

Self-Determination of Timor-Leste: Gender Equality Concern in Clandestine movement toward narratives of Timorese women's History¹

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Abstract:

This study examines the self-determination of Timorese Women's in history of Timor-Leste's underground movement named as Clandestine Front. The Research methods and analysis used in this study applied a historical research technique, to examine and critically analyze the narrative recordings of nine (9) female leaders of resistance organizations. That the shared perception of women's participation in the national liberation movement throughout underground movement of the Clandestine Front with equal participation between men and women that reflect the historical reality in nation building. Classification of women based on their traditional roles, including the portrayal of women as weak, vulnerable, submissive as a form of classical stereotypes no longer exists. The role of women in the national resistance movement showcases the progress and modernity of women in contemporary society. The history of Clandestine Front, show women as essential human capital, they have the power of ideas of nationalism, patriotism and the right to self-determination. This resilience reflected the results of the 1999, through a referendum organized by the United Nation mission 'UNAMET,' 75.5 per cent of the people of Timor-Leste voted against joining with Indonesia, which meant that Timor-Leste could take the required steps to become an independent sovereign state. This research paper is to prove that the women of Timor-Leste were highly visible during the resistance and had a clear sense of purpose and value, the strength and competence, women had a stronger and more equal gendered role during the resistance, in shaping the journey to independence and starting to shape the gender balance in the narrative of the history of nation building onward.

Keywords: *Self-Determination, Women, Clandestine, history of Liberation, Timor-Leste.*

I. Introduction to the topic and context

This research article discusses the contribution of courageous women at the Clandestine movement (well-known as Clandestine Front) in historical narrative of the struggle for self-determination of the Timorese. The women that participated in this study are the combatant women who led the movement of Clandestine Front. The Indonesian occupation of Timor-Leste was considered a form of

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the annexation of the territory of Timor-Leste and a violation of the right to self-determination under the universal declaration of human rights². Although there are publications about women and their experiences in the struggle history, those publications have not specifically discussed women participation in the underground movement “Clandestine Front” for the right of self-determination of the Timorese. Even the debate and critique of female narratives is intertwined with male roles, since the integral description is more about men’s narrative.

International academics have conducted research and publications, such the work of Sara Niner (2011) entitled “*Hakat Klot, Narrow Steps*”³, this publication encapsulates the traditions and public perceptions about women’s status in traditions and customs from a post-independence view. Then, the publication of Irene Christalis and Catherine Scott (2005) entitled “*Independent Women: The History of Women’s Activism in Timor-Leste*”⁴ only disclosed about the women activism and did not described their act in detail at Clandestine Front. Furthermore, the publication of Sally Anne Watson’s (2001) “*Lian Feto Timor Lorosa’e Nian (Voices of Timor-Leste Women)*”⁵, volume 2: Buibere, Fokupers Dili, Timor-Leste, focused more about the structural violence that women encountered and did not link to women participation in the Clandestine Movement explicitly. The latest publication was a book entitled “*Buibere Hamriik Ukun Rasik Aan*”⁶ (Buibere/Timorese Women Stand for Independence, 2021) focused more specifically on their roles in struggle through Political Party “FRETILIN”.

To date, no publications have discussed and explored in detail about the form of strategic roles and heroic actions that women took in the context of the Clandestine Front and have not revealed the different roles in the clandestine organizational hierarchy either as leaders, organizers, or mobilizers as well as ordinary members who were active in the movement. Moreover, the publications have less highlighted local perspectives, instead are dominated from an external interpretation. Moreover, Januario Soares’s thesis (2011) entitled ‘The Clandestine Movement for the Independence of Timor-Leste’⁷, published by the Universitas Kristen Satya Wacana, Salatiga, Indonesia, 2011 focused more on the men role and did not highlight the women experiences in Clandestine Front.

Women were one of the elements in the formation of the resistance movement and social capital in the Clandestine Front. Women were one of the critical elements of the social capital “to bind and bridge people in collective action” in fighting for the self-determination of Timor-Leste. The strategic role in the clandestine organization is mandated to conduct heroic actions including lead the resistance movement, organize the base, strengthen the women movement in the Clandestine Front and in society, build thenational and international alliances, run urban guerrillas, disguise and infiltrate into the enemy (Putnam, Robert Bowling, Alone, 2000). Through these roles, Timorese women have shown that they could transcend their traditions to design the strategic alliance and action in a concrete way within the context of the organization’s existence and functionalization.

² Article 1 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), 1960 & International Covenant on Social Economic and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), 1960.

³ Sara Nire (2011), *Hakat Klot, Narrow Steps*, School of Political and Social Inquiry, Monash University, Australia.

⁴ Irene Christalis and Catherine Scott (2005) entitled *Independent Women: The History of Women’s Activism in Timor-Leste*, Progressio, London, UK.

⁵ Anne Watson, Sally (2001) entitled “*Lian Feto Timor Lorosa’e Nian (Voices of Timor-Leste Women)*”⁵, volume 2 was entitled *Buibere, Fokupers Dili, Timor-Leste*

⁶ “*Buire Hamriik Luta ba Ukun Rasik Aan*”⁶ (Buibere/Timorese Women Stand for Independent) (2021).

⁷ Januario Soares (lecturer and researcher at the Faculty of Social Sciences – UNTL, with a study entitled ‘The Clandestine Movement for the Independence of Timor-Leste’⁷, published by the Universitas Kristen Satya Wacana, Salatiga, Indonesia, 2011

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Therefore, this study was conducted to discuss the positionality of women in the resistance movement through the clandestine organization to achieve the self-determination. Women were able to transcend cultural and traditional restrictions and the existing of social stigmatization, which saw women today face cultural and political pressure to conform to patriarchal demands, driven by a complex history of conflict, colonialism and changing customary practices.⁸

Women exceeded expectations of their role and had capabilities and gained expertise equal to, and in some cases, above men. Therefore, it is important to acknowledge and discuss the truth of their heroic actions from the perspective of gender equality in women leadership and reflected through the eyes of a Timorese man. Thus, this is a balanced narrative about the resistance movement in the Clandestine Front the results of which can be useful for historians, policymakers, future researchers, practitioners, and professionals in the design of policies and programs for women enhancing their equality and position, to understand better the historical role of women during this time.

II. The Theoretical Frameworks

1. Defining Concept of Clandestine

The clandestine concept was adopted in the resistance movement of the Timorese people as part of a strategy of struggle based on national unity and universal resistance people's principles.⁹ It involved all components of society in the spirit of national unity in fighting for the right to self-determination of the people and nation of Timor-Leste. George Simmel, a sociologist, published important work on clandestine organizations in 1906, in an article entitled "The Sociology of Secrecy and Secret Societies"¹⁰. Simmel's work influenced the foundations of contemporary social study on the influence of clandestine organizations on society and people's thinking about such organizations. His two propositions regarding the dynamics of secret collectives remain a significant concern for some clandestine organizations, particularly those whose movements are involved honour and social justice: First, the extent and span of control of clandestine organizations in the personal and social lives of their members; Second, the power of clandestine organizations to manipulate the ratio of public knowledge to ignorance.

The clandestine conception of organization proposed by Cynthia Stohl and Michael Stohl (2017) from the University of California, Santa Barbara, USA¹¹ was adopted to discuss the span of control and manipulation of public relationships and ignorance as characteristics of clandestine organizations. Meanwhile, clandestine organizations are 'composed of groups of people who keep their affiliations secret, conceal internal and external organizational activities.' Furthermore, Then Cynthia Stohl and Michael Stohl identify the clandestine organization as having the character of 'illicit or dark networks, black markets, backstreet businesses, anonymous agencies, gangs, covert collectives, and hidden organizations. However, there were the consensus on rules that guaranteed the clandestine

⁸Niner, Sarah Louise and Loney, Hannah (2019). The Women's Movement in Timor-Leste and Potential for Social Change. Research article Politics & Gender, Volume 16, Issue 3, September 2020, pp. 874 – 902. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1743923X19000230>

⁹Gusmao, Xanana (1994). Timor-Leste: Um Povu, Uma Pátria, Edições Colibri, Faculdade de Letras de Lisboa, Alameda da Universidade 1699, Lisboa Codex. p.117-144.

¹⁰ Simmel, Georg (1906). "The Sociology of Secrecy and of Secret Societies", American Journal of Sociology, p.441-498.

¹¹ Stohl, Cynthia and Michael Stohl (2011). Secret Agencies: The Communicative Constitution of a Clandestine Organization, University of California, Santa Barbara, USA.

organizations, such:

- 1) Mutual agreement within organization members to keep the organization secret for the significant period.
- 2) Internal activities and governance structures are kept hidden from the public.
- 3) Remain hidden although the external traced the organization existence.

Clandestine organizations also have mechanisms to control the level of organizational visibility to recognize the public at large, identify the members' words or behaviour within the organization, and identify the relevant audiences, mainly the organization's key stakeholders. Erickson (1981: 189)¹² also emphasized this concept and says that the nature of clandestine organizations defines a relationship pattern that continuously, and directly or indirectly, facilitates the relationship of followers and organizational members through secret/ and covert activities (Erickson, 1981:189). The members of a clandestine organization should keep their affiliations, and internal - external organization activities secretly. Besides, they maintained control the organization activities to ensure the confidentiality and continuity of the movement based on the consensus and orientation. As formulated in article 5 of the Chapter 9 of the Code of Virginia on Crimes and Offenses – Activities Tending to Cause Violence,” that “Clandestine organization” means¹³ any organization:(1)that uses cover-names, codes, or any other deceptive practice or other means to disguise or attempt to conceal its name, activities, or membership, or the names, activities, or membership of any chapter, branch, unit, or affiliate thereof, or;(2)whose members are compelled, urged, or advised to conceal their membership or affiliation, as well as the membership or affiliation of individuals in or with such organization, or;(3) whose members take an oath or pledge, or administer such an oath or pledge to those affiliated with them, to keep in confidence any matter or knowledge entrusted to them by the organization of any of its members, or;(4)which shall transact business or advance any purpose at any secret meeting or meetings which are guarded or secured against intrusion by persons not associated with it, and;(5) whose purpose, policy, or activity involves the use of criminal violence, threats, or intimidation to achieve any of its goals.

This study examined the narrative of women in the clandestine organization as a component of the movement against the Indonesian occupation in Timor-Leste. The clandestine model that was designed and functioned as a women resistance movement in Timor-Leste, was called the Clandestine Front. When the Indonesian military invaded the territory of Timor-Leste in December 1975, Francisco Xavier do Amaral – The founder father of the Nation¹⁴ - had realized and anticipated that the people of Timor-Leste would not win in the war against Indonesia, at least not with a military approach, because Indonesia had a strong military force, equipped with sophisticated, and modern weapons surpassing any military capability in Timor. Therefore, the strategy to fight Indonesia was by using the collective power of the people over a long-term period (Neves, 2020),¹⁵ by, including:

¹² Erickson (1981). Cited in *Secret Agencies: The Communicative Constitution of a Clandestine Organization*, University of California, Santa Barbara, USA

¹³ Article 5, Chapter 9 of the Code of Virginia on Crimes and Offenses Generally, Crimes against Peace and Order.

¹⁴ Francisco Xavier do Amaral - the First President of Timor-Leste, he is the one who Proclaimed Timor-Leste Independent in November 28, 1975 in Dili, the capital of Timor-Leste. The founder and first president of FRETILIN – The Revolutionary Front for an Independence of Timor-Leste.

¹⁵ Neves, Aniceto Guro-Berteni (2020). *Biografia no Istoria moris Xavier do Amaral*, Centro Chega, Dili, Timor-Leste

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- 1) organizing and forming resistance people in urban or village areas;
- 2) mobilizing people in cities or villages in Timor to become the liaison between guerilla/resistance fighters particularly those who still lived in the forest/mountains with the community; and the resistance movement actors who were overseas through a component that was later called the Diplomatic Front;
- 3) building solid work groups based on individuals, family, and community levels to:-
 - a) work on farming to provide adequate food for family and for the Guerrilla Front movement in the forest and mountains;
 - b) mobilize ammunition, attributes, and instruments of resistance from the enemy;
 - c) gain information about potential enemies and launching propaganda in the city;
 - d) mobilize medical drugs and provide medical personnel to treat injured victims in armed contact with the enemy;
 - e) monitor, write, and document the crimes of the Indonesian military as material for the Diplomatic Front's campaigns abroad;
 - f) conduct popular education about national resistance and the right to self-determination in basic societies, and;
 - g) organize campaigns, mobilize power to shape public opinion through demonstrations, petitions, and other advocacy approaches.

2. The nature of Clandestine organization in Timor-Leste

In 1979-1980, the Indonesian military practically claimed that they have controlled all Timor-Leste territory since the invasion which started on the 7th of December 1975. When Francisco Xavier do Amaral proclaimed the independence of Timor-Leste in Dili, on November 28, 1975, they had not organized or strengthened the Timorese armed forces adequately. They had believed that there would be no intervention or interference from Indonesia or other countries. Without this anticipation, the Indonesian military freely ravaged Timor-Leste (Chega report: 224-250).¹⁶ The Indonesian military controlled all areas including the National Armed Forces for the Liberation of East Timor "FALINTIL". Xanana Gusmão as a Commander of the FALINTIL at that time, and was a member of the Central Committee of FRETILIN – Timor-Leste Independence Revolutionary Movement, who survived the Indonesian military blockading and bombing. At that time, they [the Indonesian Military] succeeded in reorganizing the people and members of FALINTIL who survived in the forest and mountains. Entering at the beginning of 1982, there was an agreement between Xanana Gusmão and the Indonesian military authorities to reach a consensus for the ceasefire.

Xanana Gusmão used this agreement to organize and consolidate FALINTIL's internal forces, build a resistance network and connected with former FRETILIN and FALINTIL members who had been arrested or surrendered. Subsequently, units of resistance called Nucleus were formed in cities and villages throughout the territory of Timor-Leste (Soares, 2011)¹⁷. In August 1983, the resistance leader Xanana Gusmão announced the end of the ceasefire, after forming the Nucleus or resistance cells in cities and villages which involved former FALINTIL and FRETILIN members. Most of them had been recruited as a civil defense in the cities for Indonesian military. Through the formation of

¹⁶available at www.cavr-timorleste.org

¹⁷Soares, Januario (2011). 'The Clandestine Movement for the Independence of Timor-Leste'¹⁷, published by the Universitas Kristen Satya Wacana, Salatiga, Indonesia, 2011.

the Nucleus of this movement, the organization responsible for the functioning of the underground movement, hereinafter referred to as the Clandestine Front. The Clandestine Front was institutionalized through the formation of an organization called the '*OrgãoOito*' (the Eight Body). Eight represents the eight letters of FRETILIN and FALINTIL. *OrgãoOito* formed a Regional Coordination Body called *OrgãoCoordenador Regional* (OCR) in the 13 districts. *OrgãoOito* and OCR across the country succeeded in organizing and facilitating FALINTIL attacked Indonesian military concentration centers in Dare-Ainaro, Kraras-Viqueque, and Lospalos in 1983 – 1984. They seized large amounts of weapons and ammunitions from the Indonesian military and consequently increased the number of the guerrilla members. *OrgãoOito* operated under the control of the FALINTIL and the resistance umbrella organization called CRRN - Revolutionary Council of the National Resistance) led by Commander-in-chief XananaGusmão (Pinto, 1996).¹⁸

In December 1988, CRRN transformed to CNRM (Conselho Nacional da Resistência Maubere). The Commander XananaGusmão reorganized the "*OrgãoOito*" into an Executive Committee known as CEL/FC¹⁹. Constancio da Conceicao Pinto 'Terus,' led the Executive Committee with the members including; Filomeno da Silva, Francisco Branco, Jacinto Alves, Juvencio Martins, Jose Manuel Fernandes, Pedro KlamarFuik, and Gregório Saldanha. They were all arrested, sentenced, and imprisoned in Indonesian court in Jakarta. Only Constâncio da Conceicao Pinto 'Terus' escaped abroad. When XananaGusmão was arrested in November 1992 in Dili, the activities of the Executive Committee were temporarily suspended and the role of the Nucleus gained greater importance. With the ceasing of activities of the Executive Committee such as organize groups of youth, mobilize logistic of guerilla, this give way to a bigger role for the Nucleus to do works as nature of Executive Committee did.

The 'Nucleus', as the smallest unit of the Clandestine Front, formed secretly with extremely closed membership at the family or community level. Furthermore, every member of each Nucleus did not know each other, though they had the same mission through the same leadership of the 'Clandestine Front' orientation. The Clandestine Front served as a 'bridge' that played a role in connecting the existence of guerrilla/resistance fighters in the forest/mountains with people in cities and villages, including connecting the resistance movement with the Diplomatic Front. The Nucleus was defined as "water", providing the life force for the and the resistance fighters known as "fish" (Neves, 2020). The Nucleus members role was called "*estafeta*" (liaison). The mission of the Nucleus included preparing supplies of food, medicine, clothing, and ammunition for the needs of guerilla/resistance fighters in the forest and women played a critical role in the functioning of the Nucleus. The role of women, was beyond actioning, they were also part of the design and development of strategy. Prominent women figures such as Luisa Sarmiento 'Megawati' served as the first deputy of OPMT – Timorese Popular Women Organization – and Josefa Xavier 'Nunu-Bere' as Secretary for OPMT Dili regions led and selected women into the nucleus groups. In addition, Maria Domingas Fernandes 'Micato' and Maria Olandina Caero, who, besides being active in mobilizing and giving direction to the clandestine movement, also lead women's organizations that advocated and campaigned on issues of human rights and violence against women as an agenda to pressure Indonesia's position in the case

¹⁸ Pinto, Constancio and Mathew Jardine, 1996, *East Timor's Unfinished Struggle: Inside the East Timorese Resistance*, Boston: South End Press, USA

¹⁹Comite Executivo da Luta Frente Clandestina - the Executive Committee of the Clandestine Front Struggle - which established from the Resolution No. 4/Aitana/1988.

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of Timor-Leste throughout organization FOKUPERS and ETWAVE during the period of 1997 - 1999.

The clandestine organization raised awareness and convinced the community, from with small communities such family to link guerrilla fighters in the forest and former arrested or former FALINTIL and FRETILIN militants. Then, it expanded to build cellular networks in cities and villages. Women played a critical role in this expansion such as maintaining the secrecy of the entry of guerrillas in the city, organizing guerrilla meetings with youth movement leaders in the city, monitoring and observing the movements of the Indonesian military and police in public places and residents' homes, including arranging secret meetings between movement actors. The success of the joint mission was the accuracy in the strategic places or families were chose as cellular networks, and women members of the Nucleus played a vital role in supporting the resistance fighters to come and go and gathered the required logistics and others supplies for them. The members of each Nucleus and cellular network collected diverse information related to the enemy's situation conveyed to the resistance movement leaders and the Diplomatic Front for analysis the needed of the guerilla movement. Jason MacLeod (2008)²⁰ classified the Clandestine Front into 3 (three) major components, as follows:

- a) *As the kitchen of the resistance movement*, Clandestine Front was assigned with analyzing the political situation, establishing cooperative relationships with Guerilla/resistance fighters in the forest and mountains, gathering and disseminating information to international solidarity organizations regarding violence and human rights violations committed by the Indonesian military, monitoring the mobilization of Indonesian military forces within the territory and carrying out coordinating activities such as activities of Laura Abrantes, Mena Reis, Mica Barreto on their team members in Indonesia as well as in Timor-Leste;
- b) *As action components*, Clandestine Front was assigned with organizing and carrying out collective actions, mobilizing during visits by officials from abroad and when foreign journalists enter the territory, this action doing by women such as Olandina Caero, Micato, Luisa Sarmiento Megawati, Josefa Xavier 'Nunu-Bere' and their team who lead take part in the Women Movement organization 'OPMT'.
- c) *As an advocacy group*, Clandestine Front was based on campuses and schools consisting of young people, students on campuses (Universities); in particular, student groups in Indonesia were assigned with building relations with the pro-democracy movement in Indonesia to make the issue of the right of self-determination of the people of Timor-Leste a permanent agenda for the pro-democracy movement in Indonesia and ensuring communication with human rights NGOs in Indonesia, conveying information and reports on Indonesian military crimes (arrest, torture, detention, and imprisonment) in Timor-Leste. Teresa Carvalho, Zelia Fernandes, Suzana Carsodo, and their team members which is based in Dili, and Mica Barreto, Laura Abrantes with their advocacy group networks in Indonesia.

The Clandestine Front maintained strength in towns and villages although all the CEL/FC members were arrested and imprisoned. The majority of Timorese were affiliated with the resistance

²⁰ MacLeod, Jason (2008), *Free at Last: The Struggle for Independence in East Timor*, A Campaign/Movement Case Study, USA.

movement and were getting stronger against Indonesia, until the Indonesian President, B.J. Habibie, in June 1998 offered two options for the people of Timor-Leste to choose the broad autonomy or remains united with Indonesia.

3. Clandestine organization 'Bridging the Resistance'

The Clandestine Front Actors became agents to create space for efforts to influence people's attitudes and perceptions about the importance of all components and people participation in the resistance movement for the right to self-determination. Along with the continuous development of the idea of the right to self-determination, the Clandestine Front received wide support and large number of people, and growing number of women, took part in the resistance movement. By 1998, at the time of Habibie's ultimatum, various nuclear or cellular networks had sprung up in cities and villages all over Eastern Timor. These nucleus and resistance networks relied on the work of women from various organizations and professional backgrounds. The importance of the resistance movement was clearly known to all sectors in society, which participated in the movement. In Indonesian's Sociologist perspective, Robert Lawang (2004) described the Clandestine organization as:

- a) Mechanisms developed by the community in the line of resistance to maintain the existence of the movement, both micro and macro;
- b) Bounded social capital (a unit of micro-observation and analysis) or in the context of a network as a bridging social capital (a unit of macro-observation and analysis);
- c) Social construction in which people who organized and were involved in clandestine organizations built a common strength to overcome the problem of weakening the resistance movement;
- d) A means that was constructed (designed) for the achievement of the goals of the resistance movement (ends);
- e) A dominant and synergistic social force for collective national resistance.

This set of conditions was also a motivating factor for women to be active participants and become lead actors of the resistance movement. Women from various professions, including civil servants, the private sector, housewives and wives of Indonesia military-police officials, students, were became involved. The forms of their participation ranging from mobilizing food, clothing, ammunition, sourcing information about the mobility and potential strength of the enemy, mobilizing drugs to provide medical treatment directly to resistance fighters in the forests and mountains, facilitating the mobility of resistance fighters in towns and villages, spreading propaganda, and political education in the base²¹. Furthermore, women also gave instructions and relayed information about the enemy's position, potential, and strength. They served as guides for the resistance and created diversions, blocked the Indonesian military where necessary to enable the resistance to move, and even launched attacks.²² However, the development of women's activities in the Clandestine

²¹Soares, Januario (2011). *Gerakan Klandestin bagi Kemerdekaan Timor-Leste*, Universitas Kristen Satya Wacana, Salatiga, Indonesia.

²²Niner, Sarah Louise (2021). Women in Southeast Asian Nationalist Movements: *Bisoi: A Veteran of Timor-Leste's Independence Movement*, NUS Press is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to Women in Southeast Asian Nationalist Movements.

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Front built a strong social movement to strengthen collective action. Their role in both strategic design and actions in combating are limited in publication in Timor-Leste. This leads to write this research article to balance and build understanding on the concept of popular resistance.²³

The Clandestine Front became a force in carrying out closed-door resistance and where the woman's role was pivotal in secretly accommodating resistance movements in towns and villages against the Indonesia military and its control of all areas and people. Therefore, the role of women in Clandestine Front as social capital to bind and to bridge the elements of resistance/guerrilla fighters towards a collective struggle for a common goal to self-determination and national independence. Anthony Giddens (2006)²⁴, positions that Clandestine Front was part of a social movement, to pursue a common interest or movement to achieve common goals through collective action outside the scope of established institutions. What is meant by outside of established institutions is that the Clandestine Front organization becomes a force outside the official structure formed and controlled by the ruling authorities. Because of the structure, women in particular, became very active including the young women who used the operated the Clandestine Front as a kitchen for movement and a support system in terms of action and external network expansion and supported the philosophy of Xanana Gusmao who recognised that the war against Indonesia would not be won quickly or easily by forced military action alone (Jason Macleod, 2008).²⁵ Three principles or strategic scenarios in their resistance movement was:

- a) resistance must be waged by all the people, by being involved in the underground movement;
- b) resistance must last for a long period to make Indonesia's military power drained and incur large costs, impacting on the Indonesian economy;
- c) and thirdly that Timor- must rely on its strength of collectiveness from Timorese's brave women (Gusmão, 2019).

The collective action included people, including women, to be involved, trained, nurtured, and educated on political education, organization, and mobilization. They were required to be a great force that would not be defeated of Indonesian military aggression and so the Clandestine Front's strength was in its expansion and the multiple layers of the community that it existed. The various methods used to start with simple tactics to masked as 'ordinary life' to find local food in the forest such as sweet potatoes, cassava, fruits, and others to provide the resistance fighters but also served as an opportunity to hold meetings and established contact with resistance fighters in the forest. Because of this increased network of communication and contact, the secret formation of Nucleus in towns and villages was creating and increasing the effectiveness of the works of resistance cells.

III. Method of Research

1. Design

This study adopted a qualitative research method. Qualitative research involves the use of qualitative data, such as interviews, documents, and observations to understand and explain a social phenomenon. This method also involves collecting data on personal experiences, introspections, life

²³Gusmao, Xanana (2021). *Temática da Guerra*, Xanana Reading Room in Dili, p.83-85.

²⁴Giddens, Anthony, 1995, *Sociology*, Second Edition fully revised and updated, Cambridge: Polity Press, USA

²⁵Gusmao, Xanana (1994). *Timor-Leste: Um Povu, Uma Pátria*, Edições Colibri, Faculdade de Letras de Lisboa, Alameda da Universidade 1699, Lisboa Codex. p.148-152.

stories, interactions, and visual texts that are significant to people's lives. Qualitative research typically serves one or more of the following purposes.²⁶

2. *Data collection*

The historical data used in this study's analysis were obtained through a systematic investigation of past events via a literature review and interviews to develop a historical account. This account was not simply an accumulation of dates and facts or a description of past happenings but a flowing and dynamic explanation of previous events that included an interpretation of these events to recapture the incidents, personalities, and ideas that influenced them. The historical data were collected from both primary and secondary sources.²⁷

Primary sources are first-person accounts that involve the oral or written testimony of eyewitnesses such as Micato, Olandina Caero, Luisa Sarmento 'Megawati', Zelia Fernandes, Teresa Carvalho who gave their testimony through interviews during this research in Dili and may include documents, letters, observational notes, and other relics that were created at or very near the time of the historical event that is being described. These secondary sources used in this study took the form of biographies, popular books, reference books, textbooks, and newspaper articles, such as outstanding contribution from Irene and Catherin through publication titled 'Independent Women: The History of Women's Activism in East Timor' (2005).

3. *Analysis and procedure*

To analyse the research results, I considered the following research questions:

- (a) What motivated women to participate in the national resistance movement through the Clandestine Front?
- (b) What form did their role and involvement take in the resistance movement through the Clandestine Front?

The analysis followed the five stages of historical research proposed by Lundy,²⁸ as follows:

- 1) A researchable phenomenon is identified by reading the relevant literature, gathering views about the phenomenon, and reflecting on the researcher's interest before choosing a specific time period, person, phenomena, or era related to the focus of the study.
- 2) Research questions are formulated. This is followed by the identification of a theoretical perspective that will guide the data collection process and interpretation of the results, as well as helping the researcher focus on and interpret the historical occurrences recorded.
- 3) Data exploration and collection stage, which is dependent on the subject of study and the accessibility of data sources.
- 4) Fact checking, evaluation of the validity and reliability of the data, and the analysis of the evidence gathered from each source.

²⁶ Peshkin, Alan (1993). 'The goodness of qualitative research', *Educational Researcher* 22, no.2: 23–9.

²⁷ Peshkin (2000), 'The goodness of qualitative research'; E. Jennifer Monaghan and Douglas K. Hartman, 'Undertaking Historical Research in Literacy', in *Handbook of Reading Research, Volume III*, eds. Michael L. Kamil, Peter B. Mosenthal, P. David Pearson, and Rebecca Barr (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates), 109–22.

²⁸ Lundy, K. S., 'Historical Research', in *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods: Volumes 1 & 2*, ed. Lisa M. Given (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2008), 395–99.

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- 5) Finally, the findings are written up and presented, along with interpretations and detailed supportive evidence in defence of the conclusions made.

IV. Finding

The researchers have presented and discussed several narratives based on empirical data from interviews, discussions and narrative explorations of the texts of women resistance actors through the Clandestine Front (Underground movement) in the finding and discussion section of this research paper. The narrative is using in this study was based on the testimonies and empirical experiences of the sources, then formulated to describe empirical findings regarding the role of courageous women in fighting for self-determination through the strategy of the Clandestine Front: (1) Anti-Indonesian sentiment and right to self-determination, (2) Setting information, recruitment/mobilization, and empowering the masses, (3) Women in undercover/infiltration roles and 'relay' liaisons,' (4) The role of women role of providing supplies for resistance fighters in the forest, and (5) Women role of setting issues and gathering support for international solidarity.

1. Anti-Indonesia sentiment and the right to self-determination

The sentiment of anti-colonial imperialism and the right to self-determination became a main basis for women to take part in the resistance movement. This sentiment reflects the principles of human rights law according to UN Security Council Resolution No. 1415/XIV/1960 of December 15, concerning the right to self-determination and UN Security Council Resolution No. 15/14/XV/1961 on the list of non-self-governing territories in which Timor-Leste is included (Horta, Jose Ramos, interview, 2019)²⁹. The Indonesian military invasion was accompanied by violent acts of murder, torture, imprisonment, and post-disappearance, violence against women and created hatred in the hearts of Timorese. This situation forced Timorese including young people and women to choose between 'surrender to Indonesian military, or fight until win the right to national independence.' Many women, who categorized as the first generation, both from their personal experience and their families who faced the military violence, organized and led women to fight through clandestine organizations because of their anti-Indonesian sentiments and desire for self-determination. Maria Domingas Alves 'Micato'³⁰, with a very young age of 17 years she joined the guerillas in the forest, because she watched Indonesian military kill people including children and rape women. Micato was arrested, imprisoned by the Indonesian military, as her husband Jacinto Alves was arrested and imprisoned in Jakarta Indonesia. After her released, from 1980-1990, she re-established the Clandestine network and was active in building cooperation with resistance fighters in the forest and organizing women in urban areas. In the 1990s, she and women activists founded the FOKUPERS – The East Timorese Women's Communication Forum– and actively advocated for justice for the cases of violence against women at the hands of the Indonesian military. The story of female human rights victims was written and published in a book "Storing the Dryness – Violations of the Human Rights of Timor-Leste Women" in 1998 (Maria Domingas Alves 'MICATO', interview, 2017).

²⁹ Available to read at *FUNU: The unfinished saga of East Timor*, The Red Sea Press, Inc. Eritrea. Horta, José Manuel Ramos, Spokeperson of CNRM later on CNRT in diaspora during Indonesia occupied territory of Timor-Leste (1975-1999).

³⁰ The Secretary of OPMT in the Sub-district of Laclo and Laclubar, Manatuto District, between December 1975-1978

Maria Olandina Alves “Caero” and Fatima Guterres was a Maubere Radio locator from 1974 – 1975. Radio Maubere was the only FRETILIN radio station until 1978. OlandiaCaero was arrested, tried, and imprisoned in Kupang, Indonesia. Because as a radio locator of Maubere, who was active in propaganda, campaign fighting spirit, and active as one of the FRETILIN women activists who fought for the right to the independence of Timor-Leste. She experienced various forms of violence including sexual violence during the interrogation process during eight days. She was tortured and her body was burned with cigarette and electrocuted. After her released from prison, the period of time when the movement was reorganizing in the 1980s, she was active in the resistance through the lines of clandestine organizations. Caero was released in 1979 and was repeatedly arrested and tortured. In 1989, she returned to being secretly active in the Timorese resistance movement through establishing contacts with FALINTIL guerrillas/guerrillas in the forest and mountains and was arrested again in 1992, losing her job and home. Then she opened a restaurant in Dili. In the 1990s, she founded the organization for advocacy and defense of children’s and women’s rights ‘GERTAK/ETWAVE – East Timorese Women Against Violence’ as a strategy to fight in the city. From 1997 to 1999 Caero organized demonstrations against violence against East Timorese women. On the eve of the 1999 independence referendum, he participated in a door-to-door campaign for Timor-Leste's independence. She fled during a wave of violence in September via Jakarta to Lisbon, where she became one of the leading women in the independence movement.

She successfully mobilized 5,000 women members of the movement signed a petition in December 1999. The petition contains the withdrawal of the Indonesian military from the territory of Timor-Leste, forming an international fact-finding team to conduct investigations and bring Indonesian military criminals to international courts, respecting and recognizing the right of the people of Timor-Leste to self-determination (Maria OlandinaCaero, 2016). Likewise, Fatima Guterres, with a very young age of 18 years was the person in charge of the OPMT in the East of Timor-Leste. She joined the guerrillas in the jungle and witnessed the Indonesian military kill women and children and witness women being tortured and raped by the Indonesian military. She was arrested and detained, tortured during the interrogation process in Alas District, Manufahi District in 1979-1980. Once released, she again actively established a network of cooperation with resistance fighters in forest and mountain to organize women and people in the city to fight against Indonesian military then anti-Indonesian sentiments were ingrained in her life (Fatima Guterres, 2005). Despite the hardships these women endured during their capture and subsequent time in jail, their motivation for self-determination and what that had experienced drove them back to the resistance on their release

Besides the first-generation women, there were also the second-generation women, who continued to reinforce anti-Indonesian sentiments and a desire for self-determination. Sentiment and desire for self-determination were continuously instilled and nurtured in society as a critical reflection because of the fact that many young women lost their parents, families, and brothers, experienced sexual violence, and were tortured by the Indonesian military both in the forest and in the city. Suzana Cardoso³¹, Suzana and her sister were raised and educated by her biological father’s brother because her parents were killed by the Indonesian military. When she was in the last year of high school, her adoptive father talked about the incident where her father and mother were killed. When she knew

³¹ Born in Atsabe, Ermera District, had lost her mother and father because they were killed by the Indonesian military in the Astabe District of Ermera in 1976. Late, she became a pro-independence activist at the UNTIM.

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that her parents were killed, instead of being sad, it instilled anger in her and she hated the Indonesian military more. The hatred got stronger along with her anti-Indonesian sentiments and a desire for self-determination. While attending Santo Yoseph Catholic High School in Dili, in 1991 to 1992, she began to join her senior in the 'Externato' class. The Externato class, a school controlled by the Catholic Church, was the only school that actively opposed the Indonesian military through demonstrations. Suzana was a regular participant in anti-Indonesian military protests. "Suzana Cardoso became more involved in protests and demonstrations after enrolling at UNTIM – Universitas Timor-Timor in Dili in 1994. Beside her study, Suzana started working as a journalist at the Daily Media 'Suara TimorTimur (STT)' in September 1994. She was not only active in demonstrations but she also had the opportunity to cover and report on every demonstration in the UNTIM campus at that time (Suzana Cardoso, 2021). She has actively investigated and reported as detailed as possible on acts of violence and violations from the military. Her publishing has influenced Timor-Leste and international opinion.

Teresa Carvalho experienced the same thing where her families were arrested at the end of 1978 and taken to their hometowns. During the interrogation process her father and mother were detained and tortured. Because of her background as a member of the FRETILIN Teresa's mother was the main military target. Her father and mother were again active in building a communication network with the resistance fighters in the forest during the restructuring of the opposition movement. Between 1980 and 1995, Teresa was often detained and interrogated, and experienced sexual violence from the Indonesian military. The memory of this painful experience built the resentment and anti-Indonesian sentiments when she was in junior high school in 1988-1989 in Baucau. Teresa took part in building a network of cooperation with resistance fighters in the forest, and in 1987 Teresa met Cornelio Gama 'L-7,' one of the Resistance Fighter Commanders in Laga area of Baucau District. After connecting with the resistance fighters, she became more active and daring and took great risks to communicate with Resistance Fighters and underground movement actors in Baucau.

After graduating from high school in Baucau, she continued her higher education at UNTIM – Universitas Timor-Leste, 1994-1999. Teresa had more freedom to take part in several movement organizations in Dili such as OJETIL – East Timorese Student Youth Mass Organization, OPJLATIL – Timor-Leste Youth People's Organization, FITUN (Stars), Sagrada Familia – Holy Family in 1992 – 1999. She participated in gathering needs to help sustain the resistance in the forest. As a student at the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, UNTIM, Teresa was very active in the movement through the ranks of clandestine organizations and as a Front-Liner in organizing and mobilizing demonstrations at the UNTIM campus and in front of the East Timor Regional Government offices as well as the East Timor Regional House of Representatives in Dili. Due to her leadership, in December 1998, Teresa was appointed to lead the GFFTL – Grupu Feto Foinsa'e Timor-Leste (Timor-Leste Young Women's Group). Teresa and other founding members of GFFTL such as Lita Sarmiento and Rosa Xavier were not only active but began to advocate and campaign against Indonesian military violence against women in Timor-Leste. In all negotiations in international scenes, this strategy has succeeded in dampening Indonesia's position (Teresa Carvalho, interviewed, 2021).

Marquita Soares, a woman of the second generation, had a brother named Salvador da Silva Soares alias 'Siqui' who was arrested as an Operational Assistant (Tenaga Bantuan Operasi, abbreviated as

TBO). Later it was found that Siqui was a FRETILIN militant, and the Indonesian military killed him. In 1978, Marquita and her mother were captured and detained in Uatulariin Viqueque district, during her childhood. Marquita attended the school and worked with a Catholic Priest, DomingosMaubere, until the second-high school grade in 1987 in the Catholic Church. DomingosMaubere and Marquita went to Dili for a Catholic Mass where she observed youth demonstration. She became aware of the reason for the demonstration against the Indonesian military, and anti-Indonesian sentiments, and Marquita felt that the demonstration represented the loss of her father and brother who had been killed by the Indonesian military.

In 1988, Marquita moved and studied in Dili at Santo Joseph Catholic High School. At her school, Marquita grew bolder and took the opportunity to express her anti-Indonesian feelings and desire for self-determination. During the visit of Pope John Paul-II in October 1988 in Dili, she again witnessed the mass demonstration in front of Pope Paul-II. She had a strong desire to take part in the movement against the Indonesian military because of anti-Indonesian sentiments. On November 12, 1991, Marquita participated in a mass demonstration against the Indonesian military occupation which well-known as Santa Cruz Massacre in Dili and, where hundreds of peaceful demonstrators, including students, were killed by the Indonesian military. In the following year, in 1992, Marquita Soares participated in a movement network, which on behalf of Falur Rate-Laek, one of the Resistance Commanders in the forest. After their communication, Marquita became very active in mobilizing supplies for resistance fighters in the forest and mountains (Marquita Soares, interviewed, 2021). Later on, Marquita Soares, Teresa Carvalho, and Zelia Fernandes³² initiated the formation organization of the resistance movement at UNTIM Campus as DSMTT – Timor-Leste Students Solidarity Council in July 1998. DSMTT became an umbrella to accommodate demonstrations and demand the withdrawal of the Indonesian military and recognition of the right to self-determination of Timorese. As an alliance of DSMTT, in October 1998, Marquita together with other young women founded GFFTL – Timor-Leste Young Women’s Group. GFFTL was dedicated to advocate cases of violence against women by the Indonesian military from 1975 – 1998 (Zelia Fernandes, interviewed, 2021). GFFTL succeeded in support Timor-Leste youth and students against the Indonesian military regime, campaigning for cases of Indonesian military violence against women in Timor-Leste.

2. Setting information, Recruitment/mobilization, and empowering the masses

Organizing, mobilizing, and strengthening the organization of the mass-people movement was one of the most decisive strategies in the work of the Clandestine Front. The adoption of the principle of a struggle movement based on ‘universal resistance and national unity. Organizing, mobilizing, and strengthening/empowering were not only the responsibility of men, but the role of women movement was very strategic, powerful and influential. To ensure popular support, women focused on issues that impact more on women, such murder, arrest, torture, imprisonment, sexual violence, including socio-economic and cultural issues had emerged by the Indonesian military occupation that. Exploration of these issues aimed to create loathing, animosity, and antipathy towards the presence of Indonesian civilian and military authorities in Timor-Leste.

³² Born in 1979 had the same history. Their father was arrested and imprisoned.

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Various issues, both from first-hand experience and structural issues, were used as campaign material to shape public opinion on anti-Indonesian sentiment. As Maria Domingas Alves ‘Micato’, one of the main actors and leaders in the Clandestine Front, and a leader of the women’s resistance organization OPMT – Popular Organization of Timorese Women, describes, after being released from Indonesian military custody, she became active again in the movement through influencing and controlling her family, neighbors, and relatives. According to Micato, if the family itself did not know what a family member is doing, then they could inform to other people about it, especially children who were not yet adults. Micato started by influencing the family with propaganda such as presenting that the Indonesian military is the new invader and the enemy of the people because they have killed the family members, they do not know humanity, they rob and take all of the people's wealth. Messaging focused on highlighting that the people in Timor-Leste are becoming poor and cannot afford to pay for school, and that the Indonesian military are occupiers and criminals who imprisoned their fathers and others. Then, in the forest and overseas, built the resistance from Timorese fellow and the commanders. One could show material evidence of the existence of resistance movements such as newspaper clippings of publications about movements in Portugal, Australia, and England, which were smuggled in through Catholic missionaries. Furthermore, they recorded news from Radio of Netherlands, Australia, England, Voice of America, and RTP – Portuguese audio Television – that was actively discussing the issue of Timor-Leste. They reproduced the recordings as an organizing instrument.

Josefa Xavier ‘Nunu-Bere’³³ experienced the same where she and her team recruited members and expanded the network of the resistance movement through the dissemination of information about the resistance movement. As secretary of the OPMT Dili region, she worked closely with Catholic Missionaries, organized Catholic mothers, young people through churches and stations in Dili, introduced the OPMT organization and its mission, disseminated messages about the resistance movement in the forest and mountains through appeal from the resistance leader. Furthermore, in the appeal, she wrote a message about the forms of participation and contribution needed for the sustainability of the resistance movement. Evidence of contribution was passed on to the resistance leaders in the forest through a relay or ‘*Estafeta*’. Besides spreading the OPMT mission through providing political orientation, they also collected community assistance to be distributed to forests and mountains (Josefa Xavier, interviewed 2016).

The similar happened to Luisa Alves Sarmiento Megawati³⁴, Secretary of OMPT and concurrently as First Deputy of OPMT. Megawati Alves carried out organization work to the regions, cooperated with resistance leaders in the southern region, formed branch organizations and the smallest units in the regions, disseminated the organization mission and objectives, carried out political propaganda to attract followers and mass support, gave orientation to branch organization leaders and the person in charge of the smallest resistance unit to organize the participation of the masses, including women, through appeals which were distributed in secret to resistance fighters concealing in the forests and mountains. Besides organizing and strengthening the base, they also mobilized the resistance movement in the city in the form of protests and demonstrations. They organized, educated and empowered the mental and spirit of young people in cities and villages aimed to suppress the morals

³³ She was one of the leaders of the OPMT – Popular Organization of Timorese Women in the Dili region.

³⁴ Secretary of OMPT and concurrently as First Deputy of OPMT

and mentality of the immigrant civilian population (Indonesian citizens) in the city (Megawati, interviewed 2016). They used verbal hostile with words; every time they met a migrant civilian population (from Indonesia) they stamped them as immigrants. Then, they used terror questions such '*kapanpulang mas?*' meant "when will you back to Indonesia?" The purpose of these actions was to show the migrant community from Indonesia that their presence was not wanted, that those who against the Indonesian regime were not only the military but also the civilians. These actions entered various circles of society, ranging from people in cities, on campuses, to villages. Organizing and strengthening the masses of the people were also carried out through the formation of resistance cells consisting of women.

A number of protests in Dili attracted the international community and demanded that Indonesian military personnel retreat, political prisoners should be released, United Nations intervention should accelerate the resolution of the status of Timor-Leste, and civil and political-military officials for their crimes. Several actions greatly influenced public opinion, such the demonstration during the Pope John Paul II visit in Tasitolu Dili on October 12, 1989, demonstrations of the United States Ambassador visit in front of the Rezende Hotel in Dili on January 17-19, 1990, the Santa Cruz demonstrations in Dili in November 1991, demonstrations because of the European Union Commission visit on April 14, 1993, demonstrations at the Tripartite meeting between the Indonesian Foreign Affairs Minister, Foreign Affairs Minister of Portugal, and the Secretary-General of the United Nations in New York on January 9, 1995, a demonstration held by youth, students, and UNTIM students on February 3, 1996, in front of Bishop from Portugal at the inauguration of the Seminary in Dili, a demonstration to welcome President Suharto for inauguration of the statue of Christ The King on November 24, 1996.

Then, it was a massive march in Dili involving around 100,000 people from various districts to welcome Bishop Dom Carlos Filipe Ximenes Belo, SDB after receiving the Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo Norway on November 12, 1996, a demonstration demanding the release of the supreme leader of the resistance Xanana Gusmão, and a referendum on the resolution of the Timor-Leste issue on June 12, 1998, in front of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Jakarta, a demonstration welcoming the second special envoy of the UN Secretary-General Amos Wako on October 12-20, 1998. Then, in collaboration with male students and youth, Teresa Carvalho, Marquita Soares, Suzana Cardoso, and other women took over the office of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia in East Timor for more than a week.

3. Women in undercover/infiltration and liaison roles (estafeta)

Disguise and infiltration into enemy groups was one of the patterns of resistance that were also conducted from women in the Clandestine Front. Undercover infiltration tactics were used to enter areas or places controlled by Indonesian military. One of the most commonly used undercover strategy was to impersonate a merchant, disguised as sellers of coconuts, fish, vegetables, fruits, betel leaf, areca nut, animals such as pigs, goats, chickens, and others. During the impersonation, apart from selling from one place to another, and sales were conducted by also entering into and leaving people's houses, which made the Indonesian military lose their guard. The Indonesian military also might not have suspected them for they were considered sellers with no big risk, who knew nothing about politics. Through undercover tactics, letters of appeal or messages, and communication

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between resistance leaders and their networks and between people within the city's movements was easy and effective. Generally, this disguise was done from 'estafeta' women.

Maria Barros de Araujo's mother, Luciana Ximenes, in Mausiga Hatobuilico, Ainaro district, and Zulmira da Costa in Rotuto Same, Manufahi district were took part in the Clandestine Front in 1983, they began to operate business, sell betel nuts and coffee. In the markets of Maubisse, Ermera and Ainaro Maria Barros de Araujo and Luciana Ximenes disguised themselves as a sword. At that time Zulmira da Costa was trading in the same Maubisse marketplace. They did trading activities in collaboration with members of resistance fighters who guerrillas in Mount Kablakimountain range in Same, the southern region. Usually, they traveled by foot, leaving the house very early in the morning. When they returned, it was confirmed that they arrived home at night. This form of mobility was based on the instructions of resistance fighters as it was the best area to congregate at dawn or at night (Group discussion, April 2020). In general, there was still a relative between women in disguise and members of the resistance fighting forces. Thus, apart from making money in the market, the covert purpose was to monitor and find out the security situation and conditions controlled by the military in other areas such Ermera, Ainaro, and Same. Through their business mission, they were free to go anyplace to find information about the presence of the Indonesian military in the city or at every checkpoint on the road. The Indonesian National Armed Forces had never suspected them. Upon completion of the expedition, they provide a report on the status in the region.

Besides the covert operation of selling merchandise in the regions, they also conducted operations at government and private offices or agencies, by infiltrating movement agents into Indonesian civilian and military agencies. Infiltration was done through the application for positions as staff, army, police and intelligence officers. Many movement agents were women who succeeded in infiltrating used all facilities as cars, motorbikes, photocopier machines, printers, papers, and others to assist the movement. Official cars were used to deliver confidential items within the city therefore could not be inspected by the military or police. They used the photocopy machine to reproduce the letters of appeal from the resistance leaders, and then distributed it. Furthermore, they also used printers in offices to print photos, motion documents, and others. The way to access photocopiers was to use it during the night or during the day when everyone went for lunch, or late in the afternoon when all the employees went home. Felismina de Jesus was a civil servant in Dili's Military Command 164 Wira Dharma, whose day-to-day duties were dealing with correspondence and filing matters. Since Felismina was friendly, obedient, disciplined, and quiet, the commander trusted her to handle military documents including Indonesian military secrets. In 1994, Felismina disclosed confidential Indonesian military documents to the resistance leadership in the forest, including documents about the assassination plan of Bishop Belo by the Indonesian military. This confidential document was taken, multiplied, and then handed over to Bishop Belo through Amaro da Costa, a catechist and close person to Bishop Belo. Information about this planned assassination was known to the leaders of the movement in the jungle, including abroad, and became the material for the campaign about the Indonesian military's crimes against Timor-Leste. Felismina was arrested, tortured, and imprisoned by the Indonesian military (Felismina de Jesus, interviewed, 2015).

To ensure the communication between resistance fighter leaders in the forests and mountains and movement agents in cities, women performed important and high-risk roles "Estafeta". Several

women were doing this in earlier started the resistance in 1975, including Maria Goretti Alexandrina alias 'Bi-Leto/Bi-Brani,' Maria da Silva alias Benfica and Anita Soares alias 'Bui-Lacuc/Bui-Continue.' These were courageous women who served as liaisons between the highest resistance leaders including the first leader, Nicolau dos Reis Lobato to XananaGusmão. The data and information on 'Estafeta' liaison list of resistance leaders with the Guerilla Front has published by the Timor-Leste President Office in December 20, 2016. "Between 1975-1979, Maria Goretti was entrusted with the role of permanent 'Estafeta' liaison for the supreme resistance leader, NicolauLobato, who was also the first Prime Minister in 1975 Government. Maria Gorettiwas responsible for receiving orientation and passing the message and orders of the supreme leader NicolauLobato to resistance members and leaders and community organizers scattered in the forests and mountains ofAileu, Maubisse, Turiscari, and Alas, and those in Dili. Then, Maria Goretti and NicolauLobatowere killed by the Indonesian military in the forest at31st of December 1978.

Other prominent clandestine resistance women were Anita Soares Bui-Lacuc 'Bui-Terus' and Romana Pacheco 'Bi-Kiak.³⁵' From 1980-1999, Anita Soares was the permanent liaison for resistance leaders, XananaGusmão, Nino Konis Santana, and Lu-Olo in the Viqueque region. Between 1980 and 1982, Romana Pacheco's Bi- Kiak served in the Mount KablakiManufahi district, and Tata-Mailaudistrict of Ainaro, as liaison forMa'hunuBulerekKaratayani, head of the resistance. In particular they carried out crucial jobs, in the midst of a frightful and mortal battle as experienced by Maria Goretti. As liaisons, conducted the roles in different locations, sometimes they were in their homes with resistance leaders, but sometimes they were in the woods and mountains for days and weeks. Despite the dominance of the military throughout Timor-Leste, they succeeded in playing a liaison role. Because of their reputation, courage, and leadership in the role of liaison, Maria da Silva alias Benfica and Anita Soares alias 'Bui-Lacuc/Bui-Terus' were trusted and became liaisons for the 'estafeta' for resistance fighters in the forest and mountains.

4. Women in support supplies for resistance fighters in the forest

Since the Indonesian military invaded, various offensive operations followed throughout Timor-Leste. The Indonesian military succeeded in destroying access to the sources of food and basic commodities for the population and that available in the forest. Practically civilians and FALINTIL in the forest had difficulty to get enough food to sustain the life and conduct the resistance movement in the forest. Women cells of the resistance movement of the Clandestine Front were assigned for collecting food, clothing, medicine, and ammunition needs. Meanwhile, the person in charge made cells of the Clandestine Front and became logistics warehouses. Furthermore, the resistance fighter worked together with the other women in clandestine movement to choose and determine the home or site as the coordination and communication center.

The house or place chosen was designated a warehouse or called 'Caixa.' Caixa is the place where Clandestine Front actors met with the Guerilla Front at the forest and mountains. Every Caixa was in the guerrilla operation area, whether in the city, district, or villages. The person in charge of Caixa was a trusted person who was chosen by the resistance fighters' members of FALINTIL and the Clandestine Front cells. For the needs of supplies in each Caixa, a kiosk or mini-market was built as front to 'fool' the Indonesian military. The forest resistance workers were used Caixa to gather

³⁵ Personal memory in narrative text, available at office of the Presidency of Republic, 2015.

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and/or diversify humanitarian requirements like rice, coffee, sugar, cigarettes, oil and others. The enemy took products into consideration for business purposes such as kiosks. The network of the Clandestine Front also used the opportunity for the provision of munitions, medicine, communications instruments, clothes, and other essential things.

Gradually, the Clandestine Front movement expanded to involve members of the community from various backgrounds such as civil servants, nurses, and doctors, as well as young students, university students, businesswomen, and the families of Timorese military and police officers. In early 1980, Maria Bi-kia³⁶ re-established a relationship with resistance fighters' members FALINTIL commander David Alex 'Daitula' and Cornelio Gama 'L-7' in the forest. Maria-Bi-Kiak had a familial link with David Alex 'Daitula,' although she was married to an Indonesian soldier, she was trusted by the guerilla resistance in the forest. Despite the marriage, it did not eliminate the anti-Indonesia occupation sentiment she felt. Because of their strong desire for a nation as a common goal, it encouraged them to be involved in the clandestine movement, including in utilizing their life partner in their intimate family. Such experience of Maria Bi-kiak, she stole the striped clothing of her husband, took his ammunition, and boots, and delivered them to David Alex Daitula and Cornelio Gama L-7. Maria Madalena 'Bi-Kiak' was believed to be the correspondent between resistance fighters and the Bishop of the Baucau Diocese, Mgr. Dom Basilio do Nascimento. She had a four-wheeled minibus '*Mikrolet*' vehicle. Besides used for business purposes, this car was used to facilitate resistance fighters to attack Indonesian military. In 1997, guerrilla/resistance fighters used *mikrolet* to attack Indonesian military posts in Quelicai subdistrict, Baucau District. This attack killed 19 Indonesian military. 'Bi-Kiak' was arrested and her car was wrecked. She was interrogated and detained by the Indonesian military. Then, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Timor-Leste succeeded in liberating her (Maria 'Bi-kiak, interviewed, 2019 in Baucau).

Filomena Reis had been through a similar experience³⁷. Mena Reis shared her personal experience in clandestine movement. In 1977, after two years of joining the forest resistance warriors, the Indonesian military arrested her and took to the city. In 1980, she rejoined the Clandestine Front network in Suai District of Covalima. She began to establish communication links and direct contact with resistance fighters in the forest. Filomena Reis developed contact with resistance fighters to provide food, medication, and clothes through Caixa in Suai. In its development, the Indonesian military became aware of this network of cells of resistance. Many of its members had been arrested and detained where Mena Reis was told by one of the members of this network. Thus, she was arrested and then imprisoned for several months in Dili in 1981. After her released, Mena Reis again became actively involved in the resistance movement and was arrested again in 1988 for few weeks because she was receiving and distributing information about the activities of the CNRM – The National Council of Maubere Resistance in the city (cited from Irene and Scott, 2005).

Likewise, the women's organization OPMT – Popular Organization of Timorese Women leaders Rosa Baptista 'Bianti' and Augusta Amelia Riberio 'Uraka', both women who occupied positions in the OPMT organization, they established direct communication and contact with guerilla fighter leaders in the forest such Taur Matan Ruak, Falur Rate Laek, and Cornelio Gama 'L-7' in the east 'Leste'

³⁶ The family of Maria Madalena dos Santos Fátima aka 'Bi-kiak' were killed by the Indonesian military during the attack on Mount Matebian in Baucau. She surrendered in November 1978 during an air, land, and sea attack on Mount Matebian Baucau.

³⁷ At the beginning of the fight in 1975, she had been active in OPMT – Popular Organization of Timorese Women.

sector/region. They collaborated with male actors of the Clandestine Front Tuloda Alves, Folara, David Ximenes 'Mandati,' in the city (Biyanti and Uraka, interviewed 2015). They met Riak-Leman a guerilla fighter commander in the Southern region to discuss the strengthening of the Clandestine movement in the town and the city, as well as the mobilization of aid in the form of food, medicine, military clothing, and the design of strategies for the operation of resistance fighters in the city.

5. Women role of building an international solidarity network

The Timorese women who led the Clandestine Front realized the importance information about movement not only for domestic needs. Women knew how to select useful information for the movement interests and Indonesian position in international forums. Various types of information were collected and managed then disseminated to the international Solidarity network including in Indonesia, Australia and the Pacific, Portugal and the European continent, and the African continent. Information distributed on the cases of Indonesian military violence and human rights violations, including murder, imprisonment, rape, arrest and torture, as well as the structural violence in terms of social, economic and cultural, involving Indonesian authorities in Timor-Leste. In general, there were women worked in the movement, have been experienced with the military because their family members have had relations with the Indonesian army, as experienced by Filomena Reis and Laura Abrantes, detained, imprisoned, tortured, terrorized and intimidated. Mena Reis was a member of OPMT. Due to her experience in dealing with the Indonesian military, "Mena Reis managed to explore her personal experiences and write into cases of violence and human rights violations. Mena Reis built an advocacy-working group with women's organizations defending women's rights such as ETWAVE – East Timorese Women Against Violence toward women and children, FOKUPERS, and GFFTL.

Likewise, with Laura Abrantes, after finishing her studies in Indonesia in 1993, she became active in the Clandestine Front resistance movement at her work place in Caritas Dili – a Timor-Leste Catholic Church organization. Laura recorded all information about the conflict and violence in the Indonesian military including violence against political prisoners in prison. Her visits to the jails included visits the political prisoners and women victims of Indonesian military brutality. Laura wrote and packaged/analyzed various information about Indonesian military violence that was collected. Furthermore, the information was sent abroad via fax, typed on electric typewriter to international human rights defender organizations such as Amnesty International Australia and the United Kingdom (UK), East Timor Human Rights Center in Melbourne (Laura Abrantes, at Independent Women, Irene Cristalis and Catherine Scott, 2005). Laura Abrantes' information became a reference point for worldwide groups of solidarity campaign to shape the view of international community on Indonesia's position on Timor-Leste self-determination. From 1990-1999, Mena Reis and Laura Abrantes were very diligent and persistent in their work to support and strengthen the resistance movement in the Clandestine Front, along with other female figures including Maria Domingas Alves 'Micato' and Maria OlandinaCaero Alves. FOKUPERS, established by Micato, for example, was involved in assisting young and old women who were victims of abuse and human rights violations by the Indonesian military. Then she wrote the narratives of the victims of military violence and forwarded them to international human rights defenders such as Amnesty International in Australia and the UK, to solidarity organizations in Indonesia such FORTILOS – Solidarity

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Forum for the People of East Timor and narratives of women victims of the violence were published (Micato, available at Independent Women, Irene Cristalis and Catherine Scott, 2005).

Likewise, Maria OlandinaCaero Alves was the only East Timorese woman who also initiated a women's resistance movement in Timor-Leste that discussed the narrative of the women's movement against violence against children and women. In 1998, this movement was transformed into an organization called ETWAVE. In 1998 and 1999 at ETWAVE OlandinaCaero started, organized, and led an open campaign against brutality by the Indonesian military dictatorship in Timor-Leste, including a protest of over 5,000 women (available at Independent Women, Irene Cristalis and Catherine Scott, 2005).

The resistance movement through open actions in Indonesia territory fills the pages of various media in Indonesia and abroad which greatly influences public opinion in Indonesia. Gradually, these actions led to the establishment of solidarity support from Indonesian community. Responding to the massacre on November 12, 1991, at the Santa Cruz public cemetery in Dili, in Jakarta in 1991, several NGOs formed the Joint Commission for the Defenders of Timor-Leste, which was later, changed to Fortilos – Solidarity Forum for the People of East Timor. In 1995, in Jakarta, SPRIM (*Solidaritas Perjuangan Rakyat Indonesia dengan Maubere*) or (Indonesian Peoples' Struggle with Maubere People) was formed, and then in 1997 Solidamor (Solidarity for the Peace in East Timor) was formed. The various demonstrations that took place in several places in Indonesia made the Indonesian people knew about the military violence in Timor-Leste. Members of Solidarity organizations in Indonesia came from various groups, ranging from workers, campus activists, and workers/activists of Non-Governmental Organizations. Indonesian and Timorese activists link Indonesia's democratization as a precondition for Timor-Leste's self-determination and as an entry point for the process of reform and democratization in Indonesia. In 1998, the international Solidarity organization that supported the struggle for self-determination expanded in many regions include in Indonesia who fought against Indonesia's civil administration and military itself. RENETIL became the main agent of the resistance movement within Indonesia, which became a bridge to facilitate communication with international tourists and journalists, by giving information about the situation of Indonesian military violence, and the national resistance movement originating from resistance fighters and the Clandestine Front.

Women from Timor-Leste succeeded in identifying concerns of civil and political rights violations of women rights, violations as detention and torture, rape and sexual assault, mass murders of widows and mothers and the plight of orphans as a result of the killings. Issues and realities published in international publications and media campaigns continuously accused the Indonesian military of committing violence against the Timorese including violence against women. Reports on violence and human rights violations in Timor-Leste received public space in the international media, both in violations of civil and political rights and socio-economic and cultural rights. For example, the assimilation of community traditions and culture, where the values of Javanese society were systematically injected into all community institutions in Timor-Leste. The traditions and culture of the local people were considered primitive and backward which forbade the use of Tetun and Portuguese. Children were taught Pancasila education as the only Indonesian national ideology in schools. The case of forced Islamization was also fostered by the Indonesian military in 1981. Institutions and groups in the name of Islam had been established in various places, which threatened

the animistic and Catholic character of Timor-Leste society. Timorese marriage has changed, and it was never possible to continue with a dowry (*barlaki*), since many of the military's members had been married to girls in the countryside. Some women had only been used as concubines while they are in service and then abandoned afterwards, demonstrating where Timorese customary marriage customs, social norms, and culture were not respected.

In addition of concerns and abuses of human rights for the benefit of foreign media, the world community also gained sympathy and support because of the 'jump over the fence' political asylum actions conducted by activists at embassies in Jakarta. Jumping over the fence of 'politically asylum' at foreign embassies sought to draw Indonesia's friends in Jakarta's attention and strengthen support to justify Timorese including youth not being safely protected or under fear of death. The political asylum was in 1994 coincided with the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation APEC Summit. When the APEC meeting took place in Bogor, West Java, on November 12, 1994, 29 students from Timor-Leste jumped over the fence at the US embassy in Jakarta. This incident had attracted the attention of international media covering the APEC Summit meeting. For several days, Timorese students include Timorese Women students such as Edite Palmira dos Reis and Paula Fonseca (both women recently as Judge in Dili Court), Marilla da Costa, Renata Aparicio, Sildonia Sarmiento, Mica Barreto, and others Timorese students university from, Jakarta, Jawa and Bali who took part in demonstrations appeared on the front pages of the mass media in Jakarta and foreign media demanding the release of Xanana Gusmão and self-determination for the people of Timor-Leste.

V. Discussion

This article describes several objective conditions that define the narrative of women in "Clandestine Front" as an instrument for women to do resistance movements for self-determination. Objective conditions that serve as references for women to take part in the struggle of the society include personal experiences growing and developing in the war against Indonesia (firsthand experience) and structural issues that shape anti-Indonesian sentiments and motivate the birth of nationalism, anti-colonialism, and imperialism as well as right on self-determination. First-hand experiences, family experiences, cases of sexual violence, and murder had become factors that motivated women to take part in the resistance in the Clandestine Front. Both firsthand experience of structural violence became the main factors that motivated and encouraged the rise of women organizationally affiliated with clandestine organizations to fight for the right of self-determination of the people of Timor-Leste.

These structural factors greatly influenced and motivated the people to fight against Indonesia and received support from the international community included structural aspects, the people's economic condition worsened (impoverishment) systematically. During the Indonesian military invasion and operations, many Timorese fled to the mountains and forests and later arrested or surrendered while resistance fighters accommodated some. This made these groups sympathize with FRETELIN's idea of fighting for the right to self-determination. Both arrested and surrendered people lived in poverty, hardship, terror, and intimidation and a number of Indonesian military criminal prosecutions. Thus, they preferred to become freedom fighters as a way to survive (Ben Kiernan, 2009:140). The second component is the restrictive political system in Indonesia was the rule of Indonesian military during 24 years in Timor-Leste. All public actions that were perceived to be detrimental to Suharto regime

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were promptly prosecuted and classified as acts of treason and subversion that were prohibited from taking place within the Republic of Indonesia. Everything was controlled excessively by the military that freedom of expression was a very rare and precious thing in Timor-Leste.

The basic material of the Clandestine Front movement is a narrative about the first-hand experience and various issues that arose from structural policies and the Indonesian political system as the basic material in influencing local people's opinions and organizing strategies for the masses. The process of influencing opinion and organizing was the initial step and basis for the functioning of the Clandestine Front started from the family, relatives, then community members who had the same experience. Women were instrumental in portraying information about the negative consequences using photos or pictures, videos, audio and media publications about members of resistance fighters and ordinary members of the public who were killed, arrested, tortured, detained, and imprisoned, as well as rape victims were shared from person to person, family, relatives, and the wider community. The reality of the first-hand experience and the structural violence against women, at the hands of the Indonesian military-political system affected the people's anti-Indonesian sentiment and the desire for self-determination grew. They started recruiting and mobilizing as well as empowering fellow women to take part in the resistance movement in the Clandestine Front to involve more and more people. Women made contact with the resistance combatant guerrillas in the forests and mountains; young women were organized to create cells, mobile networks, which operate as a hub for movement coordinating. Thus, the community's participation in the movement was increasing from various groups such as students from schools, university students, the clergy, civil servants, teachers, nurses and medics, and entrepreneurs. Furthermore, members of the police and military native to Timor-Leste also joined the clandestine front movement.

Women took one step farther, even in places with high danger of mortality. They played the part of infiltration and communication with resistance soldiers who fought in forests and mountains. Women were able to carry out the role of infiltrating the enemy to save and facilitate guerrilla actions in the city of resistance fighters, because they were women. They managed to break through the various layers of Indonesian military checks that were placed along the road from one area to another or the military base-camp base. They carried out undercover and infiltration to seek information about the Indonesian military's actions against the community. They also tracked the migration of militants from one region to another, in order to enable resistance forces, prevent armed encounter with the Indonesian army. They observed how the people respond to the Indonesian military actions, by identifying opportunities to raise awareness to the public about the existence of resistance and the need for support and identifying the strengths (military equipment, number of personnel) and weaknesses of the Indonesian military. All monitored situations and conditions were reported to the resistance leaders, both in the city (Clandestine Front) and resistance fighters who were guerrillas in the forests and mountains. The information obtained through undercover and infiltration was studied and analyzed, to find ways to organize the community, to find FRETILIN or FALINTIL cadres who surrendered or were captured and had settled in residential areas controlled by the Indonesian military. Thus, it was easier to build contacts/cooperation relationships and to compare the security situation of the area/place with another.

It was recognized that to mobilize the power of the masses and clandestine actions needed to be strategic. Various efforts were done by women to activate former FRETILIN and FALINTIL

members who surrendered because of missions or because they were secularists or those who were arrested in Indonesian military operations. Through Clandestine networks, they deceived Indonesian military operations, organized and formed people's resistance organs in centers of cities and villages. They also played a role as a liaison between resistance fighters who still existed in the forest/mountains with the community and actors of the resistance movement overseas named Diplomatic Front. Furthermore, they also built concrete works based on the roles of individuals, family, and community levels in groups such as facilitating the availability of necessities of life and guerrillas in the forest, mobilizing ammunition, attributes, and instruments of resistance from the enemy, mobilizing information about potential enemies and launching propaganda in the city, conducting popular education on national resistance and the right to self-determination in basic societies. Meanwhile, in the realm of policy, women succeeded in organizing campaigns, mobilizing power to shape public opinion through petitions and demonstrations, and so on. The women of Timor-Leste had managed to organize and lead clandestine groups in a planned and cohesive way, in order to achieve joint objectives and in the kitchen for the underground movement.

The narratives obtained prove that although the achievements of the resistance was shared with between men and women, the struggle process, which had adopted and relied on a long-term resistance strategy, and encouraged the birth and the history of the popular resistance movement and the self-determination of people through the establishment of clandestine organizations and the critical involvement of brave women. The collective and personal roles and activities focus on the testimonies of certain women from Timor-Leste. Gender inequality ceased to factor, as the roles of men and women were equal and perceived to be equal during the clandestine movement, and the poor status of women was a hangover from the long period of Portuguese colonialism, reinforced by the Indonesian military occupation. The experiences and narratives of Maria Olandina Cairo Alves, Maria Domingas Alves Micato, Luisa Sarmento Megawati, and several women discussed in this study emphasized that the struggle for the right to self-determination is an internal part of the struggle to regain equality of men and women after years of oppression. To guarantee the freedom of women rights, is to give Timor-Leste women as many opportunities as possible to determine their destiny. Therefore, the researcher positions that the occurrence of gender disparity today, is due to the community perception factor, which is influenced by the historical process of colonization and occupation. In fact, in the subsequent development of the struggle for the right to self-determination, the role of women in Timor-Leste was greater. The experience of women becomes visible to maintain gender balance in the historical record of the people's struggle and of national development in the future.

VI. Conclusion

In this study, Clandestine Front is defined as a term adopted from the Portuguese language "Frente Clandestina", which means the strength of the resistance movement in a closed, secret, or underground movement.³⁸ That are invisible in most analyses of Timor-Leste, especially in the academic analysis regarding contemporary politics. Not only are these analyses incomplete, but also not strictly accurate. Males dominate the decision-making processes publicly and politically, whilst women symbolise ritual power (Enloe, 2004). In Timor-Leste, during the Indonesian occupation,

³⁸Soares, Januario (2011). 'The Clandestine Movement for the Independence of Timor-Leste,' published by the Universitas Kristen Satya Wacana, Salatiga, Indonesia.

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women had the power to influence others through communication to act like others (Kirner and Rayner, 1997:34), demonstrating that the role of women is very deterministic and cannot be seen as a controversial reality (Cameron in Mils: 1997). In most literature and publishing houses on national struggle, including Timor-Leste, the male dominance of the resistance movement is the lens through which this narrative is portrayed.

However, the role of women in the Clandestine Front was one of the most important mechanism of how Timor-Leste resisted. It is one of the critical national resistance strategies to interpret the community resistance movements carried out in cities and villages in clandestine manners. The two critical elements of the women's role in resistance; the movement's strategic and advocacy roles and tactics. The intended strategic role was mobilising and organising people supporting the movement, advocating against communism, and convening international support. Meanwhile, their role in implementing the Clandestine Front movement tactics was by carrying out political, urban guerrilla tactics such as disguising and infiltrating, eliciting and circulating information, disguising, infiltrating and expanding the Clandestine Front network as well as providing safety and direct medical support to the resistance.

The 'referendum', the process of public consultation, was conducted on 30 August 1999 by the United Nations Mission for East Timor (UNAMET), when around 75,5 per cent of the Timorese people declared their desire for Timor to be a free and sovereign state. The results achieved prove the power of women in taking the role. The resistance carried out by the Timorese women fighters is proof that they were an essential element of forming social capital for the Timorese resistance. They employed nationalism and patriotic concepts and the acknowledgement in the practical activity of the right to self-determination. They developed many types of creative pursuits to demonstrate their ability to impact international public opinion and produce different forms of tangible actions. In the future, without equal participation between women and men in various levels of policy and society, the objectives of equality, development, and peace will not be achieved. This study ensures that women's experiences are visible to maintain gender balance in the historical record of the people's struggle and the future of nation-building.

Conflict of Interest:

"I, Aniceto Guro-Berteni Neves as the Corresponding Author, declare and undertake that in the study titled as "*Self-Determination of Timorese Women's in History of Timor-Leste's Clandestine Organisation Movement*", scientific, ethical and citation rules were followed; Turkish Online Journal of Qualitative Inquiry Journal Editorial Board has no responsibility for all ethical violations to be encountered, that all responsibility belongs to the author/s and that this study has not been sent to any other academic publication platform for evaluation."

Sincerely,
TOJQI Editorial Board

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