UNAMET) was mandated by Security Council resolution 1246(1999) to organize the “popular consultation” on the status of Timor-Leste. At its peak, the operation included 1,148 international staff—of which 50 were military liaison officers, and 275 international police—and 4,000 local employees (Greenlees and Garran 2002, 159–160). Registration of voters was affected by serious security problems, where pro-integration militia harassed and terrorized UN staff, and, more severely, the Timorese population. Indonesia had refused international peacekeeping troops, and only allowed a few international police and military observers. As these were mainly there to handle the ballot boxes after the referendum, they had no mandate concerning security. Nevertheless, in spite of violence and harassment, 446,666 people registered (see Chopra 2002; Department of Public Information 2000; Department

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\(^1\) That is, events taking place within the Timor-Leste territory.
Due to the security situation, there was a three-week delay before elections could be held on August 30.\textsuperscript{2} The turnout for elections was 98.6 percent, despite the insecure and hostile situation, and 78.5 percent voted for independence (see Chopra 2002; Department of Public Information 2000; Department of Public Information 2002; GendercideWatch 2000; Kiernan 2003; United Nations 1999c). Although the 5th of May agreement contained a promise by Indonesia to uphold security, it could not, or would not, halt the military campaign conducted primarily by local militia, but also by elements of the Indonesian army, against pro-independence supporters (General Assembly 2000).\textsuperscript{3}

After considerable international pressure,\textsuperscript{4} and after Indonesian reluctance or inability to stabilize the situation,\textsuperscript{5} Indonesia ‘invited’ a peacekeeping force to handle the crisis. Security Council resolution 1264(1999) gave the operation a Chapter VII mandate. One motivation for the mission, quoted in 1264(1999), is the appalling humanitarian situation, particularly for “women, children and other vulnerable groups” (Security Council 1999d). This Australian-led military intervention, ‘International Forces in East Timor’ (INTERFET), was launched on September 20, after further consultations with Indonesia and internal parties. INTERFET was mandated 11,000 troops at maximum strength, and consisted of 22 contributing countries (Australia with its 5,000

\textsuperscript{2} See Security Council resolution 1257(1999).

\textsuperscript{3} For a description of the connection between the militia and the Indonesian army, see (Greenlees and Garran 2002, 163–170; 193; 197–200; 201ff). The Indonesian army had, reportedly, run Timor-Leste as its own, and it is unclear how much direct power the central government in Jakarta had over the troops in Timor-Leste (Security Council 1999b).

\textsuperscript{4} For example, a Security Council delegation visited Jakarta and Dili in September, IMF suspended ongoing discussions with Indonesia on the review of a large loan, the World Bank linked a loan to the halting of the crisis, and the US suspended military sales (Greenlees and Garran 2002, 232ff; Samuel 2003, 216–217; Taylor 1999, xxxii–xxxv). For a description of the insights of the Security Council delegation, and the opinions of the UNAMET staff in Dili at the time, see Security Council (1999c).

\textsuperscript{5} A UN mission to Indonesia and Dili indicates that Indonesia might not have had control over their troops in Timor-Leste (Security Council 1999c).