



INTERMEDIALITY IN THE VISUALIZATION OF PEACE:
CONTRADICTING NARRATIVES ABOUT PEACE AND
VIOLENCE IN TIMOR-LESTE

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Visuals can be effective tools for educating an audience about peacebuilding and the need to engage with a nation's violent past. However, research on visuality has pointed to the ambivalence visuals can develop through audiencing and the dominant political discourse. Building on this, this article argues that ambivalence can also occur between narratives by different media although the same institution produced them, and that such inherent contradictions can limit the institution's effectiveness. The analysis centers upon a case study of the East Timorese Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation (CAVR) that compares the commission's documentary *dalan ba dame* ("road to peace") with its final report about peace and the human rights violations committed in the territory between 1975 and 1999. While the commission's final report stresses the individual responsibility of members of the Indonesian military and formulates the need for an institution-based liberal peace, the documentary communicates the message that all parties to the conflict are guilty of committing crimes and that peace has already been created, mitigating the need to further engage with the violent past. The analysis identifies the media's different formats and their different agendas as reasons for the creation of these contradicting messages. Based on an assessment of the dissemination of both media and their reception within the political discourse in Timor-Leste, the implications of these conflicting narratives for educating an international audience are discussed. Since the final report is difficult to access due to its length and its legal language, the documentary remains the more accessible medium to educate an international audience about the nation's violent past. However, due to the narrative it conveys, the documentary's ability to mobilize an international audience is limited. Thus, the article argues for considering three aspects when designing visuals for peace education: the intermediality of visuals with other media and

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its potential effects concerning the communication of a specific message, the reception of the message by the target audience, and the reception of the message by broader audiences when the visual is distributed online.

INTRODUCTION

The documentary *dalan ba dame* was produced by the East Timorese Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation (*Comissão de Acolhimento, Verdade e Reconciliação de Timor-Leste*, CAVR) and covers the twenty-four years of Indonesian occupation of Timor-Leste, during which nearly one quarter of the population died. The CAVR was originally set up to produce a report about the human rights violations committed between April 25, 1975, and October 25, 1999, analyze its root causes, and identify ways of how to come to terms with the violent past. It therefore constitutes an instrument of transitional justice, defined as “a set of practices, mechanisms, and concerns that arise following a period of conflict, civil strife, or repression and that are aimed directly at confronting and dealing with past violations of human rights and humanitarian law.”¹ As the same institution produced both media, the report about the human rights violations and the documentary, one should expect them to communicate the same message. However, this is not the case. The report emphasizes the need to prosecute individual members of the Indonesian military for the human rights violations committed as a precondition for sustainable peace. The documentary tells the story that peace already prevails and keeping it is a matter of reconciliation among the East Timorese population. Consequently, the case of the CAVR and its documentary is interesting for research on visibility, which analyzes the dynamics and effects of visuals in social and political processes.

Research on visibility has stressed the ambiguity of visuals and their unintended consequences, pointing to cases in which an audience interpreted visuals differently than expected. However, as this example demonstrates, ambiguity not only occurs regarding different interpretations of the same visual but also regarding intermediality, that is, the conflicting message a visual produces in comparison with other media that deal with the same issue. This is the case with the documentary *dalan ba dame*, which invites interpretations of conflict and peace in

Timor-Leste that inadvertently undermine the CAVR's call in its report for judicial engagement with past violence by the Timor-Leste government and the international community.

The questions therefore are how the two media create these different messages, why this is the case, and what the political consequences for both are. To answer these three questions, this article compares *dalan ba dame* with the final report of the CAVR regarding how both media produce a narrative and why these narratives contradict each other to a certain extent. The analysis identifies the media's different formats, the target groups they address, and their agendas as reasons for the creation of contradicting messages. To mitigate such a contradiction regarding the use of visuals in peacebuilding, a more coherent approach is proposed, which integrates the visual in a broader outreach strategy. This approach should not only take into account the immediate target audience, but also other potential audiences when deciding about which message to communicate.

The article is structured as follows: The first section presents the research on visuality and the ambivalence of visuals. Based thereon, the section calls for a stronger engagement with intermediality to analyze how different media cover the same issue and to evaluate the political consequences of such an interaction. It identifies the visualization of peace as especially difficult and thus prone to communicating an unintended message. The second section presents the case of the CAVR. It starts with a discussion of the commission's political context, followed by an analysis of the documentary as well as of the commission's final report, and an analysis of the media's audiencing as well as the dominant political discourse in Timor-Leste at that time. The final section discusses the reasons for the creation of these contradicting messages and draws conclusions about the visuality of peace and how to use visuals in peacebuilding and transitional justice processes.

THE POWER AND AMBIVALENCE OF VISUALS—STATE OF THE ART

As authors have laid out, visuals entail an immediacy different from texts and therefore create emotions more directly.² Transcending language boundaries, they also circulate more easily and therefore reach a broader audience.³ Studies in international relations and visual culture have therefore identified visuals as political since they create

our social reality by structuring our awareness for a situation, our evaluation of it, and the way we react.⁴ Roland Bleiker refers to semiotics to explain the political aspect of visuals: since “there is always a gap between a form of representation and what is presented therewith,” there is room for a specific interpretation of the subject at hand, and in this interpretation politics unfold.⁵ Authors have therefore focused on how visuals create a certain message through strategies of representation and these authors thereby differentiated between what is shown and how it is shown.⁶ On the one hand, research has discussed the othering effects of visuals and how they ultimately legitimate violence, as Wendy Kozol does with regard to photojournalism in the Iraq War.⁷ On the other hand, authors have stressed the potential of visuals to create awareness for grievances and social pressure to act to address them, as well as visuals’ potential to create solidarity with others.⁸ The concept of the narrative thereby points to the structuring function of media, with which they give meaning to our life-world. Narratives provide a consistent definition of a problem and solutions for it. To create consistency, narratives usually contain a sequential and relational order, which makes them appear as commanding a beginning, middle, and end. As Rebecca L. Stein demonstrates regarding the lack of Palestinian eyewitnesses of the Gaza war in Israeli television, authors have emphasized that there is always a selection process behind an image, which excludes other less convenient images.⁹

Strategies of representation often naturalize a visual’s message and entail a claim to authenticity by using a specific type of visual.¹⁰ Concerning a documentary, claims to authenticity are inherent in the genre, as it usually draws on a historical reality and presents it from a distinct, albeit plausible perspective. Documentaries often use people who tell their views, whether from a personal or an expert point of view, and some text, either written or provided by a background voice, to guide the interpretation of the images.¹¹ Thereby, authors have stressed the power of eyewitnesses to evaluate a situation and have identified a special normative status with victims of violence, which makes it difficult to doubt their accounts.¹²

A visual’s semiotic room for interpretation, however, also produces ambiguity. As studies have argued, visuals always entail the potential to lose its authorial control and to have unintended effects for their creators and audiences alike.¹³ Thus, it is neither foreseeable who exerts power with the help of visuals nor how their effects will

unfold.¹⁴ Authors have therefore proposed to not only study the visual itself and its strategies of representation, but also how specific audiences react to a visual. Gillian Rose¹⁵ generally differentiates between four sites of analysis concerning a visual: its production, the image itself, its distribution, and its audiencing. Alternatively, Lene Hansen introduces a specific understanding of the audiencing site to focus on the political aspects of a visual.¹⁶ Hansen differentiates between the dominant policy discourse in the respective country that attributes the policy-relevant meaning to a visual, and other texts, which contain an alternative understanding of it, commanding the potential for resistance against the dominant policy discourse.¹⁷ However, both authors put the visual at the center of their framework and analyze discourses that directly relate to it. This limitation prevents us from taking into account that a visual's ambiguity can not only arise through the audience's interpretation, but also through its interaction with other media.

Usually, the same issue is taken up by different media. Therefore, contradictions between different forms of representation are prone to arise. Accordingly, this is not a case of intertextuality or intervisuality, as the two media do not directly refer to each other, but rather build up on the same information instead. Instead, this is a case of intermediality, defined as the interaction between two material vehicles of representation.¹⁸ They form a relationship through (1) the topic they discuss by creating a specific narrative about it and (2) by the dominant political discourse that relates to them which can build up on one medium to delegitimize the other's narrative. While this phenomenon is well-known regarding media from different producers, for example, concerning the production of war propaganda by two different nations, the case discussed here demonstrates that this can also take place when two media have the same producer.¹⁹

This is also a vital point for the visibility of peace. As Frank Moeller puts it, peace is a difficult subject for visuals as it constitutes a nonevent—it is mainly defined through the absence of violence.²⁰ It gets even harder if we differentiate between negative peace as the absence of direct physical violence and positive peace as the absence of structural violence.²¹ How can we display the latter without referring to violence in the first place? At the same time, any reference to peace can entail different political messages: It can not only present a goal worth striving for, but also a condition threatened by outsiders or certain groups in society. By displaying that a society has achieved

peace, however, it potentially discredits any need to deal with the roots of the conflict as well as persistent inequality and injustice. In the context of peace education, it is therefore necessary to be aware of the narrative a visual creates by displaying peace, especially concerning the visual's implications about where peace comes from and how to sustain it.

To summarize, the analysis of a visual should take into account its strategies of representation and the narrative it creates. While authors have stressed the ambiguity inherent in visuals, such ambiguity can also occur in relation to another medium that refers to the same subject. It is therefore necessary to consider the broader context of the visual by taking into account alternative versions of the same narrative communicated by other media, in addition to the dominant political discourses.

THE TRUTH COMMISSION AND ITS DOCUMENTARY: WRITING HISTORY IN TIMOR-LESTE

To demonstrate strategies of representation and contradictory narratives, the subsequent part of this paper will analyze the CAVR's documentary compared to its final report. In Timor-Leste's *lingua franca* Tetum, the documentary, *dalan ba dame* means "road to peace," while the CAVR's final report, *Chega!*, means "enough" in Portuguese. It can be expected that there exists a strong relationship between these two media, both replicating the findings of the commission. As the analysis makes clear, despite some similarities in the perspective conveyed, differences exist regarding their narrative of the conflict and their display of peace.

This section begins with an overview of the historical context of the CAVR, which operated from 2001 to 2005. The subsequent subdivisions analyze the documentary and the final report on two levels. First, it considers strategies of representation, focusing on the technical aspects of creating the movie, its editing, and the footage it uses. Second, a coding of the sequences of the audio-visual provides insights about the importance of different facts by comparing the length of elements of the plot and identifies the narrative's beginning, middle, and end. As the documentary mainly relies on eyewitness accounts, the images used function as a secondary mode of representation underlining the information provided by the witnesses' statements, yet nevertheless sequencing helps convey the medium's narrative. Insights from

an interview with the maker of the documentary, Ian White, provide background information about the production of the movie and the considerations about the selection and production of footage. Following this, a similar analysis takes place regarding *Chega!*, identifying its strategies of representation and the narrative it creates by means of sequencing. Finally, the two media's distribution and audiencing are discussed, including the dominant political discourse in Timor-Leste. While information about distribution is deducted from an analysis of secondary literature and policy papers, the political discourse surrounding both media has been analyzed with the help of a qualitative content analysis of 35 newspaper articles, published between the years 2001 and 2007, thus covering the commission's period of operation and its immediate aftermath.

The Historical and Political Context of the CAVR

The CAVR was established to provide the truth about the extent, structures, and causes of the human rights violations committed in Timor-Leste since the country's independence from Portugal in 1975. Indonesia invaded the country nine days after its independence from Portugal, claiming to end a short but brutal civil war, which had broken out over the political course of the new nation. Major Western powers supported the Indonesian regime with weapons and the quasi-acknowledgement of the annexation. However, the leading political faction in the territory, Fretilin (*Frente Revolucionaria de Timor-Leste Independente*), turned to resistance, fighting with diplomatic means on the international level and with guerrilla and clandestine tactics throughout the territory.²² Since the Indonesian regime established a system of pro-Indonesian militia groups to counter the insurgency, both sides of the conflict relied on support from the population, which led to deep divisions and an atmosphere of suspicion and betrayal within East Timorese society.²³ In the wake of the Asian financial crisis, the United Nations brokered a referendum on the status of Timor-Leste in September 1999, in which almost eighty percent of the population voted for independence.²⁴ Pro-Indonesian militias and the military took revenge, destroying seventy percent of the territory's infrastructure and killing more than one thousand people.²⁵ The United Nations established an intervention force, Interfret (*International Force for East Timor*), and made the Indonesian troops and militias withdraw. However, the militias forced more than 250,000 people to

flee with them across the border into West Timor.²⁶ The UN assumed transitional authority over the territory with an extensive state-building mission, UNTAET (*United Nations Transitional Administration of East Timor*), and prepared Timor-Leste for its independence in May 2002.²⁷

To address the crimes committed in the aftermath of the referendum, UNTAET established a tribunal as part of the East Timorese justice system, comprising two Special Chambers at the Dili District Court. However, these Special Chambers were only able to try mid- and low-level militias as the leaders of the militia groups and the Indonesian militaries remained in Indonesia. They also did not prosecute any member of Fretilin. At the same time, the Indonesian government set up an ad hoc court in Jakarta to try its own citizens, but denied the tribunal any political support.²⁸ It indicted East Timorese leaders of the militias and mid-ranking military officers only, while high-ranking militaries appeared as witnesses.²⁹ Of the eighteen persons tried, only six received very low sentences, which were later overturned by the Indonesia court of appeals. The prosecutorial approach to transitional justice therefore remained incomplete, and by the time the CAVR finalized its work, it had become clear that neither the state of Timor-Leste nor Indonesia would be able nor willing to prosecute those most responsible.

UNTAET established the CAVR with the financial support of the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNOHCHR) and gave it a budget of two million USD.³⁰ Nine East Timorese commissioners, seven national individuals well-known for their engagement in human rights issues, and two representatives from the East Timorese church chaired the CAVR. In addition, legal advisors from the UNOHCHR as well as more than three hundred staff in the capital Dili and the country's thirteen districts supported the commission. The commission collected over 8,700 statements in public hearings in all of the districts.³¹ Apart from writing a report about the human rights violations committed, the commission also set up a Community Reconciliation Process (CRP), which aimed at encouraging refugees to return from West Timor—many of whom feared to be regarded as supporters of the militias by their communities. The CRP used a traditional conflict resolution tool on the community level to facilitate the reintegration of persons who had committed less serious crimes (such as theft, minor assault, killing of livestock, and the destruction of crops).³² Those responsible for murder, torture, sexual

violence, war crimes, and crimes against humanity and genocide, in contrast, were supposed to be prosecuted.

THE DOCUMENTARY *DALAN BA DAME*

The CAVR produced the documentary during the last two years of its operation period, from 2003 to 2005, and initially targeted an exclusively East Timorese audience.³³ The CAVR invited filmmaker Ian White to make the movie as he personally knew one of the legal advisors to the commission. Its budget was extremely limited, and White provided his own equipment for the production. Regarding strategies of representation, *dalan ba dame* uses mainly original footage gathered in Indonesian and Australian archives, which creates a strong impression of authenticity. This was important for the East Timorese audience as Timor-Leste is a very small country and the persons appearing in the footage were well-known to the public.

The sequences produced for the movie display eyewitness accounts of the human rights violations people had suffered or were forced to commit. The statements replace the display of violations, leaving it to the audience to imagine atrocities such as the cutting of ears, gang rapes, and burying people alive. Most of the eyewitnesses qualify as noncombatants, making their statements even more authoritative. All of them speak in front of a black screen, and originally, there was no information provided about their identity.³⁴ According to Ian White, this should create the impression that their personal background is irrelevant and people's individual experiences form part of a bigger story.³⁵ The sounds used in the documentary again not only reinforce the claim to authenticity but also create an emotional atmosphere. For example, the narrator had originally worked for Radio Maubere, the radio station of the resistance movement. In addition, sounds of shooting and fire in the respective sequences underscore the tragedy of events, while chorales and other Christian music complement images of persons dying or crying, triggering compassion and concernment.

The movie's narrative begins with Portuguese colonial rule, explains the events during the occupation in Timor-Leste as well as the situation abroad, and finally shows the violence surrounding the referendum and the arrival of the intervention force. For the beginning, the documentary uses anthropological footage about ethnic groups in Timor-Leste, displaying dark-skinned people in traditional costumes and Western persons in white colonial suits. The background

voice tells the audience that the Portuguese took advantage of existing tensions between the existing groups to extend their rule over the territory. The middle part discusses the civil war that had broken out in Timor-Leste before the annexation as well as the situation during the occupation. This part devotes a comparable length to images of the atrocities committed by the Indonesian military and by Fretilin. The middle part can be separated in two parts, with the first one covering the 1970s and 1980s and the second one starting in the 1990s. The first part presents images of the civil war in 1975 and of the conflicts within the resistance movement, which culminated in the assassination of several leading figures in the early 1980s. The documentary thereby draws a surprisingly ambivalent picture about the resistance movement by telling how Fretilin risked the death of many civilians in their operations and uses this to explain that the Indonesian regime was able to set up the militia groups because many East Timorese disguised Fretilin for what they did to the people. The second part lays emphasis on civil society initiatives abroad, showing demonstrations and sit-ins by the international solidarity movement in the United States and Australia in the 1990s as well as demonstrations and occupations of embassies by East Timorese students in Indonesia. In addition, it displays the Asian financial crisis at length, showing footage of demonstrations in Indonesia's capital Jakarta to illustrate the atmosphere at that time and what the political transformation meant for Indonesia, independent of the developments in Timor-Leste.

The end of the narrative again uses the perspective of the civilian population in Timor-Leste to present the events before and after the referendum. For example, footage shows desperate people trying to enter the compound of the UN-election observation mission UNAMET (*United Nations Assistance Mission to East Timor*), when the militias ransacked towns and villages. In addition, sequences show how people fled to the mountains and lived through twenty-one days of uncertainty between the announcement of the result of the referendum and the arrival of the intervention force. In light of this tense atmosphere, the arrival of Interfret presents a moment of ultimate joy and relief: People of all ages hug each other, crying tears of joy. They engage in traditional dances and sing on open squares while joyful music increases the emotional effect. Sequences display the thankfulness toward the personnel of the intervention with people waving at Western-looking people, running after military jeeps and shaking hands with Western-looking people in military uniform. The fighting that

took place between Interfret and the Indonesian military or the revenge killings committed against members of the pro-Indonesian militias are not mentioned.

By using the sequencing and strategies of depiction as discussed, the movie creates a narrative about the conflict that sidelines two issues: responsibility for the human rights violations committed and the role of the state in building peace. First, the narrative conveys a very balanced picture of the conflict. It conveys the message that human rights violations were not only committed in the conflict between the resistance movement and the Indonesian military, but also between the different political parties in Timor-Leste and within the resistance movement, drawing a rather ambiguous picture the exclusive responsibility of the Indonesian military and their East Timorese militias. Accordingly, the ultimate message is that people on all sides suffered and that all of them were implicated in the violence, or, as Ian White expressed it: "Everybody has blood on his hands. Nobody could remain innocent during the conflict."³⁶ At the same time, by displaying only East Timorese eyewitnesses, against initial plans to include members of the Indonesian military, the documentary formulates an exclusive need for reconciliation among the East Timorese population instead of reconciliation with Indonesia. In addition, it sidelines a potential need to hold the Indonesian military accountable for atrocities.

Second, the narrative gives the merit of ending the conflict primarily to outside forces and structural factors such as the international solidarity movement, the United Nations, and the Asian financial crisis. This reduces Fretilin's achievements with regard to the independence of the Timor-Leste. In addition, with the decision to take 1999 as the end of the narrative, the movie neither addresses the difficult task of rebuilding the country nor any of the conflicts that arose on the social and political level in Timor-Leste as well as between the East Timorese leadership and the United Nations in the coming years. Instead, peace constitutes a joyful event, in which the East Timorese and the interveners form a partnership with the agreement of everyone in the country. By choosing colonial times as the beginning of the narrative, the arrival of Interfret gains an even stronger meaning, creating the impression of an "end of history" that not only frees the country from the occupation but also eradicates the colonial, divisive legacy of Timor-Leste.³⁷ Accordingly, the respective sequence creates the impression that peace, and with it a peaceful future, has already

arrived, despite the fact that it only visualizes negative peace, that is, the absence of direct physical violence. The displayed joy and relief of ordinary people, together with the people-centered perspective of the whole movie, communicates the message that people's commitment is enough to maintain peace. It thus proposes reconciliation as an adequate way of dealing with the past and especially reconciliation that takes place on an inter-personal and informal level, neglecting the role of state institutions. When asked about why the documentary does not mention the CAVR, for example, Ian White answered that this was to sustain the people-centered perspective, as bringing in the CAVR would have meant focusing on an institution instead.³⁸

THE CAVR'S FINAL REPORT *CHEGA!*

Although the CAVR applied a similar perspective on the conflict, its final report *Chega!* conveys a very different message concerning the issue of how to deal with the violent past. As the writing process also took place during the last year of operation, the timing of the two media's production cannot explain these contradictions. However, the commissioners and their legal advisors wrote the report with a different agenda and therefore addressed a different target audience. The report makes the case for democratic reforms in Timor-Leste as well as for a stronger international engagement in the East Timorese transitional justice process. Consequently, it addresses both the political leadership of Timor-Leste and an international audience such as the United Nations, human rights experts, and advocacy groups. Its purpose made it necessary to stress the urgency of the matter by laying out the extent of the past violence while creating an impression of scientificity and political neutrality. For example, *Chega!* details the arithmetic with which it concluded a minimum death toll of about 100,000 people and why the dark figure is approximately at 180,000 people.³⁹ In addition, it uses a neutral, legal language and a business-like formatting by refraining from displaying pictures of the violations committed or its victims. The legal language and the appearance as a scientific document of more than 2,300 pages make it inaccessible to a certain degree. At the same time, it also applies a people-centered perspective by citing victims' statements. This again supports the medium's claim for authenticity but triggers less emotions than the documentary.

Regarding the sequencing, *Chega!* starts with shortly describing colonialism's decisive legacy, followed by a considerably longer section describing the events that led to the occupation by Indonesia in 1975.⁴⁰ The parts that examine the regime of the occupation and the resistance movement are surprisingly short with only about fifty pages each. In contrast, *Chega!*'s largest part, over one thousand pages, describes the human rights violations committed during the occupation. The information is structured according to the crimes committed, thus presenting a very broad definition of human rights violations, comprising not only unlawful killings, enforced disappearances, and torture, but also violations of the right to self-determination and social and economic rights. The subsequent section defines the responsibility for these violations and concludes that Fretilin committed about ten percent of the human rights violations, most of them during the civil war, thus imputing most crimes committed to the Indonesian military.⁴¹ It thereby names twenty-three individuals in high-ranking positions for prosecution, tracing their military careers as well as their individual responsibility for massacres, torture, and the administration of detention centers.⁴²

The end of the report constitutes an outline of the measures needed to prevent a recurrence of the violence in the future. The final chapter contains more than three hundred recommendations, consisting of reforms of the East Timorese state system and measures to continue the transitional justice process. These recommendations are structured according to the human rights violations committed, again stressing their legal nature.⁴³ They identify the classic institutions of a democracy, such as functioning state services, the parliament and judiciary, and monitoring bodies such as an ombudsman and civil society as strongholds against authoritarianism and repression.⁴⁴ In addition, the recommendations include measures to fight inequality and to protect the social and economic rights of the people of Timor-Leste, thus again applying a broad definition of human rights.

The largest part of the recommendations concerns transitional justice and lays out measures for a reparations program and principles to make sure it benefits those most in need. The recommendations for reconciliation address the community and national level in Timor-Leste as well as reconciliation on a bilateral level with Indonesia.⁴⁵ With regard to prosecutions, however, the report argues that none of the prosecutorial initiatives established so far have been successful in convicting those most responsible for the atrocities committed.⁴⁶ It

therefore calls on the international community to establish an international ad hoc tribunal—an issue the UN-Security Council had already discussed in year 2000.⁴⁷

The discussed strategies of representation and sequencing of *Chega!* build a narrative that contradicts the documentary's narrative in two ways: first, its presentation of the conflict and the resulting question of responsibility for the crimes committed, and second, its message concerning what is needed to prevent a recurrence of the violence in the future, including its related envisioning of peace. Both media thereby use the same strategy of representation, the inclusion of victims' statements, but with differing effects. In contrast to the documentary's rather balanced picture of the conflict, *Chega!* makes a very clear point, not only about accountability for the human rights violations committed, but also that it is necessary to address these crimes and prosecute those most responsible. With the described strategies of representation such as the legal language, length, and formatting, the report appears more like a document to be used in proceedings of international criminal law. The two longest sections create a juristic narrative, presenting the crimes committed as a violation of international human rights law, which necessitates an engagement of the international community if the respective countries are not willing or able to deal with them. As such, it presents its narrative as authentic and politically neutral, and the commission as the authoritative institution to define the past violence and the measures for dealing with it. Victims' statements thereby create the impression that despite its international support and funding, the commission still represents the claims of the ordinary people of Timor-Leste.

Concerning the question of how to prevent a recurrence of the past violence in the future, *Chega!* also conveys a different message than the documentary. By laying out a very encompassing program for future reforms, it formulates the need to engage further in peacebuilding and democratization, stressing the fragility of the currently peaceful situation. In contrast to the documentary's presentation of a need for informal, inter-personal reconciliation, the report stresses the importance of state institution's role in transitional justice. It thus addresses the government of Timor-Leste as mainly responsible for dealing with the past, yet also calls the international community to support this process. Regarding the political context, when it had already become clear that neither the East Timorese leadership nor the Indonesian government would be willing to prosecute those

responsible for the past violence, this stance is even more plausible. The report's narrative thereby treats the end of the occupation not as an end of history but as only a step in a longer process of state-building and democratization, rather formulating an outlook instead of an end. In contrast to the negative peace displayed in the documentary, the report identifies factors for a positive peace. This is the case because the recommendations include measures that aim at protecting the social and economic rights of the people of Timor-Leste, thus laying out ways to attain a society free of structural violence.⁴⁸ By doing so, it at the same time translates all aspects of life into a liberal, rights-based agenda a state system has the responsibility to protect.

Distribution and Audiencing

The CAVR showed *dalan ba dame* to a public audience as part of the dissemination efforts of *Chega!* in Timor-Leste in 2006 and 2007.⁴⁹ Dissemination of the report took place with the help of a shorter “popular version” using a more accessible language. Dissemination events were staged in every district headquarter town of the country. Although the public version of *Chega!* was shorter and more accessible, it can be expected that the documentary left a stronger impression on the East Timorese audience due to its immediacy and ability to trigger emotions. This is also plausible since in 2007, the literacy rate of the East Timorese population was as low as fifty percent.⁵⁰ Unfortunately, no data exist about how the audience in Timor-Leste interpreted the documentary or related its content to the findings of the CAVR. After its dissemination in Timor-Leste, filmmaker Ian White puts *dalan ba dame* on YouTube to facilitate its free distribution. In addition, the secretariat of the CAVR distributed it on DVD but it remains unclear in how far it has reached an international audience. In contrast, *Chega!* received broad attention among international human rights groups after the leading NGO in the area of transitional justice, the International Center for Transitional Justice, put it on its homepage. Since then, international as well as East Timorese NGOs continuously use the report as an entry point to demand reforms and support for the victims of the conflict.⁵¹

The government of Timor-Leste, however, dealt only very reluctantly with *Chega!* emphasizing concerns that it would cause diplomatic tensions with Indonesia.⁵² Since the country (until today) fully depends on economic cooperation with its neighbor and due to its

geographically volatile position, it could not possibly aim at such tensions. Only after parts of *Chega!* were leaked to an Australian newspaper did the government publish the report.⁵³ In contrast to *Chega!*'s emphasis on the need for prosecutions of high-ranking members of the Indonesian military, the government proposed a reconciliatory approach toward Indonesia and called for an end of any trial.⁵⁴ It set up a bilateral truth commission with Indonesia to issue a "concluding" truth about what happened in Timor-Leste, indicating its wish to close this chapter of history.⁵⁵ The government also rejected *Chega!*'s ambivalent presentation of both the independence movement and the population who suffered under the occupation. A statement by the president Alexandre Xanana Gusmao at the handover ceremony of the report demonstrates this:

In general, I must stress that the responsibilities that befell upon us, the sons and daughters of a people whose mission was to guide that people in its march towards liberation, was a tacit acceptance of our own duties. (...) In times of sacrifice we rose to be heroes. Today, in times of peace, we are regarded as victims! Our people, the heroic and forsaken people of Timor-Leste, do not deserve to be treated with so blatant a disrespect!⁵⁶

Even before independence in 2002, the political leaders had started to present independence as an achievement of the resistance movement and the population's support for it as painful but heroic deeds for a good cause.⁵⁷ *Chega!*'s emphasis on suffering and its insistence on further reforms thus contradicted the celebratory tone of the government. Despite the setup of a post-CAVR secretariat, further dissemination of the report and political efforts to implement its recommendations were very limited and stalled over the years.⁵⁸ Especially with regard to a reparations program, the government was very reluctant to take any initiative as fears mounted that former political enemies of independence might benefit from it.⁵⁹

The documentary's depiction of peace as having already been established and its sidelining of the question of responsibility therefore corresponded closely with the government's approach of how to deal with the nation's violent past. However, the government did not officially promote the documentary. While no information exists about why this was the case, it is plausible to argue that the documentary challenged the government's position concerning its depiction of the

resistance movement. In 2013, for example, the government opened a resistance museum in the capital Dili, but the movie is not part of the exhibition.⁶⁰ Dissemination and the acknowledgement of the atrocities committed in East Timor were therefore very uneven. While the East Timorese denied any need to deal with the violent past in legal terms, the international civil society and the United Nations used the report of the CAVR to argue for an international ad hoc tribunal. At the same time, it remains unclear whether the East Timorese population has adopted any of the messages communicated by both the documentary and the report.

CONCLUSION

Although the documentary *dalan ba dame* was produced by the CAVR, its depiction of peace and conflict in Timor-Leste diverges from the narrative created by the commission's final report. As the analysis has shown, the two media use a similar perspective to make their point, starting from victim's statements, but formulate different approaches for how to create and maintain peace in the country. This is surprising, as one would expect the documentary to reinforce the report's narrative in order to contribute to its dissemination and support the commission's agenda. By depicting the arrival of the international intervention as a smooth and triumphant end of oppression, which had its beginning in colonial times, the documentary creates the impression that Timor-Leste automatically faces a democratic and just future. With its focus on the conflict between East Timorese political factions and by depicting them in an ambivalent way, the movie communicates the message that everybody was a victim but also implicated in the violence, making questions of responsibility and accountability obsolete. The documentary consequently contradicts the commission's findings concerning the question of accountability and therefore its inherent demand for prosecutions and for democratic reforms, pointing to the fact that peace and justice need further engagement from the East Timorese government. With this stance, the documentary partly corresponds to the position the government of Timor-Leste has taken on this issue, who rejected the findings of the CAVR and repeatedly called for closing this chapter of East Timorese history.

At the same time, this analysis has also developed an answer as to why these diverging narratives were developed. Both media are to a

certain extent “victims” of their own format, with which they address a different target audience. This is the case because both media pursue different purposes. As the CAVR produced *dalan ba dame* for an East Timorese audience, its message focuses exclusively on East Timorese society. It has the aim to acknowledge the suffering of the East Timorese people and to celebrate their triumph at the arrival of the international intervention force, automatically sidelining more complex issues of postconflict peacebuilding. *Chega!*, however, was produced for a very specific audience—the government of Timor-Leste, as well as international civil society and international organizations—to mobilize these actors for a further engagement in the transitional justice process in Timor-Leste. The format draws a more complex picture but, more importantly, urges the United Nations to discuss its engagement in Timor-Leste based on this information. However, its format makes the report inaccessible to a certain extent and difficult to disseminate among a nonexpert audience. Accordingly, the documentary could play an even more important role in disseminating the message of the CAVR among the broader international public. As the documentary is now available online with English subtitles, there is a high chance to not only create awareness for the history of Timor-Leste among an international audience but also for the country’s ongoing needs with regard to peacebuilding and transitional justice.⁶¹ With its triumphant ending, however, the documentary presents the case of Timor-Leste as a success story of an international intervention. Consequently, it legitimizes the approach to postconflict peacebuilding applied back then even though massive violence again broke out in Timor-Leste in the 2006 and many international observers had evaluated the peace- and state-building process in Timor-Leste as an outstanding failure even before that.⁶² Until today, no victim has received reparations for his or her suffering and no high-ranking member of the Indonesian military nor any leader of a militia group has been prosecuted. Thus, while the documentary can still create awareness for the history of Timor-Leste, it is limited in its capacity to create concernment for the ongoing situation in Timor-Leste. Though more accessible and emotionally more powerful, the documentary cannot replace the dissemination of the report.

The case of these two media of the CAVR therefore draws attention to two general points concerning research on visibility in general and especially the visibility of peace. For research on visibility, the analysis has demonstrated that ambivalence regarding visuals not only

arises from the interpretation of a visual by a specific audience. Instead, it can also be triggered by intermediality, the interaction of separate material vehicles of representation. On first sight, this is not very surprising, as there always exist different positions about how to interpret a specific situation. However, as this contribution has laid out, ambivalence in intermediality can even occur in a situation in which the same entity produced both media and maximum potential for coordination existed. It is thus necessary to not only include a visual's audiencing in the analysis, but also other discourses that address the same topic, as they can influence the audience's interpretation of the visual. Concerning the visibility of peace, the discussed case has shown that the visualization of peace does not necessarily turn a visual into a tool that contributes to peacebuilding by communicating to its audience what is necessary for establishing and maintaining peace. Instead, the depiction of peace can have the consequence of delegitimizing the need to invest in peace any further and thereby to mitigate the political power of other media making this claim. With the help of this case, we can accordingly draw some lessons about how to use documentaries as tools in peacebuilding processes and to make instruments of peacebuilding better known, not only among the affected population but also among an international audience. The first point is that more attention should be paid to the narratives of different media to plan a coherent approach which considers the purposes of the different media, as well as their potential interaction from the start. Therefore, it would secondly be necessary to identify not only the immediate but also the potential future audiences of the relevant media and to adjust their messages accordingly. One possibility would be to add information for a broader audience later on to increase the possibility that the narrative presented triggers the relevant reaction. Due to their immediacy, wide circulation, and ability to create emotions more directly, visuals constitute a promising tool to communicate central messages of peacebuilding and transitional justice instruments.

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