NATION BUILDING IN TIMOR-LESTE: NATIONAL IDENTITY CONTESTS AND CRISES

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Dedication

To the Timorese people

In the course of my research I had the unparalleled opportunity to live and work in Timor-Leste and to get to know many Timorese citizens. Despite the unimaginable suffering and hardships this country has endured, everyone from the Timorese leadership, politicians, civil servants, civil society activists, journalists, clergy, local officials, to everyday citizens are invariably full of optimism, goodwill, and absolute dedication to their nation. I was left with enormous admiration and abiding confidence that they will overcome the considerable challenges that lie ahead and build a prosperous country for future generations of Timorese.

Acknowledgments

I owe an enormous debt of gratitude to the many experts on Timor-Leste on whom I have relied heavily in my research and analysis, many of whom I have cited and quoted liberally in this dissertation. I am also grateful to the many Timorese friends and colleagues who shared their experiences and insights. I would also be remiss if I did not acknowledge the sage advice and support offered by my professors, especially the members of my Committee. In addition, I am grateful to my employer, the U.S. Department of State, for providing me opportunities in the course of my career that I have been able to use to pursue this research. Finally, without the patient and tireless support of my wife and partner, Dominique, I would never have been able to complete this project.

Note: The views expressed in this dissertation are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the State Department or the U.S. government.

Abstract

Timor-Leste, which emerged from Portuguese colonialism and Indonesian occupation to become the world's newest nation in 2002, provides a particularly interesting and ongoing example of modern nation building. In examining Timor-Leste and specific aspects of its nation building experience, this dissertation will make three related arguments. First, despite the fact that nation and state builders have tended to focus their efforts on the institutions of governance and state, more symbolic aspects of nationhood - including monuments, heroes, rituals and narratives - have also played an important role in strengthening Timorese national identity and fusing the state to the nation. Second, although nationalism scholarship has emphasized the role of political elites in the construction of a sense of national identity in the public imagination, Timor-Leste's experience suggests that the vision of the nation is not simply conceived by political elites, communicated down, and instilled in the public consciousness. Instead, the process there has been negotiated and even actively contested by various groups and institutions across society that have successfully asserted their own alternative views of the nation. Finally, a weak sense of Timorese national identity resulting from insufficient attention in the early post-independence period to the symbolic aspects of nationhood and active contests over a shared vision of the nation contributed to political crises and instability. Subsequent efforts to adopt symbols and promote a more inclusive sense of national identity, however, have begun to consolidate Timorese nationhood. Although each country is unique, Timor-Leste's experience suggests that greater attention to the symbolic aspects of nationhood and how they are contested in society may shed light on potential sources of instability in other countries similarly engaged in nation building efforts.

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Preface

In the interest of transparency, I want to make it clear that I conducted the research for this dissertation while serving in an official capacity for the United States Government. Specifically, I worked as the Deputy Chief of Mission and, for extended periods, as the Charge d'Affaires at the U.S. Embassy in Dili, Timor-Leste from June 2009 until July 2011. My official position provided me with a unique vantage point from which to observe political developments in Timor-Leste. In the course of my work I had the great privilege and opportunity to become acquainted with a range of Timorese nationals, including senior officials, military officers, parliamentarians, politicians, civil servants, clergy, civil society representatives, community leaders, and everyday citizens. My primary professional responsibility was to represent and advance the interests and policies of the United States. Whenever appropriate and possible, I explained to my acquaintances that, in addition to my official duties at the U.S. Embassy, I was simultaneously pursuing academic research on Timorese nation building. Nevertheless, I cannot exclude the possibility that some of my interactions and observations may have been affected or impacted by the fact that I was viewed and acting in both capacities. I am reasonably confident that, on balance, my research and analysis was enhanced by the opportunities afforded to me by my official duties. I can also write without reservation that U.S. and Timorese interests coincided with one another during my tenure and I can not recall a single incident in Timor-Leste or example discussed in this dissertation where I felt any potential conflict of interest between my research and my official duties.

As a consequence of my past and continuing employment, I was required to submit a draft of this dissertation for review and clearance by relevant offices in the U.S. Department of State. The Department encourages employees to engage in activities that contribute to the public study and understanding of foreign relations, but in accordance with regulations, all speeches, writings, and teaching materials on matters of "official concern" must be submitted for review and clearance before they can be published. The Foreign Affairs Manual of the U.S. Department of State explains, "The purpose of such review is to ensure that classified material and other material protected by law are not improperly disclosed, and that the views of employees are not improperly attributed to the U.S. Government."[1] The Department reviewed my dissertation expeditiously in February 2014. No inadmissible material was identified, nor were the views expressed in the dissertation found to be improperly attributed to the U.S. government. The reviewers did helpfully suggest a few stylistic and factual revisions for which I was grateful. No changes were required or even suggested, however, that might have affected the analysis or arguments put forward in this dissertation.

[1] U.S. Department of State, 3 FAM 4172.1-1 Overview of Procedures

Chapter 1. Introduction

Early in the morning on February 11, 2008, armed gunmen in two vehicles pulled up to the home of then-President of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste José Ramos-Horta a few miles outside of the capital city, Dili. Former Army Major Alfredo Reinado, the leader of the group, and one of his associates were killed in a subsequent exchange of gunfire with the President's security team. President Ramos-Horta himself, out for a walk along the nearby beachfront, returned in the middle of the attack and was shot in the back and seriously wounded by one of the armed rebels. The injured President was rushed to the airport in an ambulance and evacuated to Darwin, Australia for emergency medical treatment. Prime Minister Xanana Gusmão, meanwhile, narrowly escaped an ambush on his vehicle executed by another associated group of rebels outside his home in Dili shortly after the attack on the President's house.

This sequence of events appeared to confirm the worst fears of observers that Timor-Leste was a fragile nation-state on the brink of collapse. In the short period since Timor-Leste became formally independent on May 20, 2002, the young country's nation building efforts had been interrupted by a series of violent crises caused by a volatile combination of domestic unrest, bitter partisan politics, regional divisions, and weak institutions. In 2006, in particular, the Timorese police and army had come to blows and effectively disintegrated as institutions in the wake of a mass desertion and public protest by several hundred disaffected soldiers, leading to dozens of deaths, thousands of burned houses, and over 150,000 people displaced from their homes. In fact, the fugitive rebels responsible for the 2008 attacks had been on the run ever since the 2006 crisis.

In retrospect, however, it now appears that the 2008 attacks may have in fact been a turning point in Timor-Leste's development that marked the beginning of a period of peace, stability, and consolidation of the nation building project. Timorese officials declared a state of emergency and formed a joint police/army command to hunt for the rebels, a development that helped repair some of the tensions between and within those key security institutions. President Ramos-Horta recovered in Darwin and returned to a hero's welcome. The rebels surrendered, were put on trial following a lengthy investigation, convicted in a proper and independent judicial process, and ultimately pardoned by President Ramos-Horta.

If Timor-Leste has, indeed, survived its birthing pains, considerable credit must go to the successful development of institutions of governance, maturity on the part of the major political parties and actors, and policies to address urgent social and economic needs. Equally important, however, is the ongoing process of nation building or defining and consolidating a cohesive sense of national identity. Contests over national symbols and the national narrative are inevitable and have contributed to instability and crises. Successful negotiation of these contests, therefore, is critical to continued political stability and economic development.

The 2008 attacks were, in many ways, a microcosm of these contests over national symbols and the nation. President Ramos-Horta and Major Alfredo Reinado were both symbols themselves. The President, the symbolic embodiment of the state, was also a Nobel Peace Prize winner and key figure in the Timorese independence and resistance struggle, now the dominant thread of the national narrative. Reinado, too, had become a cult hero, particularly among Timorese from the western districts, admired for his ability to elude authorities much as the armed resistance heroes had done during the Indonesian occupation. The crisis also highlighted the tricky balance that Timorese authorities have struck between the symbolic pursuit for justice against war criminals and rituals promoting reconciliation among internal groups.

This dissertation will examine independent Timor-Leste's experience with nation building, paying particular attention to the process by which national symbols are selected, contested, and adopted. In so doing, I will argue that Timor-Leste offers three lessons that may apply more broadly to other countries in a similar stage of national development. First, along with the institutions of governance, the symbolic aspects of nationhood play an important and perhaps under-appreciated role in nation building. Second, while the political elite certainly plays a determinant role, other societal actors actively engage in contests over the nation building process, including over national symbols. Finally, the success or failure of the country in managing these contests and in consolidating a shared sense of national identity can have a direct impact on its security and stability.

Nationalism and the Power of National Symbols

Nationalism has both reshaped and been reshaped by the now-dominant international order. We take for granted that the nation-state is the natural and inevitable political unit into which the world has been divided, despite the fact that previous eras were dominated not by

states, but by empires, kingdoms, city-states, and village-level polities. The uninitiated observer would be forgiven for believing that today's nation-states have existed in one form or another since time immemorial, for this is precisely the impression that nation builders and nationalism itself seek to create. In reality, however, nations are a relatively modern construction.

Nationalism Scholarship

Some scholars of nationalism and nation building believe that nations are ancient concepts rooted in "primordial" history. Others, however, embrace the theory that nations are "modern" constructions that emerged only in the last two centuries to become the dominant means for organizing human society and the international order. Ernest Gellner and Benedict Anderson, two influential scholars of the "modernist" school, argue, for example, that the social transformation of the industrial revolution created the conditions in which nations were deliberately constructed by national elite who disseminated a national narrative through mass education and the tools of print-capitalism.[2] Another modernist, Anthony Giddens, points to how elites have deliberately propagated symbols, beliefs, and even the use of a particular language ("perhaps the most potent carrier of communal experience") to create a sense of nationalism.[3] Some, like Eric Hobsbawm, have even questioned the legitimacy of the nation by pointing out the artificiality of many "invented" traditions and most aspects of nationhood.[4] Still other nationalism scholars, called "ethno-symbolists, like Anthony Smith and John Armstrong, sought to bridge the two approaches by acknowledging that nations are "constructed," but also arguing that the raw materials used are rooted in history and real ethnic and linguistic communities.[5]

Some, including John Hutchinson and Oliver Zimmer, have questioned the "modernist" notion that political elite and state leaders can truly "invent" or "construct" national identity. They have argued instead that despite the important role of the political elite, the development of national identity is often fiercely contested in culture wars within society by non-elites.[6] Other recent nationalism scholarship, sometimes referred to as "post-modern," has challenged and nuanced the theory and understanding still further. Michael Billig, for example, posited

[2] Gellner, 1983 and Anderson, 1983
[3] Giddens, 1985, p. 214, 218.
[4] Hobsbawm, 1990
[5] Smith, 2001 and Armstrong, 2011

that the prior scholarship has overly focused on the "hot nationalism" of separatist movements and neglected the fact that national identity must not only be constructed, but must be perpetuated through a form of "banal nationalism," the widespread, yet seemingly invisible, mundane reproduction of national symbols to the point that they "operate mindlessly." "National identity in established nations," Billig wrote, "is remembered because it is embedded in routines of life, which constantly remind, or 'flag,' nationhood."[7] Craig Calhoun has argued that nations and nationalism defy all simple theoretical explanations; they need not be rooted in primordial history or the result of industrialization. Instead, Calhoun argued that each nation is a unique form of social solidarity - similar to that which binds families, sports teams, and other groups - shaped by the 'discursive formation' of nationalism around a particular territory, sovereignty, and other features.[8] Finally, Umut Özkirimli brought together a number of these new approaches by arguing that nationalist discourse makes identity claims (boundaries between 'us' and 'them'), temporal claims (meaningful links to the past), and spatial claims (a connection to a specific territory), "[y]et these choices are neither predetermined nor inevitable; they are the outcome of a dynamic and contentious process."[9] The final step, Özkirimli wrote, is that "the dominant nationalist project… consolidates its hegemony by reproducing and naturalizing itself" in everyday experiences, habits, and rituals that effectively "reify" the nation, making it real, legitimate, powerful, and seemingly incontestable.[10]

Reflections on National Symbols and Contested Nation Building

Nation building, of course, is not merely an event; it is an ongoing process that continues to be shaped by forces that are both internal and external to the nation. Internally, nations expand or consolidate as nation builders seek to reinforce the national narrative and to include disparate, isolated, or disenfranchised portions of the population in the national community. They contract or weaken when the prevailing sense of nationhood is challenged by alternative, competing senses of identity centered on ethnic, regional, political, or other groups. Externally, in addition to obvious challenges to the nation through conflict or natural disasters, the forces of globalization and technological innovation have also made national

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[6] Hutchinson, 2005 and Zimmer, 2003
[7] Billig, 1995, p. 38
[8] Calhoun, 1997
[9] Özkirimli, 2010, pp. 208-210

borders more permeable to people, things, and ideas, all of which necessitate constant reevaluation and evolution of national identity.

Whereas the nation is a mass phenomenon or "imagined community," the locus of power rests with the state to the extent that it develops and maintains an ability to speak for and act on behalf of the nation. In their efforts to identify the source of this influence, political scientists have been predominantly concerned with the structures and institutions of the state and their relationship with society. This institutional approach and obsession with the "substance" of state influence or power, however, has largely neglected the importance of the symbolic approach or "form" of power. As Clifford Geertz has written: "[I]nvestigations into the symbolics of power and into its nature are very similar endeavors. The easy distinction between the trappings of rule and its substance become less sharp, even less real; what counts is the manner in which, a bit like mass and energy, they are transformed into each other."[11]

Similarly, Prasenjit Duara divides the nation's significance into discursive and symbolic "meaning."[12] Discursive meaning includes the typical subject matter of historians - narratives, history, ideology. Symbolic meaning includes cultural practices such as rituals, festivals, kinship forms, culinary habits - the typical subject matter of anthropologists. This latter category, which can be extended to include all cultural symbols that evoke a common heritage or sense of identity, has largely been understudied by scholars of nationalism. One reason, perhaps, is that most scholars, indeed, most people, subconsciously or consciously believe that humans are essentially rational creatures who base their decisions and beliefs on dispassionate, unemotional logic. Tradition is equated with *superstition* and contrasted with *modernity*, both terms heavily weighted with subjective value. Even when confronted with direct evidence of such symbols - the flag, anthem, or monuments - scholars have tended to minimize the important role they play in fostering a sense of identity among the population.

A few scholars, however, have recognized the importance of such cultural representations. Emile Durkheim was one of the first. In studying Australian aborigines, he noted that the absence of direct contact between individuals begins to erode social cohesiveness in large communities. Symbols and totemic emblems, however, help to maintain collective identity; without them "social feelings could have only a precarious existence."[13] Geertz has compared the symbolic aspects of politics to the ritualistic nature of religion: "The

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[10] Özkirimli, 2010, p. 210
[11] Geertz, 1977, p. 152
[12] Duara, 1996, p. 165
[13] Durkheim, 2001, p. 176

gravity of high politics and the solemnity of high worship spring from liker impulses than might first appear."[14] David Lowenthal has drawn a similar comparison to the obsessive veneration of heritage by modern nation-states: "The creed of heritage answers needs for ritual devotion, especially roots, identity, belonging."[15] Both comparisons are apt. Like religion, the symbolic aspects of power and the veneration of cultural heritage provide a sense of identity and a sense of place, as well as satisfy a basic human need to make order out of the chaos of society. "These symbols provide a way to understand such abstract political entities as the nation and a means (indeed the compulsion) of identifying with them."[16] The perceived historical antiquity of symbols and rituals, moreover, provides a strong psychological anchor for modern, rootless societies while the linear continuity established with the historical past provides a sense of destiny by implying a firm trajectory into the future.

The material from which myths and symbols are constructed for purposes of nation building is quite diverse. In fact, nation building is arguably the primary function of many structures, objects, and symbols of the nation - archaeological ruins, monuments, statues, memorials, and museums. Other objects are themselves symbolic representations - flags, currencies, costumes, uniforms, stamps, maps, passports, seals, and emblems. Still more are represented by rituals and traditions - national holidays, anthems, pledges, oaths, parades, and cuisines. In fact, just about anything can become a national symbol if it comes to be associated with the nation in the public consciousness.

National symbols also serve a variety of purposes. Most commonly, "a symbol reduces the enormous complexity of communication by using a concrete sign as a kind of shorthand for… a complex of interrelated concepts, ideals, and value systems."[17] In the context of the nation-state, therefore, symbols are visual and psychological cues for the nation itself and they signal and remind the population of its legitimacy. The flag - perhaps the most prevalent and widely recognized national symbol - "is not simply a decorated cloth, but the embodiment of the nation: indeed, the nation is defined as much by the flag as the flag is defined by the nation."[18] Symbols are also designed to promote an emotional attachment among the people to the nation. Most national anthems, for example, are "remarkably similar in content and

[14] Geertz, 1977, p. 152
[15] Lowenthal, 1998, pp. 1-2
[16] Kertzer, 1988, p. 13
[17] Geisler, 2005, p. xxvii
[18] Kertzer, 1988, p. 7

sentiment," using "martial music together with graphic symbolism to create a highly charged emotional atmosphere of national solidarity."[19]

Without repetition and reinforcement of their association with the nation, national symbols lose their evocative power over time. Similarly, each new generation of citizens must be educated and inculcated with their national symbols and their meaning. Archaeological sites, monuments, and museums are notable examples of symbols that teach the public the national narrative. The modern public museum, in particular, "was invented for the purposes of celebrating and dramatizing the unity of the nation-state and to make visible to its public the prevailing ideas embodied by the concept of national culture."[20] What distinguishes museums, monuments, and certain archaeological sites is their critical role in celebrating not just history, but also national heritage. "History tells all who listen what has happened and how things came to be as they are. Heritage passes on exclusive myths of origin and continuance, endowing a select group with prestige and common purpose."[21] These and other symbols, therefore, "take on a particularly crucial importance in fusing a *nation* to a *state*" and, in many cases, "national symbols are charged with the difficult task of *creating a nation*."[22]

Those who argue that the artificiality or constructed or banal nature of national symbols makes them unworthy of serious scientific examination fail to appreciate the impact and influence of national symbols on domestic and international politics. Although many of these symbols are deliberately appropriated and even invented by the governing elite, once they are firmly entrenched in the national consciousness they assume a life and power of their own. Political parties compete for popular support by using and seeking to associate themselves with national symbols. Few would deny the emotion that they experience upon hearing their national anthem on solemn or joyous occasions. Cities themselves become national symbols when countries compete to host the Olympic games and entire nations rejoice or mourn when their city is selected or rejected. Similarly, the burning of a national flag or desecration of a national icon represents a symbolic attack against the nation itself. This is true when citizens protest against their own government and also when foreigners seek to express their dissatisfaction with the United States and its policies. Politicians who fail to react to the desecration or denigration of their own national symbols jeopardize the very legitimacy they derive from those symbols.

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[19] Kertzer, 1988, p. 73
[20] Evans, 1999, p. 6
[21] Lowenthal, 1998, p. 128
[22] Geisler, 2005, p. xv

Often, however, the power of symbols extends far beyond their ability to inspire rhetorical flourishes and political posturing. Symbols that are contested between nations are commonly viewed as indivisible and regularly lead to diplomatic incidents, bilateral disputes, and even outright armed conflict. Just a few examples include: the dispute between Britain and Greece over the Elgin Marbles; protests by China, South Korea, North Korea, and Taiwan over visits by Japanese officials to the Yasukuni Shrine; the ongoing dispute between Greece and the Republic of Macedonia over the latter's use of the name "Macedonia"; the dismantling of a Soviet-era statue in Estonia that led to riots by ethnic Russians in 2007; armed conflict and a permanent state of tension between Cambodia and Thailand over competing nationalist claims to the Preah Vihear Temple; and, of course, the question of Jerusalem and its holy sites in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Each of these examples illustrates the power of symbols to elicit public outrage. While it is undoubtedly true that politicians use these symbols to stir up public sentiment, Michel de Certeau cautions us not to view people as passive recipients of culture.[23] Instead, a more sophisticated observer will also examine how individuals appropriate and use symbols and culture, often to compel governments to bend to the will of the people or merely to subtly undermine the nation building project. No analysis of nationalism and nation building or even of domestic and international politics in general will be complete if it fails to account for the role and power of national symbols.

Research Objectives

This dissertation draws inspiration from and seeks to situate itself within the considerable body of academic literature on nationalism and nation building outlined above. The case study examined in this dissertation will offer evidence to support and supplement recent challenges to the canon of nationalism scholarship. First, although a number of scholars, like Billig and others described above, have emphasized the important role of symbols and rituals in developing a sense of national identity, much of the existing scholarship has focused instead on institutions of governance and the role of the state in providing public services as central to the national project. This research will argue that Timorese national symbols and rituals have also played a key role in the nationalist discourse, as well as in the subsequent consolidation of the nation through the banal nationalism of everyday experiences.

[23] De Certeau, 1988

Second, this research will argue that Timor-Leste's nation building experience supports the assertions of scholars like Hutchinson, Özkirimli, and others that the nation is not the inevitable product of a "primordial" past nor the simple "invention" of the political elite, but is instead the result of an active and contested discourse within society. Finally, this dissertation will argue that a weak sense of Timorese national identity resulting from insufficient early attention to the symbolic aspects of nationhood and active contests over a shared vision of the nation contributed to political crises and instability. Just as competition over national symbols has led to international conflict, this suggests that success or failure in identifying and adopting national symbols and "fusing the nation to the state" is also of significance when we seek to understand domestic political developments. The fortunes of governments, political parties, individual leaders, and even the stability of the nation-state itself may depend in part on such efforts. By examining the development of such symbols in Timor-Leste, this dissertation hopes to offer a model and lens that can be used to examine similar processes around the world.

Timor-Leste: National Symbols in a new Nation-State

Timor-Leste[24] provides an exceptionally fertile example for a closer examination of how national symbols are identified, whether that process is contested within society, and the manner in which success or failure of national identity formation impacts stability. As one of the world's newest nation-states - Timor-Leste became formally independent only in May 2002 - Timor-Leste is an example that can be examined virtually in real-time. In some ways, Timor-Leste seems to conform to the theories of nationalist scholars like Gellner and Anderson in that the nation is very much a "constructed" or "imagined," and yet also draws heavily, as predicted by Smith's theories, on primordial myths and ethno-symbolism. Timor-Leste also provides a window for research, however, into the process by which the nationalism discourse is contested within society and national identity is consolidated through the widespread adoption of symbols, rituals and narratives. The near-total destruction of Timor-Leste's physical infrastructure by Indonesian and pro-Indonesian forces after the popular referendum in 1999 combined with the country's extreme poverty and low-level of

[24] Note: Timor-Leste is also sometimes known among English speakers as East Timor, but this paper will use the country's official name, Timor-Leste. To simplify matters, I will also use the term "Timorese" to refer exclusively to the people of Timor-Leste, despite the fact that it might be used in other contexts to also describe the people of Indonesian West Timor.

institutional capacity created a situation in which both the state building and nation building processes have proceeded hand-in-hand. The circumstances of Timor-Leste's independence, moreover, and considerable international support helped the country adopt democratic institutions, popular elections, and a relatively independent media and engaged civil society. All of these have made developments relatively transparent and more conducive to this sort of study.

No nation-state is born in a vacuum, however. Timor-Leste has a large and diverse set of peculiarities and circumstances that may limit its value as a case study or model for other countries. Like many new nation-states, Timor-Leste has long history of colonial occupation. Like many countries in Southeast Asia, it has an exceptionally diverse population consisting of a large number of tribal and ethnolinguistic sub-groups. Its history and geographic location have also ensured that Timor-Leste has a number of neighbors and other foreign actors who are particularly engaged in the country's political and economic development, as well as its international relations. Its modest oil and gas reserves have bestowed resources on the country that are not necessarily available to other similar nation-states. Timor-Leste may also be unusual in that it has benefitted from having a few exceptionally dedicated and charismatic political leaders who have been intimately involved in the nation building process.

Although small in both size and population, Timor-Leste is nevertheless home to over a dozen distinct ethnolinguistic groups that are further divided along generational and regional lines, as well as into kinship-based networks. From the earliest days of independence - in fact, even before actual independence - Timorese leaders have sought to overcome these internal divisions and forge a cohesive national identity, placing this challenge on the same level as efforts to overcome the country's extreme poverty and its urgent need for economic development. In seeking to instill a sense of nationalism among the general population, nation builders have relied heavily on history, language, symbols, and common experiences and institutions. The process has often been deliberate and top-down, reflecting conscious decisions taken by the political elite. At the same time, however, national identity formation has evolved on its own in the popular consciousness and decisions taken by the political leadership sometimes reflect a bottom-up reality and other times have been actively contested by societal groups.

Timor-Leste Scholarship

Despite the fact that Timor-Leste is one of the world's newest nations, a broad range of experts have already amassed a considerable body of knowledge and insights on Timorese history and society. This dissertation relies heavily on this scholarship and aspires to make a modest contribution in examining particular aspects of the Timorese nation building experience. Nation building itself takes place at the intersection of a number of separate but overlapping academic fields. Both the nation building process and this dissertation, for example, begin with a close examination of historical events. I am indebted to historians like Charles R. Boxer, Luis Filipe Thomaz, Hans Hägerdal, and Geoffrey Gunn, in particular, who have produced thorough and accessible accounts of the history of Timor-Leste from the pre-colonial period and the arrival of the Europeans through the Portuguese colonial period. The more recent events that transpired since the end of the colonial period have been the subject matter of many, including academics Geoffrey Robinson and John Taylor; journalist-scholars like Jill Jolliffe, Bill Nicol, Irena Cristalis, Don Greenlees; and Australian diplomat James Dunn. All have written extensive narrative accounts of the Indonesian invasion and occupation of the country.

Studies of nation building like this one draw heavily from sociological and anthropological accounts as they unpack the bonds that form a national community and sense of identity. Helen Hill's study of early Timorese nationalism at the end of the colonial period and George Aditjondro's works on the impact of the Indonesian occupation on Timorese society represent significant sociological contributions to this field. Additionally, a number of anthropologists, including Ruy Cinatti, James Fox, David Hicks, Andrew McWilliam, Andrea Molnar, and Elizabeth Traube have examined and written extensively about important aspects of Timorese society and culture, including interdisciplinary pieces that build on their anthropological expertise. A number of scholars and writers have also begun to shed much-needed light on the vital and under-appreciated role played by Timorese women in both the resistance and in rebuilding the nation, including Jude Conway, Irena Cristalis, Kirsty Sword Gusmão, Christine Mason, Sara Niner, Milena Pires,[25] Susan Rimmer, and Catherine Scott. Meanwhile, Robert Archer, Peter Carey, Arnold Kohen, and Patrick Smythe have each produced valuable studies of the central role that the Catholic Church and its leaders

[25] Milena Pires, in fact, is currently serving a term as an elected member to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

have played in Timorese society. Geoffrey Hull and Kelly Taylor-Leach have focused on language and linguistics, issues which have featured and will continue to feature prominently in nation building efforts. In addition, James Scambary has generated invaluable analysis of martial arts groups and gangs and Daniel Fitzpatrick has written extensively about property and land rights.

The gross human rights violations and trauma inflicted on Timorese society led to a long and ongoing search for justice and accountability that is also closely tied to modern Timorese identity. Some experts, including David Cohen and Megan Hirst, have examined the judicial processes in both Timor-Leste and Indonesia and described these proceedings in their published works. Others like Jeffrey Kingston, John Roosa, and Pat Walsh have focused particularly on the Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation (CAVR) and its work in Timor-Leste following independence. Lia Kent and Joseph Nevins (aka Matthew Jardine) have written about these issues and more in the broader context of human rights, justice, and reconciliation.

Although this dissertation will argue that nation building is not exclusively a top-down process, key leaders and individuals nevertheless play an important role in shaping national identity. As a result, this research also benefitted from autobiographical and biographical accounts, including those of Xanana Gusmão (by himself and by Sara Niner), Kirsty Sword Gusmão (by herself), Jose Ramos Horta (by himself), Bishop Carlos Belo (by Arnold Kohen), Sergio Vieira de Mello (by Samantha Power), Constancio Pinto (by himself and with Matthew Jardine), and Naldo Rei (by himself). Others have drawn from their personal experience as diplomats and international volunteers to chronicle their observations and insights into various periods of Timor-Leste's recent history or aspects of Timor-Leste's state and nation building process. These included but certainly were not limited to those accounts and works produced by United Nations Special Representative Ian Martin, Jarat Chopra, Tanja Hohe, Edward Rees, and Geoff Robinson. In particular, Edwards Rees' work on the Timorese armed forces has been widely cited in this field, including in this dissertation.

Above all, however, prior political science research and analysis on Timor-Leste directly informs and supports the research for this dissertation. Dennis Shoesmith has approached Timor-Leste from the perspective of comparative politics with a focus, among others, on its political systems and institutions. Douglas Kammen has written about social movements and political thinking in Timor-Leste, issues which go to the core of its evolving sense of national identity. The contributions of Timorese expert-scholars like Dionisio Babo Soares and Josh

Trindade, who have both offered invaluable insights into Timorese society and politics directly related to nation building, cannot be overstated.

Perhaps the scholars to whom I am most indebted, however, are Damian Grenfell, Damien Kingsbury, Michael Leach, Kelly da Silva, and Joanne Wallis. Kelly da Silva, for example, adopts an anthropological approach, underlining the importance of cultural values, symbols, and narratives to political developments and to the emerging sense of national identity. This dissertation arrives at some of those same conclusions albeit from a slightly different perspective of analyzing the nation building process itself. In doing so, this dissertation also makes the broader claim that nation building failures contribute to instability. This study also agrees with key points raised by Joanne Wallis who identifies the early failure by state builders to "engage with local tradition and custom" as well as support a "unifying national narrative" and how resulting societal tensions contributed to the 2006 crisis.[26] This research goes further in questioning the dominant role of political leaders, however, and suggests that the nation is also actively contested and shaped by other groups in society.

Damien Kingsbury's considerable contributions in analyzing the political development of Timor-Leste, including important aspects of ongoing state and nation building efforts, are beyond question. By highlighting the importance of the more symbolic aspects of nationhood this dissertation departs somewhat from Kingsbury's emphasis on institutions. He argues that "beyond language and other cultural markers, national unity is constructed around a recognition of and commitment to common civic values" including "support for regular elections for a representative and accountable government, and equality under rule of law."[27] While institutions like elections, courts, security services, and even the constitution are clearly central to the success of any nation-state, this dissertation will argue that symbolic aspects of nationhood are also important and contribute to instability and state failure.

Michael Leach and Damian Grenfell have also both been keen observers of the nation building project in Timor-Leste. Leach has identified the suffering under Indonesian occupation, language, traditional authority, and cultural heritage, in particular, as key elements and areas of contestation for Timorese national identity. Grenfell, meanwhile, has examined oil politics, the truth and reconciliation process, and cultural norms like memorializing the dead through the lens of the Timorese national project. This dissertation agrees with and borrows heavily from their insightful research and analysis. By broadening the focus on additional elements of the nation building project and drawing connections

[26] Wallis, 2013, p. 150.

between those efforts and political stability, this research hopes to offer additional contributions to the scholarship in this field.

In conclusion, this dissertation applauds and reaffirms much of the insight and analysis offered by existing scholarship, including those noted above. The fact that a number of excellent works by authors mentioned above are not explicitly cited in this dissertation while others are cited extensively in no way reflects a value judgment on the scholarship, but is merely the result of serendipity. While relying on these works, this dissertation also seeks to add to that scholarship, tie together knowledge from disparate fields of research ranging from anthropology and sociology to history and political science, and draw conclusions from Timor-Leste's experience about the importance of symbolic elements to nation building, the contested nature of the process, and the connection between weak national identity and political stability.

Methodological Approach & Outline

By tracing the process of nation building in a particular case study and by examining a number of embedded cases, this dissertation will elaborate on nationalism theory and suggest additional levels of complexity worthy of further study. Through a process of historical explanation using elements of process tracing, as originally described by George and later elaborated by George and Bennett,[28] this case study will test nation building theories and examine the impact of nation building efforts on the Timorese sense of national identity. As noted above, three particular arguments will be advanced. First, by specifically examining the symbolic and ritualistic aspects of the process, this research suggests that nation builders and some nationalism scholars underestimate the importance of such elements in national identity formation. Second, the nation building process may be led by the political elite, but it is also heavily contested by other institutions and societal groups that play a major role in shaping national identity. Finally, these contests, in turn, support yet another argument, namely that a failure to achieve consensus on national symbols and a shared vision of the nation has the potential to negatively impact security and stability in the real world.

This dissertation adopts a combination of research methods to conduct a detailed within-case study of Timor-Leste and several embedded cases in recent Timorese history. The

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[27] Kingsbury, 2009, p. 133.
[28] George, 1979; George & Bennett, 2005.

research began with a comprehensive analysis of the existing academic literature, narrative accounts, and media coverage of Timor-Leste's colonial and Indonesian-era history, focusing on the roots and early development of Timorese national identity. Subsequent and similar research was conducted on the available literature on the post-Indonesian and recent Timorese experiences with nation building. Additional research included examination of relevant anthropological studies and biographies of key Timorese leaders. Where available, research also draws heavily from quantitative studies and assessments of Timorese public opinion, including internationally funded surveys and polling data from local elections. Particularly rich sources of information also included the successive United Nations administrative bodies with responsibilities in Timor-Leste, as well as studies and analysis conducted by international NGOs on specific issues in Timor-Leste (including, for example, the search for justice and accountability for crimes against humanity). Given the lack of historical perspective and academic consensus on what is essentially an ongoing process of nation building, research was expanded to include public statements, official speeches, and government documents.

This research also depends heavily on a broad range of interviews with local and international actors. These interviews were conducted over the course of 2009 to 2011 in Timor-Leste where this researcher had the unique opportunity to live, work, and observe Timorese history in the making. While residing in Timor-Leste for over two years, this researcher conducted extensive travel to a number of regions and towns around the country and also had the opportunity to develop close, personal relationships with a range of Timorese, including ordinary citizens, journalists, academics, civil society activists, law enforcement officials, military officers, and politicians, including the country's senior-most officials. Some interviews were conducted in a formal, academic setting, but many others were informally conducted in the course of everyday interactions and relationships.

Structure

Chapter 2 will examine the emergence of nationalist sentiment during the late Portuguese colonial period and the Indonesian occupation in order to lay out the historical context that has shaped the ongoing nation building process. Important conclusions of this historical analysis include the fact that early Timorese identity was largely formed in opposition to the Indonesian "other" and centered on the shared suffering that Timorese

experienced during the Indonesian invasion and occupation, the institutions of the resistance and the local Catholic Church, and to a lesser extent shared cultural values and the country's lingua franca, Tetum. As the country transitioned to independence, however, the absence of an external enemy and the fading memories of the occupation and resistance exposed the country's internal divisions and complicated the ongoing nation building process.

The next three chapters will trace and examine the process of nation building following the Indonesian occupation. On August 30, 1999, the East Timorese people voted overwhelmingly in a United Nations-conducted popular referendum to reject an Indonesian proposal for autonomy, setting the stage for a transition to full independence. In the days and weeks that followed, however, much of the population was displaced, over a thousand people were killed, and most of the buildings and physical infrastructure in the province were destroyed by vindictive pro-Indonesian militia groups. Following a transition period of administration by the United Nations, Timor-Leste became fully independent in 2002 and national authorities have labored since then to rebuild the country even as they have forged a nation from the ashes of destruction. A range of separate themes and parallel processes punctuated by occasional elections, crises, and events characterize the ongoing nation building process in Timor-Leste. In order to unpack this complex process, this dissertation will examine a number of individual embedded case studies.

Chapter 3 addresses some of the failures and shortcomings of the early Timorese nation building efforts that took place in the period immediately following the 1999 referendum and formal independence in 2002. The first sub-chapter unpacks some of the key indigenous and cultural symbols that pre-dated the nation and concludes that the largely reluctant and belated efforts by political leaders to appropriate those symbols may have complicated their nation building efforts, particularly the failure to reconcile the modern, democratic governance system with the preexisting, traditional leadership structures. The next sub-chapter examines the use of symbols in the voting rituals of plebiscites and elections in 1999 and 2001 (and subsequently) which provided an early and recurring illustration of the contested narratives that continue to shape the nation. The process of drafting a national constitution in late 2001 and early 2002 and the document itself is used as an invaluable window in the next sub-chapter into some of the decisions regarding key national symbols, highlighting in particular the partisan nature of the process and the missed opportunities that resulted. Taken together, these embedded cases and descriptions provide evidence suggesting that early Timorese

nation builders were insufficiently attentive to the symbolic aspects of the nation and that the result was a weak and fractured sense of national identity.

Chapter 4 addresses the two major crises in 2005 and 2006 and a third potential crisis that faced the new nation. The first sub-chapter examines how competition between the government and the Catholic Church over the role of the Church in defining national identity led to a major political crisis in 2005, highlighting the role of non-state actors in the nation building process. The next sub-chapter examines the history and establishment of a national army and provisions to honor the veterans of the resistance, underlining their centrality and independent agency in the nation building process. That history, in turn, sheds considerable light on the subsequent 2006 crisis. Finally, the last sub-chapter examines the narrative of shared suffering, demands for justice and reconciliation, and the work of the Commission for Reception, Truth, and Reconciliation and other judicial processes. This final sub-section highlights how Timorese leaders have so far managed this powerful narrative and avoided another political crisis. Although the crises described here are complex and multi-faceted, these cases support the argument that while nation building may be an elite-led process, it is nevertheless actively contested by other societal actors. Moreover, when the process is poorly managed, a resulting weak sense of national identity contributes to social and political instability.

With the benefit of about a decade of independence, Chapter 5 examines some of the policies and deliberate decisions adopted more recently by the Timorese government in its efforts to consolidate the nation building process. The first sub-chapter examines the conscious efforts undertaken in the first decade or so of nation building to identify national heroes and erect monuments and museums that will educate future generations on what it means to be Timorese. Finally, this chapter will conclude with an examination of Timorese efforts to "map" the nation to date, a process that again highlights some of the trade-offs and inevitable balancing necessary for political leaders. While it may be too soon to predict the long-term future of the Timorese nation building process, this chapter offers some evidence to indicate that Timorese nation builders have begun to consolidate a shared sense of national identity and initiated efforts to reproduce the nation in the everyday experiences of its people.

It is important to note that the methodological approach adopted in this dissertation has significant limitations. It is impossible to rule out the possibility that national identity in Timor-Leste is the result of causal factors that were inadequately or not at all addressed in this study. Similarly, this single case study does not provide enough data or information to draw

definitive conclusions that are readily applicable to different geographic and political scenarios. In fact, this dissertation will conclude that although the nation building process in Timor-Leste resembles the process undertaken in many other countries, it has taken a course that reflects the many unique characteristics of the Timorese nation and experience. This dissertation has sought to identify the specific factors that have most influenced this particular process. Some of the lessons learned from Timor-Leste may ultimately prove to be universal in nature and can help inform the broader theories and academic research into nation building. These include a call for greater attention to symbolic aspects of nationhood, the contested nature of the nation building process, and the impact of weak national identity on social and political stability. Nevertheless, as one of a handful of "new" nations and recent cases in which nation building and state building are taking place simultaneously, Timor-Leste's experience may ultimately hold little relevance for more established nations where state institutions are firmly established, where banal nationalism is already the norm, or where only aspects of national identity are actively subject to renegotiation.

Chapter 2. The Origins of Timorese National Identity

The first Europeans to arrive in Timor were Portuguese traders and missionaries in the early 16th century. The initial Portuguese foothold was in the town of Lifau, located in present-day Oecussi[1] where they sought to acquire sandalwood for trade and convert the local population to Catholicism. Many Portuguese mixed with the local population over the course of the early decades after initial contact, leading to the emergence of so-called *Topasses,* Black Portuguese, or *mestiço* families that would play a major role as surrogate administrators throughout the early period.[2] Following protracted conflict with the Dutch (and resistance from some *Topasses* groups in Lifau), the Portuguese relocated their colonial capital to Dili on the eastern part of the island, although a formal agreement with the Dutch on borders was reached only in 1904. The Portuguese administered the colony by working separately through or co-opting local traditional leaders or *liurai*, putting down occasional revolts launched by rebellious leaders. Although the history of these events is now being rewritten by Timorese looking for historical antecedents of their desire for national independence (discussed in Chapter 5), at the time there was little indication that they were anything more than local uprisings. The Portuguese made only minimal investments in infrastructure and education, leaving the colony largely undeveloped aside from certain forms of agriculture, including sandalwood in the early years and coffee during the later years. Outside of Dili and a few fortified areas along the coast, the impact of Portuguese rule was limited. The Portuguese language was used in administration and schooling while a Portuguese-influenced Tetum developed as the lingua franca in Dili. The Catholic Church and its missionaries made some inroads in certain areas, particularly when they succeeded in converting local leaders. Although both the language and religion would assume greater importance in the post-colonial period, there were no real indications that a sense of national Timorese identity was emerging until the final stage of colonial rule.

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[1] Note: Modern-day Oecussi is an enclave that is physically separated from modern Timor-Leste by 60 kilometers of West Timorese territory belonging to Indonesia.

[2] Note: This group would also comprise a significant portion of the economic and political elite into the modern period.

This was interrupted in World War II when Australian and Dutch forces landed in Timor-Leste hoping to prevent Japan from taking the island under its control and using it as a base to expand its control of the region. Japanese forces invaded and met resistance from the Dutch and Australian guerrilla force that enjoyed considerable support from the Timorese. The western forces ultimately withdrew and Timorese volunteers continued to resist the brutal Japanese occupation on their own. The wartime occupation claimed the lives of tens of thousands Timorese, mostly civilians, and was a prelude to the subsequent Indonesian occupation just three decades later.[3] The solidarity and cooperation between the Timorese and western forces during the war inspired fierce loyalty and admiration on the part of most Australians who to the current day continue to cite the bravery and sacrifices of the Timorese. Although the suffering at the hands of an outside power certainly unified many Timorese groups at the time, there are few indications that the experience inspired an early sense of Timorese national identity

In the midst of the massive wave of decolonization and nationalist movements that flourished across Asia following World War II, the Portuguese territory of Timor-Leste remained curiously unaffected and was peacefully reoccupied by Portugal after the defeat of the Japanese. Severe isolation and a lack of economic development and educational opportunities had left Timor-Leste without much of an elite class and without a strong sense of national identity. Three decades later, Timor-Leste remained isolated, but investments in education and exposure of small numbers of educated elite to developments in the Portuguese colonies in Africa led to the emergence of a group of Timorese who began to criticize their Portuguese administrators and articulate their own distinct identity. The April 25, 1974 'Carnation Revolution' and the eventual installation of a leftist regime in Lisbon that actively sought to divest itself of its costly overseas colonies soon accelerated this process. The seeds of Timorese nationalism can be found amidst the internal divisions and conflict apparent in the turbulent months between April 25, 1974, and the invasion by Indonesian armed forces on December 7, 1975. But it was the harsh crucible of the Indonesian occupation itself that helped to forge a shared sense of suffering and nationhood among the people of Timor-Leste.

[3] Note: Memories of this brutal experience continue to affect Timorese views of Japan today, including concerns about Japanese participation in United Nations operations as well as calls for apologies and reparations to Timorese women forced into prostitution.

The Seeds of Timorese National Identity

Virtually all nations trace their origins to a distant historical past and stake an inalienable claim to land and bounded territory. Popular acceptance of this historical narrative binds the people of a nation together and conveys essential legitimacy to the state. In order to unify disparate populations and maintain such unity, therefore, nation-states are compelled to remind successive generations of their national historical narrative, and, in the absence of such a narrative, to construct one.

The rapid decolonization, subsequent occupation, and eventual independence of Timor-Leste between 1974 and 1999 has been the subject of considerable popular and journalistic attention, as well as a few dedicated scholars examining the process from the perspective of the national identity formation. There is general agreement that the first efforts to "invent" or "imagine" the Timorese nation appear to have taken place in the immediate aftermath of the April 25, 1974 Carnation Revolution in Portugal. As was the case with many other similar examples, the early Timorese nationalists looked to their culture, traditions, and history for the primordial, ethnonationalist symbols and myths that would help unite their small but diverse population.

Of the published accounts on this period, a few stand out for their comprehensive description of the turbulent events leading up to the Indonesian invasion on December 7, 1975. The first major publication was *East Timor: Nationalism & Colonialism* by Australian journalist Jill Jolliffe. The book is a blend of journalism and academic analysis, albeit with a noticeable sense of sympathy for the pro-independence Revolutionary Front for an Independent Timor-Leste or FRETILIN party. Another similar account of this period, Helen Hill's *Stirrings of Nationalism in East Timor: FRETILIN, 1974-1978*, offers still more detail about FRETILIN and that formative period.[4] The third work analyzed here is the broader historical account, *East Timor: A Rough Passage to Independence*, by former Australian diplomat James Dunn.[5] Dunn's book displays a more nuanced understanding of the historical and cultural context of Timor-Leste and benefits from personal interviews conducted by an author with deep knowledge of and ties to the territory. *Timor: A Nation Reborn*, by another Australian journalist Bill Nicol, provides a strikingly different picture of FRETILIN, but its frequent

[4] Hill's book was originally available as an unpublished Master's thesis. Her account and Jolliffe's book both partly rely on each other's interviews and observations on the ground in Timor-Leste between 1974 and 1975.
[5] This book is the third version of a book originally published in 1983 with the title *East Timor: A People Betrayed*.

forays into speculation and overly-personalized narrative style ultimately undermine its credibility.[6] The comprehensive history of Timor-Leste provided by Geoffrey Gunn in *Timor Loro Sae: 500 Years* does an admirable job of synthesizing these and other major and minor works. This historical review also draws from the personal account *Funu: The Unfinished Saga of East Timor* by José Ramos-Horta, one of the founders of FRETILIN, a spokesman-in-exile during the Indonesian occupation, and more recently, a major political figure in the independent Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste.

Glimmers of National Consciousness During the Portuguese Colonial Period

"Enforced isolation and obscurantism were the hallmarks of Salazar's state," wrote Jolliffe in explaining the almost total lack of political dissent and self-consciousness in Timor-Leste prior to 1974.[7] Political dissent was discouraged by the Portuguese administrators, particularly the feared secret police, the *Polícia Internacional e de Defesa do Estado* or PIDE. "The main effect of the secret police in Timor was to almost completely suppress any form of political dissent or even expressions of opinion."[8] Dissenters and troublemakers were jailed or exiled to other Portuguese colonies.[9] Dunn's account is distinctive in noting that "the Portuguese were greatly assisted in their control measures by a lack of outside interest in the undermining of the established order, and by the low level of political awareness and political discontent among the Timorese."[10]

Even before the 1974 revolution in Portugal, however, faint glimmers of dissent and self-awareness began to emerge. Between the mid-1960s and early 1970s a handful of Timorese sent to study at universities in Portugal were introduced to the revolutionary ideas that were sweeping through Portugal's African colonies. One of these students described his experience: "The first among us who went to Lisbon immediately came into contact with revolutionary theories and developed joint actions with patriots from other colonies and with antifascist Portuguese patriots. From that moment on we were no longer isolated."[11]

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[6] Bill Nicol, *Timor: A Nation Reborn* (Jakarta, Indonesia: Equinox Publishing, 2002), originally published as *Timor: The Stillborn Nation*.
[7] Jolliffe, 1978, p. 43
[8] Hill, 2002, p. 30; Jolliffe, 1978, p. 43; Dunn, 2003, p. 32
[9] Jolliffe, 1978, p. 43; Ramos-Horta, 1987, p. 6. Note: Ramos-Horta himself was exiled to Mozambique after being apprehended by the PIDE following "subversive" remarks he made in the presence of visiting Americans.
[10] Dunn, 2003, p. 33
[11] Hill, 2002, p. 52

In Timor-Leste itself, this awakening of political consciousness in the early 1970s was reflected in weekly meetings of several young intellectuals held in a central square and occasional opinion pieces printed in the Catholic publication *Seara*, one of the only newspapers not subject to the censorship laws. The articles rarely challenged the Portuguese administration, but did raise sensitive subjects including traditional customs (including marriage law), housing problems, and education principles. The core group that participated in the meetings and contributed articles included many of the Timorese elite who a few years later would form their own political parties and advocate for self-determination and independence. The newspaper was eventually closed down by PIDE in March 1973.[12]

Despite these small steps, there was little evidence to suggest the development of a true nationalist movement at this time. As Dunn wrote in his book: "Before the Lisbon coup there had been no organized nationalist movement as such… although for the previous two or three years a political dialogue had been going on between a dozen or so members of the Timorese elite on the political and economic situation in the province, and on the possibility that it might become independent at some time in the future."[13]

The Carnation Revolution Spurs Early Timorese Nationalism

The April 25, 1974 Carnation Revolution in Lisbon and the subsequent installation of a leftist regime that was eager to divest Portugal of its costly overseas colonies was the spark that lit the first true flames of Timorese nationalism. Within several weeks of the revolution, three principal political parties had formed and begun to advocate for their visions of Timor-Leste's future. The Timorese Democratic Union (UDT, according to its Portuguese acronym) argued for Timor-Leste's right to self-determination, but favored a "federation with Portugal, with an intermediary stage for the attainment of independence."[14] The Popular Democratic Association of Timorese (APODETI, in Portuguese) pressed for integration of Timor-Leste as an "autonomous" province within Indonesia.[15] The Social Democratic Association of Timor (ASDT, in Portuguese), later renamed the Revolutionary Front of Independent Timor-Leste (FRETILIN, in Portuguese), called for Timor-Leste's right to

[12] Jolliffe, 1978, pp. 55-6; Hill, 2002, pp. 53-4; Dunn, 2003, p. 33
[13] Dunn, 2003, p. 48
[14] Jolliffe, 1978, p. 62
[15] Dunn, 2003, p. 57

independence and a rejection of colonialism.[16] Essentially, there were many similarities between the UDT and FRETILIN positions (they even formed a short-lived coalition); the primary difference was over how long Timor-Leste should remain associated with Portugal before pursuing independence. But there was a crucial difference in their party philosophies and resulting strategies. UDT favored a continuation of the status quo in which the small educated elite, mostly children of the local rulers or *liurai*, would eventually simply replace the Portuguese administrators and civil servants. FRETILIN, by contrast, recognized that power ultimately would lie in the hands of the masses and developed a political strategy to appeal directly to them. UDT's emphasis on local, traditional leaders would resurface in the post-independence period as well. By early 1975, FRETILIN had emerged as the most popular of the three parties and was well on its way to articulating not only a vision of Timor-Leste's future, but also the historical roots of its national identity.

The differences between FRETILIN and UDT, however, soon led to open conflict between the two parties. Alarmed by FRETILIN's growing popularity and communist extremists within the party, the UDT launched a pre-emptive "coup" against FRETILIN in August 1975, driving the party leadership out of the capital and into the countryside. FRETILIN soon launched a counter-attack, however, and over the next several weeks between 1,500 and 3,000 people were killed around the country in the ensuing civil conflict.[17] The UDT, its allies, and thousands of Timorese supporters were ultimately driven into West Timor where the Indonesian government used their presence as part of its justification for the subsequent Indonesian invasion and occupation.

The leaders of FRETILIN were aware from the beginning of the need to build a broad popular base of support among the Timorese population. Conscious of their own privileged position as members of the educated, urban elite, they also recognized a need to reconnect with the lives of ordinary Timorese in the countryside. Finally, they were cognizant of the deep divisions in Timorese society that had separated the population throughout history along ethnic, linguistic, regional, class, and kinship lines. As a result, they developed a political strategy to appeal to the Timorese masses and promote a sense of national unity. The success of this strategy ensured broad popular support for the party and laid the groundwork for popular resistance to the Indonesian invasion.

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[16] Jolliffe, 1978, p. 63

Timorese as Anti-Colonialists: Reinterpreting History

A primary unifying theme that ran through almost all of FRETILIN's rhetoric and programs was the appeal to popular resentment of foreign colonialism, both Portuguese colonialism and the prospect of some other colonialism or neo-colonialism. This strategy was not without some risks, however. As one Timor scholar has since noted: "Not only was the impact of Portuguese colonialism on East Timorese society deep, but it had transformed an indigenous culture into a hybrid one, one so complex that it is now impossible to separate native and European elements without destroying the fabric of the culture itself and shattering the common ethnic consciousness."[18] One manifestation of this attachment has been the incorporation of Portuguese and Christian symbols into local traditions. Portuguese flags are venerated across the country in Timorese *uma lulik* or sacred houses as spiritual talismans and were frequently brandished during this period by local *liurai* during UDT rallies and visits by Portuguese officials.

Nevertheless, FRETILIN persisted with an anti-colonialist strategy which was incorporated and articulated in their first political program:

> For more than 400 years, our land... has lived under Portuguese colonialism…
>
> These past 500 years [sic] of our development are full of dramatic developments: wars of oppression and subjugation, accompanied by the exploration and rape of the riches of the people. Our land in which we have lived during these centuries has expressed many moments of anguish when our fathers raised their voices against Portuguese colonialism and many times had recourse to armed struggles in defence of their legitimate rights. These various uprisings and rebellions over the long 500 years of colonial domination registered and irrefutably proved the strong spirit and desire for independence which tied together our forefathers.
>
> Our people fell under the domination of a foreign power by virtue of the armed superiority of the colonialist enemy. But this was not the only reason for the loss of our independence. Our forefathers' sentiment for independence was restricted by tribal feuds and by geographical divisions. This fact was able to be exploited by the Portuguese colonialists. Through intrigues and promises the new enemy was able to divide us and this helped facilitate our domination…

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[17] Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation in Timor-Leste (CAVR), 2005, Executive Summary pp. 43-4

[18] Hull, 2009

> FRETILIN struggles against colonialism and any form of domination of our people. We struggle for a humanitarian existence, for our development and for our life. But this struggle cannot be conducted if the people are factionalised. We remember very well that the DISUNITY of our forefathers caused their defeat. We will not repeat the same error. We will go forward in unity.
>
> For this it is urgent and necessary that all people participate in the Revolutionary Front for the Independence of Timor-Leste.[19]

These themes pervaded FRETILIN's rhetoric and programs throughout the pre-occupation period.

In a sense, the anti-colonialist theme was merely a part of FRETILIN's effort to reinterpret and recast Timor-Leste's history in national terms. Portuguese colonial history was replete with examples of rebellions and uprisings, but the available historical accounts indicate that the various rebellious groups were local in origin and often motivated by local rivalries and opposition to specific colonial policies. There is little, if any, evidence to suggest that the rebellions were "national" in character or motivated by a desire for "independence." Nevertheless, the FRETILIN leaders "were anxious to establish themselves in the minds of the Timorese as the legitimate heirs to the anti-colonial traditions of the 'Great Rebellion' of 1912 and the anti-Portuguese aspects of the 1959 uprising."[20] FRETILIN leaders sought to label and appropriate Dom Boaventura, the local *liurai* or king who led the 1912 rebellion, in particular, as the "first nationalist fighter against the Portuguese."[21] According to Geoffrey Gunn, "the name of Boaventura invokes awe and pride among Timorese… and has entered the pages of Timorese historiography as hero" as a result of his stand against the colonial forces and their allies.[22] As part of their effort, in June 1974 a party delegation visited and secured the support of Queen Maria de Manufahi, the then-elderly widow of Dom Boaventura. FRETILIN leaders were proud of securing this endorsement and it "obviously helped them in establishing this link, and in recruiting members in the area where he was remembered and revered."[23] Later, FRETILIN would come to embrace and explain the very notion of Timorese *funu* or ritual warfare as a form of resistance to against colonialism.[24]

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[19] Nicol, 2002, pp. 94-5
[20] Hill, 2002, p. 72
[21] Ramos-Horta, 1987, p. 19; Gunn, 1999, p. 184
[22] Gunn, 1999, p. 184.
[23] Hill, 2002, p. 72

Portuguese and Tetum: Language as a Unifying National Symbol

Language, of course, can be one of the most powerful unifying or divisive aspects of any national culture. Looking forward to Timor-Leste's future independence, the FRETILIN leaders were well aware of the challenges they faced in uniting a population that spoke 15 distinct languages and numerous dialects. After intensive debates within the party, FRETILIN eventually adopted a policy that sought to make the best of this difficult situation. Tetum, the primary local dialect, was considered and then abandoned as a possible national language on the grounds that its selection "could have alienated members of other linguistic groups" and that colonial domination had prevented the development of Tetum, as well as the other Timorese languages, as a literary language suitable for education and official uses.[25] In its final program, FRETILIN explained that "it is necessary that a profound study of our language should be made so that we can speak and utilize our language in the future. This is not possible at the moment…"[26] Instead, FRETILIN seems to have followed the examples of Portugal's African colonies and adopted Portuguese as the official language.

Despite this FRETILIN consciously selected Tetum as the basis for its literacy promotion program which represented one of the party's principal vehicles of outreach to the population outside of the capital city of Dili. After developing their own Tetum literacy handbook, *Rai Timur Rai ita Niang* (Timor is our Country), FRETILIN members fanned out to the countryside and conducted regular classes in villages throughout the territory. The decision to use Tetum in its literacy program and in other forms of mass communication was in a real sense a simple issue of practicality and efficiency – only a tiny percentage of the Timorese population spoke Portuguese while over two-thirds spoke Tetum as a primary or secondary language. Still, FRETILIN was the first party to actively use Tetum and its efforts to promote the language were "revolutionary, in cultural terms, a development, as Tetum scholar Geoffrey Hull emphasizes, only matched some five years later by the decision of the Diocese of Dili to substitute Tetum for Portuguese as the liturgical language of the local church."[27]

In addition to promoting the Tetum language, the literacy programs were an effective vehicle for FRETILIN's anti-colonialist rhetoric. The first few pages from the *Rai Timur Ria*

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[24] Ramos-Horta, 1987; Gunn, 1999, p. 279
[25] Hill, 2002, p. 78
[26] Hill, 2002, p. 78
[27] Gunn, 1999, p. 272

Ita Niang reader state that "Timor is our land. A long time ago Colonialism came to our land because our ancestors were fighting each other. All Timorese will unite together to govern their own land." The accompanying illustrations show the Timorese toiling away for the benefit of the Portuguese.[28]

Mauberism and Songs: Defining a Timorese Cultural Identity

One of FRETILIN's most successful strategies, dubbed a "master stroke" by historian Geoffrey Gunn, to forge a common identity and appeal to the Timorese masses was its appropriation and reinvention of the term *Maubere*. Previously, *Maubere* had been a generic derogatory term for a poor, backward, illiterate Timorese with

> strong and symbolic connotations for the local, who used it themselves as a form of self-effacement. FRETILIN gave the word new meaning. To be a *Maubere* was to be "one of the people." It was something to be proud of. Everyone could identify with the word and the new meaning had a widespread impact.[29]

By making it a "term of national pride" and associating it with their party, FRETILIN created an instant connection with the rural poor – an association that other parties alternatively disparaged and tried unsuccessfully to replicate.[30] FRETILIN subsequently tried to create an ideology based on the term – Mauberism – loosely-defined as "the struggle against hunger, illiteracy, poverty, and ignorance," but this approach was opposed by some in the party and was never formally enshrined in the party program.[31]

Asserting the notion of a common Timorese culture was a key part of FRETILIN's political strategy to unify and rally the population. Another effective example was FRETILIN's effort to revive and rewrite some of the traditional Timorese songs and poems – a form of communication that did not depend on literacy – and use them to reach out to rural Timorese. One of these tapped into the Maubere spirit with the lyrics: "*O Maubere, Bibere*,

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[28] Hill, 2002, p. 113
[29] Nicol, 2002, p. 160 (Note: Nicol points out the similarity between the use of the term *maubere* and Indonesian President Sukarno's use of the term *marhaen*, although he also writes that Jose Ramos-Horta, for one, denied any connection. p. 144).
[30] Jolliffe, 1978, p. 105; Hill, 2002, pp. 73-4; Nicol, 2002, p. 160
[31] Hill, 2002, pp. 74-5

Timor-Leste our land" (Note: *Bibere* is the female equivalent of *Maubere*).[32] The most successful example, however, was *'Foho Ramelau'* about Timor-Leste's highest mountain and one of the territory's most sacred sites according to local animist traditions. Its Tetum lyrics included phrases like "Why, Timor, is your head forever bowed? Why… are your children enslaved?... Awake! A new sun has risen… Take command of your land."[33] Clearly written to evoke FRETILIN's anti-colonial, pro-independence platform, *Foho Ramelau* rapidly became extremely popular and was formally adopted as FRETILIN's anthem. Drawing on tunes and melodies from across Timor-Leste, other songs also echoed FRETILIN's efforts to promote national unity. For example, Helen Hill cited *'Kɵaɵalak'*, "a song calling for the unity of all Timorese in which their power is compared to streams; "Streams flowing together become rivers, Rivers increase whoever opposes them, so must the children of Timor unite, Unite against the wind blowing in from the sea."[34]

FRETILIN's success was certainly not pre-ordained; the party had to overcome serious obstacles in their efforts to build a popular base. Like the other two political parties, FRETILIN's leadership consisted almost exclusively of Timorese from the tiny educated elite, many of them children of local *liurai* or rulers. This was precisely the Portuguese-speaking, educated class that worked in the Portuguese administration and was often referred to as *civilizaɵoɹ* or *assimilaɵoɹ* ("civilized" or "assimilated" in Portuguese). They had lost touch with the traditions and culture of rural Timorese society and were sometimes themselves greeted as foreigners or *malai* when they visited the villages. The literacy campaign and songs were deliberate efforts to reach out to that population and to give the party cadre opportunities to reconnect with their cultural roots. FRETILIN leaders learned quickly to suppress their disregard and mockery of local traditions and superstitions, including the widespread veneration of Portuguese flags, and to cast themselves as true representatives of the Timorese people.

Still, the effort to cultivate a distinct sense of national and cultural identity was a major challenge. Jill Jolliffe argued: "Even the argument put forward by FRETILIN supporters of East Timor's cultural distinctness does not run very deep. The argument for independence is more advanced than this: it is an argument against neo-colonialism, a political, not a cultural or racial argument… The key issue for them is the right for a Timorese identity to develop

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[32] Jolliffe, 1978, p. 105
[33] Hill, 2002, p. 75
[34] Hill, 2002, p. 76

freely in the post-colonial era."[35] In the end, their efforts to appeal to the Timorese *Maubere* through the use of the Tetum literacy program, nationalistic songs, and the reinterpretation of Timorese history may have successfully planted the seeds of nationalism and outlined the early contours of a Timorese national identity. The Indonesian invasion on December 7, 1975 and the subsequent 24-year occupation ultimately denied the "right for a Timorese identity to develop freely." In a bitterly ironic twist, however, Indonesian nation building and forcible efforts to incorporate Timor-Leste as its twenty-seventh province backfired and created a set of brutal and harsh conditions in which the seeds planted by FRETILIN ultimately flourished and developed into a more mature and distinct national identity.

The Crucible of Timorese National Identity

The massive military invasion of Dili that began on December 7 toppled the short-lived Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste which had unilaterally declared its independence on November 28 and forced the FRETILIN government to retreat into the interior of the country. But this did not mark the beginning of Indonesia's intervention. Indonesia had been conducting an active anti-FRETILIN propaganda campaign for much of the preceding year and had embarked on several armed covert incursions from across the border in West Timor beginning in October. In fact, in addition to the naval bombardment and paratroopers that landed beginning on December 7, the original Indonesian invasion plans had called for a simultaneous land assault by the covert forces pushing from West Timor. Instead, FRETILIN's military forces had successfully frustrated those efforts in the west and were well prepared and in full retreat in the face of the massive invasion of Dili. In fact, despite the invasion and Indonesian hopes to wrap up their military operations within a few weeks, FRETILIN controlled much of the territory of Timor-Leste for months and years to come and used that time to continue its nation building efforts among the rural population. Ultimately, however, the occupation added new dynamics that shifted and accelerated the process by which the beleaguered Timorese would forge a distinct national identity in opposition to the Indonesian "outsiders."

In analyzing this important period, this dissertation draws from several sources. First, James Dunn's *East Timor: A Rough Passage to Independence* also includes a comprehensive account of the Indonesian invasion and occupation. In addition, John Taylor's *Indonesia's*

[35] Jolliffe, 1978, p. 80

Forgotten War: The Hidden History of East Timor and his other articles add considerable detail and insightful analysis of the occupation and resistance. The collected works of Indonesian anthropologist George Aditjondro, particularly *In the Shadow of Mount Ramelau: The Impact of the Occupation of East Timor*, provides another valuable perspective. Resistance leader Xanana Gusmão's *To Resist Is To Win* is an invaluable personal account by the country's resistance leader and key founding father. *East Timor's Unfinished Struggle: Inside the Timorese Resistance* by Contâncio Pinto and Matthew Jardine sheds valuable light on the clandestine student movement from the perspective of one of its leaders. Several other individual articles and essays, particularly those pertaining to the evolution of the political resistance and the role of the Catholic Church, also help to complete the picture of Timor-Leste's national identity formation. These and other books and articles provide detailed histories of the invasion and occupation. This dissertation will provide only the minimal context necessary to examine the development of Timor-Leste's national identity during this 24-year period.

Timorese as "Victims": Shared Suffering under the Indonesian Occupation

The shared suffering of the Timorese people under the seemingly senseless brutality of the Indonesian invasion and occupation is arguably the single most important component of Timorese national consciousness. Wanton violence immediately followed the invasion of the Indonesian armed forces and innocent civilians bore the brunt of the suffering. James Dunn wrote: "The attack on the Timorese capital, much of which was uncontested, turned out to be one of the most brutal operations of its kind in modern warfare. Hundreds of Timorese and Chinese were gunned down at random in the streets of Dili…"[36] Public executions were well-documented, including of Isabel Barreto, the wife of FRETILIN founder and Prime Minister of the newly-formed Timorese government Nicolau Lobato, other suspected FRETILIN supporters, Australian journalist Roger East, and scores of other people seemingly selected at random. In an interview with John Taylor, Dili's former Bishop Costa Lopez described the scene: "The soldiers who landed started killing everyone they could find. There were many dead bodies in the streets – all we could see were the soldiers killing, killing, killing."[37] In the first few days of the invasion alone up to 2000 men, women, and children were killed, others were tortured, women were raped and abused, and countless houses and businesses were

[36] Dunn, 2003, p. 244
[37] Taylor, 1991, p. 68

looted. "The inhabitants of Dili were subjected to systematic killing, unprovoked violence and uncivilized pillaging. Some 80% of the male population of the capital had been killed by mid-January 1976."[38] Similar accounts have been provided of the Indonesian invasion and occupation of other major towns in the weeks and months to come.

As the Indonesian forces sought to occupy the territory and eliminate the FRETILIN armed resistance, military operations continued throughout much of the 24-year occupation and violence and other harsh measures were routinely employed to repress the local civilian population. According to one account, "frustrated by their inability to make significant military headway… Indonesian troops began to terrorise the population living outside FRETILIN-held areas. Villages were destroyed, atrocities committed and chemical weapons used."[39] Several thousand Timorese suspected of being FRETILIN sympathizers were exiled and imprisoned on the island of Atauro, north of Dili, in order to physically sever the resistance's support networks in the villages.[40] To undermine FRETILINs popular support on a much larger scale and cut off the food supply of the guerilla forces, the Indonesians ultimately displaced most of the population and moved them to "resettlement villages." The settlements were strategically located to facilitate military control and observation. Traditional agricultural practices were curtailed and people were confined to the villages and allowed only 'kitchen garden' plots for the cultivation of food. Severe food shortages, chronic malnutrition, and widespread famine resulted.[41]

Arguing that they sought to facilitate the economic development of the territory, the Indonesian authorities attempted to create a new foundation for the whole-scale transformation of Timorese society. The Indonesians shifted labor from subsistence agriculture and forcibly redirected it towards "road building, house construction, timber logging, and the cultivation of crops for export – sugar, coffee, even rice itself."[42] Undoubtedly many Timorese benefited from such economic development[43] but the bulk of the economy was ultimately dominated by non-Timorese. The Indonesian military leadership itself monopolized or dominated several lucrative industries, including coffee, sandalwood oil,

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[38] Aditjondro, 1994, p. 9
[39] Taylor, 1999a, p. 31
[40] Taylor, 1991, pp. 104-5
[41] Taylor, 1991, pp. 92-4
[42] Taylor, 1991, p. 94
[43] The Indonesian government has gone to great lengths to highlight their investments in Timor-Leste. In 1990 the $200 per capita income was five times higher than at the end of Portuguese rule, but still less than half of the Indonesian average (Schwarz, 1994, p. 206).

marble, construction, and even entertainment and retail sectors.[44] In the later periods of the occupation, moreover, Indonesia also encouraged the settlement of between 150,000 and 200,000 non-Timorese transmigrants (i.e., one-quarter of the total population) "who were given privileged access to trade and markets" and also came to dominate virtually all of the senior positions in the education, health, and government sectors.[45] The former Catholic Bishop of Timor-Leste Carlos Ximenes Belo criticized these trends by noting that "all the teachers are from outside, all the civil servants are from outside. For the simplest jobs in road-building, they bring in people from the outside. And these people bring their children and their brothers and sisters… As things are here in East Timor, the military are everywhere, in social affairs, the economy, culture, tourism, social communications. So what is left for civilians?"[46]

It is worth considering briefly why the Indonesians exhibited such callous and brutal behavior towards a population that they sought to incorporate into their country as full citizens. James Dunn suggests a few possible explanations. Individual commanders sought to strengthen the "fighting spirit" of the troops by inciting hatred and suggesting that they were in a holy war against Timorese Christians and/or Communists. Additionally, the language barrier impeded easy communication between the occupiers and the occupied and religious differences further widened the gap between them.[47] The fact that most Timorese were not Christian during the early years of the occupation and that most did speak Indonesian later in the occupation casts some doubt on this explanation. Another possible answer offered by an expert on Indonesia is that the violence "was generated by a sub-culture of violence whose roots lay partly in a military contempt for civilians dating back to the [Indonesian] revolutionary period, and partly in military triumphalism and impunity which rapidly took shape after 1965."[48] Whatever the underlying reason, however, numerous accounts testify to the continued widespread brutality and the treatment of the Timorese people at the hands of the Indonesian occupiers as sub-human throughout the occupation. Ultimately, as many as 200,000 people – or between one-quarter and one-third of the entire population of the territory – are believed to have died as a result of violence or famine during the occupation.[49]

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[44] Taylor, 1991, pp. 125-7; Aditjondro, 1994, pp. 58-9
[45] Taylor, 1999a, p. 32
[46] As cited in Schwarz, 1994, p. 220
[47] Dunn, 2003, p. 254
[48] Cribb, 2002, pp. 234-5
[49] Taylor, 1991, p. ix; Dunn, 2003, p. 278

The Timorese Resistance as a National Symbol

FRETILIN put up no more than a token resistance to the initial invasion of Dili and quickly retreated to pre-prepared bases where they waged a fierce campaign against the Indonesian military. During the first few years of the occupation, FRETILIN and its 20,000 armed soldiers controlled much of the territory of Timor-Leste and continued to administer their literacy and other nation building programs to the large portions of the population that had retreated to positions behind their lines. Although the Church was initially hostile towards FRETILIN, a number of Catholic priests and nuns who fled with the people to the mountains have attested to the relative success of their administration efforts by describing the normal functioning of schools, health services, the production of food and medicines, and even trade and exchange between regions.[50] Even as they provided protection and a sense of normalcy to the people living in the territory under their control, FRETILIN, and its armed forces, FALINTIL, depended heavily on the overt and covert support they received from much of the Timorese population, motivated in part by their ill treatment at the hands of the Indonesian military. "There can be little doubt that the rapacious and brutal behavior of the occupying forces greatly stiffened the resolve of the resistance and provided FRETILIN with a degree of popular support greater than it might otherwise have enjoyed."[51]

John Taylor explains FRETILIN's success in this early period by pointing to its development of an organization and military links that unified the population around common politics and values while retaining an emphasis on regional autonomy and local culture, including kinship networks and tribal affiliation.[52] Later, however, the arrival of Indonesian reinforcements and the use of armored vehicles and air support inflicted serious casualties on FRETILIN, forced their retreat to the mountains in the interior, and disrupted the coordination efforts that made FRETILIN a national organization. Isolated in separate regions, local commanders began to pursue their own interests, occasionally leading to conflicts with the FRETILIN leadership. The most dramatic examples of this led to the removal of FRETILIN president Xavier do Amaral and the surrender of FRETILIN's

[50] Taylor, 1999b, 81-2
[51] Dunn, 2003, p. 253
[52] Taylor, 1999b, p. 95

Minister of Information, Alarico Fernandes. By late 1978 and early 1979, the Indonesian forces succeeded in encircling and eliminating various FRETILIN groups.[53]

One of the low points of the resistance came on December 31, 1978-January 1, 1979 with the death of Nicolau Lobato, the leader of FRETILIN and the armed resistance, in a six-hour gun battle during one of these military operations. Even as the Indonesian military rejoiced in its victory, "a wave of deep sorrow and hopelessness swept across the territory… Lobato had become a legendary figure to Timorese and Indonesians, but to the former he was a symbol of the slender hope that some day the occupying forces would be driven out of East Timor… Lobato had become a folk hero and symbol of the resistance to most Timorese, including those whose political loyalties in 1975 had been to UDT or APODETI."[54]

In the months that followed Lobato's death, FRETILIN's national network, support bases, and communication channels were destroyed. Hundreds of demoralized resistance fighters surrendered or were captured only to be executed in captivity.[55] At a time when almost all of the leadership was killed or captured and the resistance was reduced to scattered and isolated small pockets of fighters across the countryside, public support in the villages proved critical. "Supported by hamlets not yet included in the strategic resettlement villages, groups were able to move around and be provided with food, shelter, and local lines of communication. During 1979 and 1980 this reliance on traditional forms of organization was crucial for the maintenance of the resistance."[56] One of these groups included the remaining FRETILIN leaders, including Xanana Gusmão, who successfully regrouped and reestablished contact with the other surviving resistance forces. "Throughout 1979 and 1980 he walked from village to village through enemy strongholds to consult with the people about whether to continue or end the war and to contact remnant resistance forces. This period of grassroots consultation became the basis for his decision to reorganize the battered resistance."[57] Xanana was formally named the president of FRETILIN and the Commander-in-Chief of FALINTIL in March 1981.

Faced with the reality that FRETILIN could not pose a serious military threat to the Indonesians, Xanana capitalized instead on the fact that their persistent efforts had became a potent symbol for Timorese of the popular resistance to the occupation. Xanana embarked on a fundamental transformation of the resistance movement, working to reorient the resistance

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[53] Taylor, 1999b, pp. 96-7
[54] Dunn, 2003, pp. 274-5
[55] Dunn, 2003, p. 274
[56] Taylor, 1999b, p. 115

to broaden its appeal and unify the remaining Timorese political factions. Over the course of several years, Xanana broke with the Marxist-Leninist ideology that had motivated some of the FRETILIN leaders and dropped FRETILIN's claim to be the sole representative of the East Timorese people. In a 1984 message, Xanana stated that "FRETILIN… knows that there are people unwilling to belong to a movement or party. What is important, however, is that everyone is moved by a common feeling – that of national identity."[58] Resigning from FRETILIN in December 1987, Xanana declared that FALINTIL would henceforth be non-partisan and formed the National Council of Maubere Resistance (CNRM, in Portuguese) in an effort to unify all political parties and factions. Lingering political differences between and within the parties prevented a full reconciliation, however, until the creation of the National Council of Timorese Resistance (CNRT, in Portuguese)[59] in 1998, incorporating FRETILIN, UDT, and APODETI, and offering "voting rights to all major political parties as well as to nationalist, cultural, and religious groups both inside and outside East Timor."[60]

Reorganizing FALINTIL into independent, mobile units, Xanana continued to lead FALINTIL and engage in guerrilla operations against the Indonesian armed forces. Xanana soon shifted tactics, however, avoiding direct military confrontations with large Indonesian forces and engagements that might provoke Indonesian reprisals against the local population.[61] Like Lobato before him, Xanana gradually acquired a mythical status as a symbol of the resistance. An Australian journalist who interviewed him in September 1990 noted: "Meeting him, I could understand the reverence in which ordinary Timorese hold him. He's a living symbol of their resistance. Xanana is there in the mountains, and the Indonesians haven't been able to capture him in fifteen years…"[62] As such, his capture on November 20, 1992 and forced "confession" was a severe shock to the Timorese. A few months later, however, Xanana released a defiant statement at his trial and "his leadership stature increased, rather than diminished, despite his imprisonment in Java's Cipinang Prison. He was the symbol of an uncrushable Timorese spirit, inspiring the population at large not to bend before the Indonesian will."[63]

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[57] Niner, 2001, p. 20.
[58] Niner, 2001, p. 20
[59] Differences between FRETILIN, UDT, and others were partly connected with the CNRM's use of the FRETILIN-associated term *Maubere*.
[60] Niner, 2001, p. 23
[61] Dunn, 2003, p. 296
[62] Gusmão, 2000, p. 142
[63] Dunn, 2003, p. 297

Building an Identity with a New Generation: the Clandestine Youth Movement

Even as Xanana sought to promote political unity, he also turned to the people of Timor-Leste to open a major new front in the resistance struggle by encouraging passive resistance and civil disobedience among the general population. "Indeed, by the late 1980s the main opposition to Indonesian policies came not from FALINTIL but from the population at large, with a strong activist element emerging among the young Timorese."[64] Xanana himself publicly acknowledged the important role of the clandestine student movement: "These students are of great significance… they're completely mobilized to take practical actions in the struggle… based on their patriotic consciousness, which is in the blood of the Maubere people."[65] Building on clandestine support networks that FALINTIL had established in the towns and villages, the Timorese students and other members of the clandestine movement took the lead in organizing civil protests to draw domestic and international attention to the ongoing resistance struggle. One of the student leaders explained the structure of the movement:

> Starting in the early 1980s a different kind of student movement emerged in East Timor. Students began to get involved in the underground movement mainly through their parents or through their friends at school. In the beginning they organized in cells – with three, four, or five people in a cell – and these spread all over East Timor. Each cell had a direct connection with FALINTIL and FRETILIN in the mountains.[66]

Similar networks were formed among the Timorese students studying at universities in Indonesia. Indonesian President Suharto opened up Timor-Leste in 1989 to visitors from Indonesia and abroad and relaxed restrictions on internal travel, thereby creating additional opportunities for the underground student movement to spread the message of the resistance. Students proved to be a critical communication channel, smuggling messages out of the country, passing notes to tourists, and even facilitating interviews with resistance leaders for foreign journalists.[67]

Small-scale civil disobedience gradually escalated and culminated with a protest during the public mass given by Pope John Paul II for over 100,000 Timorese and an assortment of

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[64] Dunn, 2003, p. 297
[65] Gusmão, 2000, p. 142
[66] Pinto, 2001, pp. 32-3

international media representatives during his 1989 visit to the island. A similar protest was staged during a 1990 visit of the U.S. Ambassador. The turning point, however, was the November 12, 1991 protest march to the Santa Cruz cemetery where Indonesian authorities attacked the 5000 peaceful protestors.

Subsequent reports suggest that over 270 people were killed in the Santa Cruz Massacre and hundreds more missing – a terrible blow to the Timorese resistance.[68] Indonesian authorities claimed that the protestors provoked the violence and that only a handful of them were killed, but unlike other more serious massacres committed during the occupation, this one was captured on videotape by a British journalist, Max Stahl, and subsequently broadcast around the world.[69] For the first time during the long Indonesian occupation, "the world at large was given a visible glimpse of the East Timorese ordeal" and public outrage ensured that foreign countries not turn a blind eye.[70] Taking place in the context of the Cold War and a fear of countries falling as "dominos" to Communist influence, the United States, Australia, and other foreign governments had done little to contest the Indonesian invasion and subsequent occupation. International pressure on Indonesia increased, however, as "FRETILIN representatives abroad, Portuguese officials, and human rights activists used the massacre to return the East Timor case to international prominence."[71] The international outcry and subsequent "investigations" were even covered by the Indonesian press which "increasingly carried articles critical of the army's performance."[72] The Timorese cause was eventually taken up by a number of sympathetic pro-democracy groups in Indonesia which believed that the case "exposed the true nature of the Indonesian state and symbolized all that was wrong with the country."[73]

The emergence of the youth movement and its successful mobilization and staging of such public events represented a severe blow to the Indonesian occupation strategy. Describing the strategy as the "Indonesianization of East Timor," one outside observer noted that:

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[67] Pinto, 2001, p. 38
[68] Aditjondro, 1994, p. 13
[69] Note: Max Stahl is the assumed name of Christopher Wenner. His films based on this incident and subsequent events in Timor-Leste have won numerous international awards.
[70] Dunn, 2003, p. 292
[71] Schwarz, 1994, p. 220
[72] Schwarz, 1994, p. 221
[73] Tan, 2006, p. 194

> Indonesian leaders are realistic about the speed with which measures of integration will effect change… Their basic commitment is to the next generation of East Timorese whose principal socializing experiences will have occurred in an Indonesian framework. To this end, educational and other kinds of associational structures for youth have had high priority…[74]

The Indonesian authorities highlighted the fact that they built hundreds of schools and imported teachers from other islands. The preexisting Catholic school system was left without any public support and their teachers were hired away at salaries triple their existing income to come to public schools. Both Tetum and Portuguese were banned in the Indonesian schools and Javanese culture and the vast majority of textbooks emphasized *Bahasa Indonesia* and *Pancasila,* the Indonesia national ideology.[75] Despite considerable investments, however, the strategy ultimately failed. James Dunn explained why in *East Timor: A Rough Passage to Independence:*

> [T]he program simply did not work in an environment of oppression and in a community where nearly every family had suffered human rights abuses at the hands of [the Indonesian military]. By the 1990s thousands of young Timorese, many of whom spoke only Indonesian, were to form a common front of opposition to *integrasi,* and were ready to risk the wrath of a ruthless military in occasional demonstrations.[76]

In addition to finding common cause in the resistance, this new generation of Timorese also identified closely with the Catholic Church, an institution that had also come to be closely associated with Timorese national identity.

The Church and Catholicism Become Fused with Timorese Identity

Beginning with the arrival and establishment of the original Portuguese settlements in Timor and the neighboring islands, the Catholic Church's efforts to convert the Timorese people was a dominant element of the Portuguese "civilizing" mission. Despite some early successes with *liurai* and their families and the Church's long presence in the territory, however, by the time of the Portuguese Carnation Revolution in 1974, only about 20 percent

[74] Weatherbee, 1981, p. 17
[75] Taylor, 1991, pp. 128-9
[76] Dunn, 2003, p. 292

of the population had converted to Christianity.[77] But for many of those who did convert, "the process of 'conversion' was often rather shallow: away from Dili and the main market towns, reverence for *lulik* (tribal/family heirlooms) and animist rituals continued to flourish amongst Timorese Catholics despite Church prohibitions."[78] Although the clergy was held in high esteem by the people and Catholicism had become the religion of the local rulers and small elite population (as well as the key to education and social advancement), by the end of Portuguese rule the Church remained a foreign, colonial institution with which few ordinary Timorese identified. During the Indonesian occupation, however, the Timorese Catholic Church underwent a "remarkable transformation" and became "a people's Church able to articulate and defend the interests of the Timorese people."[79]

At the time of the Indonesian invasion in December 1975, the Church was deeply suspicious of FRETILIN and highly critical of its perceived Marxist/Communist tendencies. FRETILIN, for its part, advocated the separation of church and state and sought to place the Catholic Church on a par with animism and other local faiths. This tense relationship changed, however, as many of the priests and nuns who accompanied the population when they took refuge behind FRETILIN lines began to admire FRETILIN's efforts and commitment to independence. The respect was mutual. FRETILIN leaders credited the Church for its efforts to support the oppressed Timorese people: "The church… during the long captivity of our people, has been a safe haven during the waves of crimes and violations. It has been the moral support in the struggle of our people, a precious helping hand that has eased the pains of our people during their heroic resistance…"[80]

The Timorese Church leaders were among the few in Timor-Leste who publicly criticized the Indonesians for their atrocities and mistreatment of the local population. Because the local Church was administered directly by the Holy See in the Vatican, it was also one of the only local institutions with direct connections to the outside world during Timor-Leste's isolation in the early years of the occupation. The Apostolic Administrator of Timor-Leste, Martinho da Costa Lopes, "was revered for fearless statements and actions that highlighted the plight of his beleaguered compatriots," including his condemnation of a massacre of up to 500 people in Lacluta in September 1981.[81] Following years of pressure by the Indonesian government, however, in 1983 the Vatican replaced Lopes with Carlos

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[77] Kohen, 2001, p. 46
[78] Carey, 1999, p. 79
[79] Carey, 1999, p. 77
[80] Gusmão, 2000, p. 123

Ximenes Belo who was believed to be more pliable. Bishop Belo soon defied these expectations, however, by gradually becoming one of the most prominent critics of the occupation and champions of the Timorese people. As early as December 1984 he defended the Timorese right to self-determination and in 1985 he wrote (before being forced to repudiate his signature): "[The] attempt to Indonesianise the Timorese people through vigorous campaigns to promote pancasila, through schools or the media, by alienating the people from their world view, means the gradual murder of Timorese culture. To kill the culture is to kill the people."[82]

One of the Church's most significant decisions was to adopt Tetum as the language of church services and liturgy when the Indonesians banned the use of Portuguese in 1981. While Portuguese was consciously adopted by FRETILIN as the language of resistance, the Church abandoned it for Tetum, the de facto lingua franca of the territory. This simple decision made the Church immediately accessible to most of the Timorese population that had long been excluded by the Portuguese language barrier. In addition, the switch had a significant impact on the development of Timorese nationalism. As Benedict Anderson pointed out

> the decision of the Catholic hierarchy in East Timor to use Tetum, not Indonesian, as the language of the Church, has had profoundly nationalizing effects. It has raised Tetum from being a local language or lingua franca in parts of East Timor to becoming, for the first time, the language of «East Timorese» religion and identity.[83]

Long hostile and dismissive of the deep-rooted animist faith and beliefs of much of the population, the Catholic Church took measures during the occupation to signal its respect for and accommodation of those beliefs. The Church demonstrated increasing toleration of local practices and, "indeed, the iconography of the Catholic Church with its crucifixes, statues of the Blessed Virgin, grottos and *via dolorosa* structures soon came to serve as substitutes for the multifarious forms of ancestor worship and *lulik* veneration."[84] The Church's large open-air masses at sites typically associated with animism, including the installation of Christ and Virgin Mary statues at the summit of Timor-Leste's highest peaks (both sacred sites used for animist worship), were additional examples of this accommodation. As a nun told a visitor to

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[81] Kohen, 2001, p. 48
[82] Carey, 1999, p. 83; Archer, 1995, p. 124
[83] Kohen, 1999, p. 137

Timor-Leste during this period: "These people are godly in a truly religious sense… We have learnt to coexist with their animism."[85]

At the same time, Indonesian policy effectively pushed the Timorese into the embrace of the Catholic Church. As part of Indonesian efforts to combat Communism and atheism and to "raise" the people from their primitive, animist beliefs, all Indonesian citizens, including the Timorese, were required to have a "proper book-religion." The vast majority of Timorese therefore turned to the Catholic Church which had already established itself as a defender of the people. After only two decades of Indonesian occupation, the number of Catholics in Timor-Leste had increased to about 90 percent of the population.[86]

Bishop Belo himself continued to play a major role in transforming the public image of the Church. In a letter to the United Nations Secretary-General dated February 6, 1989, Belo took an unequivocal position on the occupation and Timor-Leste's future:

> I hereby request your Excellency initiated a genuine and democratic process of decolonization in East Timor to be realized through a referendum. The people of Timor ought to be heard through a plebiscite on their future. Until now they have not been consulted. Others have spoken in their name. It is Indonesia which says that the People of East Timor have chosen integration, but the people themselves have never said this. Portugal hopes that time will resolve the problem. But in the meantime we are dying as a people and a nation.[87]

Despite pressure to deny what he had written, Belo refused to do so.

In the following months and years, the Church played a central role in the continuing resistance and Church events, including the Pope's visit and the Santa Cruz commemoration, represented the primary venues of the struggle. The Church and the new, younger generation of Timorese in the resistance forged close bonds during this period. Compared with the older generation who saw Catholicism as a badge of social status, this new generation had a deeper commitment to it.

> This commitment fused an intense sense of Timorese nationalism (with adherence to Catholicism setting indigenous Timorese apart from the mainly Muslim… inner island Indonesian occupation forces and transmigrants) and a belief in the redeeming power of the

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[84] Carey, 1999, p. 84
[85] Carey, 1999, p. 84
[86] Carey, 1999, p. 86
[87] Archer, 1995, p. 125

> Cross… the individual experience of suffering and oppression in East Timor shaped a deep personal faith, a faith in which redemption and transcendence had both a personal and a national dimension.[88]

The fundamental role of the Church was acknowledged in 1996 when Bishop Belo was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize (along with co-recipient José Ramos-Horta). He was hailed and welcomed back by the Timorese as a national hero. Pope John Paul II himself told Bishop Belo after he had received the award that, "I hope it will be a shield for you to work more for peace in East Timor."[89] Bishop Belo himself had earlier summarized in his own words the remarkable transformation of the Catholic Church from a foreign, colonial institution to the people's church and a symbol of their national aspirations: "The Catholic faith of the people is a kind of symbol to unite them, it is a way of expressing the fact that they are Timorese."[90]

The Church is an excellent example of how local institutions and symbols evolved and changed in response to circumstances and needs. Similarly, not only did the armed resistance shift its military and political strategies, but it expanded to include popular, non-violent, student-led resistance in an effort to mobilize international support for Timor-Leste. In the end, however, it was the shared suffering of the Timorese under a brutal occupation that led the public to embrace and elevate these institutions and their leaders to the status of national unifying symbols.

Awakening, Suffering, and Resistance

Not only did Timor-Leste emerge from the dark period of Indonesian occupation with a distinct sense of nationhood, but that strong sense of national identity was a primary agent in ending the occupation and creating a new nation-state. FRETILIN played an instrumental role during the period after the April 25, 1974 revolution in Portugal in constructing and awakening a national identity based on anti-colonialism, shared cultural values, and a fledgling lingua franca, Tetum. But it was the brutality of the Indonesian invasion and occupation that drew the population – including the younger generation raised and educated under the occupation – together in shared suffering around national symbols: the resistance,

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[88] Carey, 1999, p. 86
[89] Kohen, 1999, p. 243

the Catholic Church, and national heroes like Lobato, Gusmão, and Belo. Tetum, meanwhile, continued to develop into the Timorese 'national' language and Catholicism was embraced as the people's religion. All of these symbols and institutions achieved widespread acceptance in part because they accommodated and did not challenge the traditional institutions of tribal and kinship networks and beliefs rooted in animism and ancestor worship.

The natural evolution and deliberate construction of national identities is, of course, an ongoing process in every country. At the same time, the original construction of such identities presents an unusual opportunity to observe nationalism theory in real-time. As such, the emergence of new nation-states, like Timor-Leste, presents fresh and potentially productive areas for continued study. This dissertation, an attempt to trace the development of national identity in one of the world's newest nation-states, illustrates and supports some of the tenets of established theories of nationalism. At the same time, although Timor-Leste's tragic history also sheds light on more contentious aspects of those theoretical approaches, including how national identity is powerfully affected by symbols, rituals, and narratives and is deliberately constructed by national elites yet also contested by other societal actors.

Some combination of domestic pressures resulting from the Asian financial crisis and the fall of the Suharto, international pressure and a desire to improve Indonesia's image, and Indonesia's persistent inability to integrate Timor-Leste led Indonesian President Habibie in early 1999 to agree to a U.N.-organized public referendum on a new proposal for regional autonomy. Significantly, he added that if the Timorese rejected the proposal, they would be free to separate from Indonesia and form their own independent nation. The United Nations conducted the referendum on August 30, 1999 following several months of violence and intimidation by pro-integration militia groups supported by the Indonesian military and intelligence. Almost 80 percent of the population rejected the autonomy proposal, effectively voting for independence, thereby unleashing a wave of vindictive destruction and violence by the pro-integration forces before the United Nations finally secured Indonesia's approval to dispatch armed peacekeeping forces to restore order.

During a three-year transition period under U.N. administrative authority, Timor-Leste took the first steps towards erecting state institutions even as political leaders engaged the country in an active discourse over nationalism and a vision for the nation. Constituent Assembly elections were held in 2001 and the constitution was drafted and approved over the next several months. The Assembly then approved a measure to transform itself into the

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[90] Archer, 1995, p. 127

country's first National Parliament. Xanana Gusmão was elected president in March 2002 elections and the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste became formally independent on May 22, 2002. A large international presence that included United Nations police and international peacekeepers remained in country to help maintain stability and help develop Timorese state institutions. Apart from a few sporadic violent incidents, however, the first major political challenge came from mass protests organized by the Catholic Church in 2005 in opposition to government proposals to deemphasize religious education. The following year, however, shortly after the withdrawal of the bulk of international police and peacekeepers, divisions in the Timorese army spread to include mass protests, widespread violence, and the displacement of over 100,000 people. The Timorese security institutions broke down and total collapse of the state was averted only following the resignation of Prime Minister Alkatiri and the return of international peacekeepers. José Ramos-Horta was elected President in 2007 and Prime Minister Xanana Gusmão put together a coalition government following parliamentary elections that same year. Both were the targets of violent attacks by rebel elements in 2008, however, that had eluded capture after the 2006 crisis. President Ramos-Horta was seriously injured and evacuated to Australia before recovering and returning to assume his official duties. The rebel group surrendered later that year and was tried, convicted, and ultimately pardoned for their crimes. In 2012, former General Taur Matan Ruak was elected President and Prime Minister Gusmão succeeded in assembling another parliamentary coalition. The United Nations and international peacekeepers formally ended their mission on December 31, 2012.

Independence and nationhood brought new challenges to Timor-Leste. Even as Indonesia was effectively removed as a unifying enemy or "other," the fledgling Timorese state and its political leaders sought to rebuild the country and forge a shared sense of national identity. Subsequent chapters of this dissertation will focus on specific aspects of nation building and contests over national identity in the independence period. Amidst this active discourse on Timorese nationalism, a range of regional, generational, and political differences emerged, contributing to minor and major crises. Timor-Leste is already benefitting from modest oil revenues from off-shore projects, but the challenge of managing and investing those resources in the face of widespread poverty will test the government's capacity and legitimacy and may exacerbate class and other societal divisions. Timor-Leste also faces a stark generational gap between those who were raised before and during the occupation, accentuated by the fact that the educated representatives of each generation claim different

primary languages. Much of the current leadership has been drawn from a pool of Timorese that were exiled or lived abroad during the occupation, thereby creating yet another cleavage with those who stayed behind and suffered under Indonesian oppression. Questions and doubts about national language policy and the role of the Catholic Church have made core elements of the Timorese national identity potentially divisive flash points for the young nation-state. The desire for both justice and reconciliation among the population and with neighboring Indonesia presents challenging decisions for a leadership trying to preserve national unity. Even charismatic national figures like Xanana Gusmão and José Ramos-Horta have found it difficult to chart a course for the new nation between these dangerous shoals. Missteps and mistakes have risked unraveling the fragile sense of nationhood that has developed over the last few decades. The following sections of this dissertation will provide an initial examination and assessment this ongoing process.

Chapter 3. Early Timorese Nation Building Efforts

Much of the academic literature on nation building has focused on exploring the origins of the nation and has identified and unpacked the various key elements that normally comprise national identity. These include - to a greater or lesser degree for each and every nation - a national language, a constructed historical narrative, shared cultural heritage, and state institutions that seek to establish themselves as the legitimate providers of public services and representative of the nation in the international arena. All of these continuously create and shape the nation through the use of mass media, education, and day-to-day governance. Less attention, however, has been directed towards the important role in this process of the symbols and rituals that are created or appropriated in the nation building process to interpret and continually remind people of their national identity.

Despite the complexity and nuance of the nation building process, certain steps in that process have become fairly straightforward in the modern, post-colonial era. New nations born into the existing international state system each follow a now well-trodden path as they accouter themselves in the symbolic trappings of nationhood. Such trappings include, but are not limited to: a constitution, flag, emblem, anthem, and holidays. These symbols are also usually replicated on a national currency, ceremonial medals and awards, and stamps. National heroes are identified from the national historical narrative, monuments and statues are erected to memorialize them, and major landmarks, streets, and buildings are named after them. It is important to note, of course, that such symbols are not created in a vacuum or simply applied to a blank slate. Timor-Leste and its people have long-standing cultural traditions, norms, values, myths, and heritage. The successful construction of a new nation must, of necessity, draw heavily from this raw material. Failure to do so and willful disregard of deeply cherished local norms and traditions risks pitting the new nation against competing poles of identity. As Timor-Leste grapples with fundamental questions of its national language, writing its history, building up its institutions of governance, and taking its seat in the international arena, it has also adopted the symbols and rituals that form the short-hand or code for its national identity.

As has been the case in other post-colonial, developing, or even developed countries, the process of nation building in Timor-Leste has drawn heavily from its history, including the pre-colonial, colonial, and Indonesian occupation periods. That said, the particular circumstances of Timor-Leste's development also made it a particularly interesting example of nation building. During the Indonesian occupation when Timor-Leste was administered as a province from Jakarta, it lacked even modest local governance institutions that could form the basis of state institutions. Timor-Leste was also one of the poorest countries in the world with human development indicators for health, education, and infrastructure that placed it near the bottom in any global comparisons. Following the historic August 30, 1999 referendum, moreover, the ensuing violence destroyed the few provincial-level structures and eighty percent of the physical buildings and infrastructure ranging from municipal offices to schools and health facilities. Most of the civil records, including property, school, and health records, were also destroyed or lost. In addition, a large portion of the provincial administrators, civil servants, teachers, and other functionaries - predominantly Indonesian or pro-Indonesian - fled the country. Upon its entrance to the world stage as the youngest nation, Timor-Leste was forced to rebuild the country even as it engaged in a new state and nation building process. This chapter will detail the early stages of that process, focusing particularly on national symbols and rituals, and analyze the degree to which it has helped or failed to create and maintain a new sense of nation.

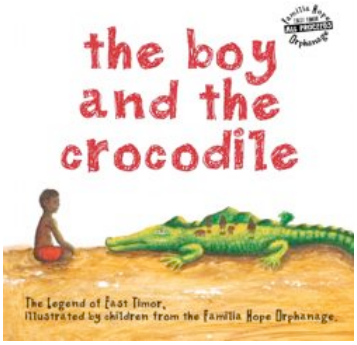
Indigenous Heritage and Cultural Symbols

Given Timor-Leste's extreme poverty and near-total destruction following the August 30, 1999 "popular consultation," there was a tendency on the part of international administrators and even some Timorese leaders to treat the country as a blank slate or *tabula rasa* upon which the new nation and state could be constructed. The reality, of course, is that every community, irrespective of its level of economic development, has a deep-rooted culture replete with primordial creation myths, historical narratives, leadership hierarchies, customs, traditions, rituals, and symbols. Observers of Timor-Leste's post independence period have noted the failure by leaders not only to recognize Timorese traditions and social structures, but also to effectively incorporate elements of traditional society into the new state structures and national identity. At a minimum, neglect of these indigenous symbols represented missed opportunities to strengthen national identity. At worst, however, the willful exclusion of such

deeply-rooted icons and values may have generated resistance towards the national vision being constructed by international and Timorese nation builders. Even in the absence of such recognition or efforts by such leaders, however, these traditional elements of Timorese society have helped shape the nation. As this research will demonstrate and highlight at key points in Timor-Leste's recent history, political elites do not have a monopoly on the nation building process. It is, instead, a discourse that is dynamic, ongoing, and contested by actors at all levels of society. This section will briefly review some of the indigenous symbols and rituals of Timorese society that have formed key aspects of Timorese national identity.

Creation Myths

Many communities have creation myths that serve the purpose of connecting even far-flung members of society to common ancestors or points of origin. Perhaps one of the most popular and widespread creation myths in Timor-Leste is that of the crocodile and the boy. According to the story, a baby crocodile stranded on land was once rescued by a boy who carried it back to water. Later, to repay the good deed the crocodile swam out to sea and died, allowing its body to form a new land where the boy and his descendants could live peacefully. According to legend, that land today is the island of Timor (both Timor-Leste and Indonesian West Timor), shaped like a crocodile with the head in Lautem and the tail in Kupang.



(Book cover illustration, Artists Children from the Familia Hope Orphanage)

(Crocodile-Timor-Leste illustration, Artist Luis Peres, 2009)

Despite the fact that salt-water crocodiles today represent a real menace to the island and routinely claim the lives of livestock and human victims, most Timorese believe that they are sacred animals, essentially 'ancestors' of all Timorese. Many Timorese continue to believe that crocodiles would only attack someone who had done something 'evil' and that to avoid such a fate 'good' Timorese need only shout "Ancestor, don't eat me!" to remind the sacred animals of their historic debt.

Although the myth extends beyond the borders of modern Timor-Leste, the crocodile has, indeed, been widely adopted as a symbol for the new country. The Timorese Army, for example, adopted two captive crocodiles as 'mascots' which are kept at their training base in Metinaro[1]. Political parties, as we will examine in a subsequent section, have also used the symbol to associate themselves with the nation. The crocodile motif also features not only in traditional handicrafts, but also on Timorese commemorative stamps (see below) and is widely used in both official and unofficial promotional materials. Despite the safety threat the animal presents to society, Timorese authorities have been careful to respect the crocodile. They have launched multiple efforts, including with Australian assistance, to manage the crocodile population through humane means. On one occasion, a group of Timorese bystanders reportedly rioted when a United Nations police officer fired a pistol at a crocodile in a Dili canal, eventually prompting the U.N. leadership in country to send him home prematurely.[2] Despite these limited examples, however, respect for the crocodile and its use by the government or state institutions as a symbol has been decidedly ad hoc and reactive.

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[1] "East Timor army adopts saltwater crocodiles as mascots." *Sydney Morning Herald*, 31 Jan 2003: web.
[2] Anecdote related by several expatriates in Dili.

Sacred Mountains

(Fatima statue atop Mt. Ramelau, Photo by Dan Kaspersz)

The ancestor worship and animist beliefs that are deeply entrenched in Timorese culture have also inclined the Timorese people to attach high spiritual value to natural sites. Mountains in particular are seen as being both close to, and representative of the divine.[3] Timor-Leste has two major mountain peaks, Mount Ramelau and Mount Matebian. Among the Mambai people who live in the vicinity of Ramelau, the mountain occupies a central place in the local mythology and its local name (Tatmailau) translates as "highest, oldest ancestor."[4] Many traditional houses across the country are also oriented towards the territory's highest peaks – both of which are referred to as "Matebian" which translates as the "ghosts of the ancestors" or "land of souls."[5] While revered as sacred sites and used for animist worship, in recent years both mountain peaks have also acquired Catholic religious significance. In the mid-1990s, large-scale Masses were celebrated at each site and statues to the Virgin Mary (Ramelau) and Jesus Christ (Matebian) were installed at the peaks.[6] A few of the Timorese interviewed for this research noted that they or their families had attended the Mass celebrations where the statues had been warmly embraced as "appropriate" even at these sacred animist sites.[7]

[3] Smythe, 2004, p. 209
[4] Traube, 1986, pp. 36-7
[5] Cinatti, 1987, p. 69; Hicks, 2004, p. 1
[6] Carey, 1999, pp. 84-5

(Christ statue atop Mt. Matebian, Photo by Eoghan Walsh)

Due to their role during the Indonesian occupation and their significance to the Timorese resistance movement, the mountains have acquired even more significance to Timorese today. "After the invasion, many people fled to Mount Matebian. Located in the east, the mountain came to symbolize the will of the East Timorese to survive. Xanana [Gusmão, a resistance leader and current Prime Minister] called Mount Matebian "our big home" when it became the last resistance stronghold in 1978."[8] One of the anthems of the original resistance party, FRETILIN, was *Foho Ramelau* or Mount Ramelau. Even younger Timorese who were not old enough to recall when Mount Matebian served as a rebel stronghold have been taught the history by their families and associate the mountains as places of "refuge" and sources of "strength and protection."[9]

(National Emblem of Timor-Leste, Source http://timor-leste.gov.tl)

Although the official Timor-Leste tourism website features the mountains as attractive tourist destinations, authorities made only limited efforts to use the sacred peaks as unifying symbols for the nation. The first explicit effort appears to have been the inclusion of Mount Ramelau on the national emblem or *belak* adopted by law in 2007 and intended to represent national unity. The pyramidal or shield-shape represents the sacred peak. According to the law:

> The white color of the centre of the circumference, the star, and the rays shall symbolize peace; The light yellow in the contours of the black portion of Mount Ramelau, the strips and borders of the book, the *batar fulin* and the *háre fulin*, the toothed wheel, the *ramainan*, and the *∂iman* shall symbolize the wealth; The black color in the central part of Mount Ramelau, the automatic rifle, and the letters of the book

[7] Anonymous. Personal interviews. April 2009.
[8] Kohen, 2001, p. 48
[9] Anonymous. Personal interviews. April 2009.

> shall symbolize the obscurantism that needs to be overcome; The light red of the Mount Ramelau, the letters, the hoops, the contours of the strips, and the book shall symbolize the love for the motherland and the struggle for national liberation; The white rays of the star shall symbolize the light of solidarity and the determination to bring about peace all over the world. The set of four angles referred to in the Mount Ramelau insignia shall symbolize the principles of the separation of powers and the interdependence of the organs of sovereignty of the State…[10]

While the all of the detailed meanings are probably not immediately apparent to the average Timorese, the use of the sacred peak would likely be accepted as a natural, symbolic representation of the nation. The use of the emblem, however, is limited to official documents, including diplomas and certificates, as well as on official government vehicles.[11] In other words, unlike the national flag or other ubiquitous symbols, the emblem is not something that Timorese come across every day or even very often at all.

Another effort to tap the symbolism of the mountain was the Ramelau Culture Festival launched by President Ramos-Horta in October 2010 as part of a campaign to promote peace and unity. The official description of the event noted that "Mount Ramelau is the symbol of pride and unity to the people of Timor-Leste. The festival brought together examples of the unique culture of each of Timor-Leste's 13 districts. Each district wore examples of their own traditional woven cloth, or *taiʉ*[12], to identify their culture and presented two songs to promote national unity and peace."[13] President Ramos-Horta himself described the event after the fact noting that the choice of location was deliberate, that it is one of the only places that the entire country reveres, and that the event itself would "contribute to Timorese identity."[14] The inclusion of the Peak on the national emblem in 2007 and this subsequent event, however, appear to have been among the only deliberate efforts by the Timorese state to capitalize on the universal regard accorded to such sites, and these only came about after several years into Timor-Leste's modern nation building efforts.

Sacred Houses, Traditional Leaders, and Ancestors

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[10] Republica Democratica de Timor-Leste, 17 January 2007.
[11] Republica Democratica de Timor-Leste, 17 January 2007.
[12] Note: *Taiʉ* is a traditional handmade Timorese cloth typically worn as an element of traditional dress. *Taiʉ* patterns and color reflect differences in social status and regional origin.
[13] Republica Democratica de Timor-Leste, Timor-Leste Strategic Development Plan, 2011.
[14] Ramos-Horta, Jose. Personal interview. 30 May 2011.

Traditional animist beliefs and veneration of ancestors persists in Timor-Leste despite the introduction of the major world religions to the region and the fact that an overwhelming majority of the Timorese population today also identify themselves as Catholic. As is the case elsewhere in Southeast Asia with other major world religions, such beliefs coexist peacefully with Christianity throughout Timor-Leste. The physical, spiritual, and political center of Timorese communities is the *uma lulik* or ancestral cult house. Ruy Cinatti noted that "for the Timorese, the binomial 'man-house' is an expression of the relationship between that symbolic world and the social order in its most static form.[15]" The *uma lulik* takes the form of an indigenous Timorese structure in an architectural style particular to its local community and, not coincidentally, also tends to be the most distinctive house in each town or village.[16] "Each village community has its own *uma lulik*… attended by the community priest… Every major event of Timorese life in peace or war is accompanied by ritual sacrifices and tributes… Relics relating to the tribe's history, especially in battle, are kept in the *uma lulik*."[17] Even nominally Catholic Timorese often have two separate wedding ceremonies, one in a church and the second, and more important, in an *uma lulik*.[18]

(Uma Lulik in Los Palos, Photo by Ira Leon)

The *uma lulik* is not merely a physical structure but is also a social construction that binds and mediates between families and clans, forming an intricate social network across the entire country. Andrew McWilliam notes that house alliances are formed through marriage exchanges and that this results in "intricate networks of affiliation, exchange and alliances within and between Timorese houses of origin [that] represent the historical and continuing

[15] As cited in Prista, 2004, p. 92
[16] Gunn, 1999, p. 38
[17] Jolliffe, 1978, p. 16
[18] Carey, 1999, p. 79

basis for the reproduction of Timorese society."[19] Relationships within and between extended families that share descent from founding ancestors play a fundamental role in Timorese culture and local political authority is largely derived through an ancestral lineage that is legitimated by the *uma lulik* and the sacred items stored there.

Although the traditional beliefs are strongest in the villages and rural areas, the *uma lulik* serves as a physical representation of these beliefs and local kinship networks that continue to resonate even with the younger, educated, and urban Timorese population. Several representatives of this group told this researcher that they still retain a connection with 'their' *uma lulik* even though they no longer live in their home villages. The *uma lulik*, they claim, houses the spirits of their ancestors and provides the family with strength and protection. One Timorese told this researcher that although he and his parents had moved to the capital city, Dili, another family member stayed in the village and tended to the house, requesting money from time to time to conduct necessary repairs. Others noted that the unique architectural aspects of the houses are also a source of pride associated with their regional origins.[20]

The Indonesian government was well aware of the importance of the *uma lulik* and made considerable efforts to incorporate it into its own pro-integration ideology during the occupation period. Images of the distinctive houses of the Fatuluku-speaking people of Los Palos, in particular, were used in government reports and tourist brochures. In 1979, a reproduction was even installed in Taman Mini Indonesia Indah, an architectural theme park in Jakarta.[21] This was consistent with Indonesian nation building efforts enshrined in the motto 'unity in diversity', but was often perceived by Timorese as an effort to appropriate their culture. One Timorese student noted that seeing "his" house at the Jakarta exhibit engendered only resentment, not pride.[22]

In fact, the 'sacred houses' and the social network that they represent played a fundamental role in the resistance movement. The clandestine networks that sustained the small armed resistance in the latter stages of the movement were "built around house-based affiliations of trust and obligation."[23] Under the Indonesian occupation, however, many of

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[19] McWilliam, 2005, pp. 33-4

[20] Anonymous. Personal interviews. April 2009 - July 2011.

[21] Kusno, 2000, p. 75; Note: This was also typical of the Indonesian tendency to reduce the people and cultures of Timor-Leste to a simple, homogenous stereotype, an attitude that ultimately contributed to the development of a unified sense of national identity among the people of Timor-Leste.

[22] Anonymous. Personal interviews. April 2009. Note: Following Timorese independence the Taman Mini Indonesia Indah pavilion was converted into the Timor Timur Museum.

[23] McWilliam, 2005, p. 35

these structures were either destroyed by the military or else left to fall apart after their owners were forced from their lands.[24] In addition, large numbers were deliberately destroyed or damaged during the vindictive post-referendum violence in 1999 in order to eliminate the symbols of the Timorese resistance. The fact that local authorities and communities have been working to rebuild them across the country at considerable expense and effort is a testament to their enduring cultural and spiritual significance.

From a cultural and physical perspective, the *uma lulik* has been acknowledged by the independent Timor-Leste government as a symbol of indigenous culture and has been included on brochures, publications, and the government's official tourism webpage, but little was done by the government in the early years of independence to support local reconstruction of these structures. Following the implementation of a U.S. Embassy-funded project beginning in 2008, the Timor-Leste Secretary of State for Culture launched its own limited government-funded program to help local communities rebuild *uma lulik* that were destroyed, effectively recreating the destroyed structures in accordance with local traditions.[25] The fact that even such limited assistance came only a full decade after the destruction in 1999, however, suggests that the government was slow in recognizing the important role these structures play in the national consciousness. This point was also emphasized in surveys conducted after the 2006 crisis where a number of those surveyed suggested that the government was remiss in not establishing a single, symbolic national *uma lulik* that would build on and unify the clan-based *uma lulik* networks throughout the country.[26] One senior government official claimed in 2011 that there had been high-level meetings to discuss plans for such a national *uma lulik*, but to date there has been no plan articulated for a way forward.[27]

Beyond the symbolism of the physical structure, there has been a similar failure to recognize and incorporate the social and political aspects of the house-based networks into the political and administrative structures of the new nation-state. The traditional, indigenous leadership structure has modified over time and incorporated outside influences, but in recent years it remained closely associated with and derived its authority from the *uma lulik* and the kinship networks. Under Portuguese rule, the hereditary political leaders of local communities or *liurai* were installed as the chiefs of the *suku* (or *chefes de suku*), administrative

[24] Hicks, 2007, p. 14
[25] U.S. Department of State, 2010, p. 38; also from personal knowledge and multiple conversations with Secretary of State Virgilio Smith between 2009 and 2011.
[26] Trindade & Castro, 2007.

units that grouped together a number of villages. Within the *sukus,* moreover, other traditional officials served on indigenous councils to support the *liurai*'s administrative authority. The Indonesians also sought to marginalize local political authority, but their "sustained attempts to subvert, disrupt, demoralise and reorganise Timorese society in the interests of integration ultimately failed to convert or co-opt rural allegiances into their nationalist project."[28]

Despite previous failed attempts to change these indigenous social and political structures, the United Nations and Timorese political leadership since 1999 appear to have made similar mistakes. By and large, traditional leaders were ignored when the basic structures of the Western-style democratic nation-state were developed in the early years of Timorese independence.[29] A particular conflict between the Western democratic model and indigenous local traditions emerged with the system established to select local authorities. Timor-Leste adopted laws providing for the democratic election of *suco* chiefs and councils, mandating the inclusion of women and youth in the councils, and redefining the role of the traditional *lia na'in* or storyteller/advisor to make them elected council members. This led to the election of local, traditional leaders in some areas, but also created a situation in other areas where "two political figures… provide villagers with alternative sources of authority."[30] In some communities, traditional leaders maintain cultural authority and are called upon to resolve conflicts and in others local customs have even evolved to include the "ritual bestowal of power" from the *liurai* to the newly-elected *suco* chief.[31] Despite the democratic mandates of newly-elected leaders, however, in some areas local loyalties remain divided and there is considerable confusion about the role of the new *suco* chiefs.[32] The model varies from locality to locality and continues to evolve over time with a recent survey suggesting, for example, different models of hybridization in which traditional and modern authority co-exist.[33]

Although it is difficult to know exactly how much conflict and confusion this has created from community to community, it is noteworthy again that observers pointed to the lack of respect accorded to traditional authorities, including *liurai,* as one of the causes of the 2006

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[27] Babo Soares, Dionisio. Personal interview. 24 April 2011.
[28] McWilliam, 2005, p. 37
[29] One notable exception, which will be examined in a later section, involved the community reconciliation processes of the Commission on Reception, Truth, and Reconciliation (the CAVR, according to its Portuguese acronym).
[30] Hicks, 2012, p. 35
[31] Tilman, 2012, p. 200
[32] Hicks, 2012, pp. 35-6
[33] Cummins & Leach, 2012, pp. 173-7

crisis.[34] Recognition of this failure subsequently led to some nominal attempts by leaders, including Xanana Gusmão and José Ramos-Horta, to consult with traditional leaders. President Ramos-Horta attended a Senate of *Liurai*, for example, in October 2010, bringing together many of the traditional leaders from communities across the country[35] and a similar group gathered with President Taur Matan Ruak in November 2012 for the 100th anniversary celebration of Dom Boaventura on the Proclamation of Independence Day.[36] These belated efforts appear to be largely reactive, however, and do not appear to have resulted in any substantive new approaches to incorporating traditional authorities, even symbolically, into modern state institutions.

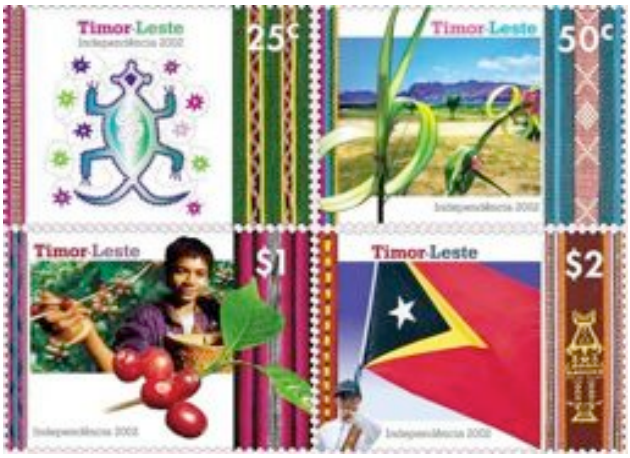
President Ramos-Horta, for one, recognized the potential role that traditional authority could have played in the nation building process. "I wish we had been able to preserve this tradition with its influence and credibility. It would have been such an asset to sustain national unity and peace in this country," he said in an interview. He claimed, however, that the role and the influence of the *liurai* had been on the wane since World War II and that by the end of the Indonesian occupation, there were very few authentic, hereditary *liurai* that retained considerable credibility even within their local communities.[37] Although the weakening of the local authorities themselves may partly explain the failure to incorporate them into the nation building process, others have instead blamed a lack of respect and appreciation for traditional authorities on the part of the nation builders.[38]

Stamps, Currency and *Tais*

Modern nation-states frequently use stamps, coins, and paper currency to reproduce the symbols of the nation and to serve as constant and ever-present reminders to citizens of their national identity. One of the virtues and advantages of modern states is that they generally maintain a monopoly on the production and dissemination of such representations, giving them broad discretion in the selection of symbols and designs. True to form, Timor-Leste issued its first set of stamps concurrently with its formal restoration of independence on May 20, 2002. Lacking the expertise and means to produce its own stamps, however, Timor-Leste

[34] Trindade & Castro, 2007.
[35] Personal participation at Delta Nova, Dili, 25 October 2010.
[36] Taur Matan Ruak, "Remarks on the Commemoration of the centenary of Dom Boaventura and the 37th Anniversary of the Proclamation of Independence." 28 November 2012.
[37] Ramos-Horta, Jose. Personal interview. 30 May 2011.
[38] Hicks, 2012, p. 26

turned to Australia for assistance with its first issuance. Australia Post staff traveled to Timor-Leste in August 2001 to consult with Timorese authorities and to select designs for the stamps.[39] The final designs, depicted below, were specifically chosen for their symbolic meaning. The 25 cent stamp features a stylized crocodile intended to represent the Timorese creation myth described above. The 50 cent stamp features a palm frond, a traditional Timorese symbol of welcome and celebration. The dollar stamp depicts coffee beans and a coffee farmer, the occupation of the majority of the population and the primary export crop of the country. The two dollar stamp features the national flag and a stylized *uma lulik*. Distinctive traditional *tais*, or traditional woven cloth, patterns that form the backdrop of each stamp were reportedly commissioned by Australia Post and are said to represent a national "united *tais*" based on regional designs from the country's thirteen districts. The *tais* pattern is also intended to symbolize a "weaving together of past and present to create the new country's future."[40]



(Official stamps, Images from http://www.coinsusallecollection.com)

In addition, two other commemorative stamps were issued on the same date.[41] The first depicts then recently-elected President Xanana Gusmão with the following annotation: "Xanana Gusmãão, President of the youngest country of the Twenty-First Century." The other shows a simple map of the country with the capital city, Dili, marked clearly and the annotation: "The youngest country of the Twenty-First Century." Both include a depiction of the national flag. Here, too, it was clearly no accident that the design of the stamps was

[39] Stephens, 2002.
[40] Stephens, 2002.
[41] Commonwealth Stamps Opinion, 22 July 2013.

intended to evoke, or at least assert, a sense of national identity. Even before his election as the first President of the newly-independent country, Xanana Gusmão had long been the most recognizable figure in the resistance movement. The map, meanwhile, with its lack of internal borders, regions, or other cities draws a clear distinction between "us" and the rest of the world (in this case, neighboring Indonesia).

http://timor-leste.zzl.org/stamps.html

Almost a year and a half later, Timor-Leste also issued a set of national coins. The decision was taken during the period of United Nations administration for the country to adopt, at least temporarily, the U.S. dollar as its official currency. In 2003, the Banking and Payments Authority (BPA) of newly-independent Timor-Leste decided not to revisit that decision, citing the inherent cost and difficulty involved for small, developing to manage an exchange rate regime and national currency reserves. The BPA did decide, however, to use its authority to introduce a set of coins, known as "centavos," with a value at parity with U.S. cents.[42] The coins were designed and produced in cooperation with the Portuguese Mint and Official Printing Office and ultimately approved by the President of Timor-Leste; they have been in regular and continuous use throughout the country to the present date. Each of the coins has a common face that, aside from its particular numerical value, depicts a *kaibauk* which "represents one of the symbols of power in Timor-Leste" surrounded by a *tais* border with a traditional crocodile pattern. The rear faces of the coins also depict notable symbols: a Nautilus (to draw "attention to the need to preserve our country's maritime resources"), a rice plant ("to draw attention to the need to provide food for all Timorese, especially the poor"), a Timorese rooster (as an "homage to Timorese culture, but also to recognise the determination of the Timorese people during the struggle for independence"), a traditional fishing boat (to draw "attention to the need to use marine resources economically"), and a coffee plant ("to emphasise the wealth that comes from exports of this product" and as an "homage to the 75%

[42] Banking and Payments Authority, October 2003.

of Timorese people who live in rural areas and who principally depend on agriculture for their livelihood").[43]

(Coins of Timor-Leste, Image from Banking and Payments Authority of Timor-Leste, October 2003)

A subsequent set of stamps was designed, printed, and issued in cooperation with the Portuguese Mint and Official Printing Office on November 28, 2005, the 30th anniversary of the original declaration of independence by FRETILIN.[44] Once again, the design indicates a clear intent to reproduce national symbols. In addition to depicting a Timorese child, an adult, a rooster, and the national flag, the 75 cent or centavo stamp depicts the martyred resistance leader Nicolau Lobato, who, in addition to being one of the founders of FRETILIN, was also one of those who declared independence thirty years earlier and served briefly as Timor-Leste's first Prime Minister.

[43] Banking and Payments Authority, October 2003.
[44] Serra, No Date Indicated.

(Timorese stamps, http://commonwealthstampsopinion.blogspot.com)

A few years later, on the 6th anniversary of the restoration of independence on May 20, 2008, yet another set of stamps was issued depicting two more historical and symbolic national figures: Nobel Peace Prize Laureates Jose Ramos Horta (who was also President at that time) and Bishop Ximenes Belo (who had since departed Timor-Leste to serve the Catholic Church abroad).

(Timorese stamps, http://timor-leste.zzl.org/stamps.html)

While on the surface these efforts appear to represent deliberate and thoughtful attempts at nation building, the issuance of stamps, in particular, needs to be considered in the Timorese context. Although the Timor Postal Service was formally established in April 2000, domestic postal service has been severely limited for most of the post-independence period. A Central Post Office building was inaugurated only in June 2010.[45] It is probably safe to assume that the primary users and consumers of Timorese postage stamps have been foreign collectors and the vast majority of Timorese citizens have probably never laid eyes on one of these Timorese stamps. As a result, it is doubtful that these particular philatelic nation

[45] Republica Democratica de Timor-Leste, 14 June 2010.

building efforts - funded and conducted by Australia Post and the Portuguese Mint and Official Printing Office, albeit in close consultation with Timorese authorities - have had much of an impact on the national consciousness or in shaping a sense of national identity.

The use of Timorese coins, on the other hand, is quite widespread throughout the country and many if not most Timorese handle them on a regular basis. In contrast with the individual personalities chosen for some of the stamps, the symbolic representations depicted on the coins appears to reflect an effort to select symbols that ordinary Timorese recognize and accept rather than shape their sense of identity. The exception, of course, is the subsequent addition in 2012 of a coin commemorating the colonial resistance figure Dom Boaventura to the older set that has been in circulation since 2002 (to be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5). Regardless of the symbolic representations, however, the coins themselves have become tangible, everyday reminders of the nation. But while Timorese nation builders had (and have) sound reasons for postponing the introduction of a national currency, the fact that Timorese coins coexist with a ubiquitous and decidedly foreign paper currency - the U.S. dollar - somewhat diminishes their symbolic impact on a sense of independence and nationhood. In that light, a future decision by the Timorese government to replace the U.S. dollar - when economic circumstances permit - with its own national paper currency will represent a potent opportunity to elevate still more symbols and continue to shape national identity.

(Timorese woman weaving a *tais*, source http://www.etwa.org.au)

The reproduction of Timorese traditional woven cloth or *tais* patterns, however, on stamps and currency and their use in other important ways may well represent one of the most deliberate and successful efforts to fuse indigenous symbols with the nation. The tradition of weaving and the woven textiles themselves have long been a key part of Timorese culture and society. "Men and women wear distinctively different *tais*. *Tais Mane* or 'man's

cloth' are woven as one large piece of cloth in bright colours often featuring a fringe or tassels. These are wrapped around the waist like a sarong. *Tais Feto* or 'women's cloth' are sewn together to form a tube. The women wear it tucked around the waist or pulled high like a dress worn with bare shoulders."[46] In addition to serving as everyday clothing and as a medium for economic exchange, *tais* are used in social rituals, including births, weddings, funerals, and and other traditional and cultural events. As the weavers and experts in this cultural craft, women, in particular, play a critical role in this culturally and economically significant aspect of Timorese society. Although the craft suffered as a result of the social disruption caused by the Indonesian occupation, it became an important means by which villages and communities sought to rebuild and recover after independence.

Tais patterns are passed down from generation to generation and often incorporate local stories, events, and beliefs, making them ideal repositories and representations of symbolic identity. Villages, communities, and districts are known for particular patterns, motifs, styles, and colors. As noted above, these motifs include, for example, stylized reproductions of the mythical crocodile as well as depictions of *uma lulik* or sacred houses. The ubiquity of *tais* throughout the country makes them a useful symbol that both unites the country around its indigenous traditions while recognizing and celebrating regional diversity through the variety of patterns and styles. "Designs that recur throughout the island transcend ethnic-linguistic diversity and reflect an overarching unity in Timor aesthetics," noted one expert.[47] At the same time, the prevalence of similar weaving traditions in neighboring Indonesia may limit the utility of *tais* as a symbol to distinguish the nation geographically. Another researcher remarked, for example, that as Timor-Leste seeks to "redefine… a distinct, traditional… Timorese identity. The impact of these issues can be seen in the textiles now being created in East Timor, as weavers find themselves caught between tradition and innovation, between a desire to establish a distinctly East Timorese identity and the realisation of their many links with Indonesian traditions."[48]

Nevertheless, the adoption of *tais* for symbolic nation building purposes in Timor-Leste is well under way. The ritual presentation, for example, of "the *selendang*, a long slender piece of cloth used for giving tribute by being placed ceremoniously around the neck"[49] has been adopted throughout the country at public events to honor senior Timorese officials or foreign

[46] Delaney, 2010.
[47] Bennett, 1998, p. 44.
[48] Pide, 2002, p. 2.
[49] Niner, "Strong Cloth," No date indicated.

dignitaries. Representative examples of *tais* from each of the thirteen districts decorate the walls of the main chamber of the National Parliament of Timor-Leste. Finally, as indicated above, the deliberate decision to incorporate *tais* patterns into stamps and coins suggests that Timorese leaders have recognized their symbolic value and potential use in their nation building efforts.

Graves & Memorials

Another particular aspect of Timorese tradition and culture worth exploring in the context of the early nation building efforts is the important role played by graves and memorials. As noted above, Timorese culture places enormous value on the veneration of ancestors. The process of such veneration begins immediately after a relative's death and is governed by ritualistic ceremonies of burial. The various processes of interment practiced in communities across the country serve the fundamental purpose of facilitating passage of the deceased to the sacred world. In fact, many believe that without a proper burial, the deceased's soul may "wander" and become malign rather than make the transition to becoming an ancestor. The burial ritual also provides a tangible connection between the deceased and the community, a physical reminder that can serve as a focus for remembrance.[50]

The violence and forced migrations associated with the Indonesian occupation, however, disrupted many of these traditional ceremonies and deprived families of the opportunity to bury their deceased relatives. The fact that they died for the cause of Timorese independence, moreover, merely enhanced the desire and expectation on the part of their surviving relatives that their bodies be properly buried and their memories duly honored.

The international community and the fledgling Timorese state were overwhelmed by the enormous challenges of repairing the damage caused in the aftermath of the 1999 referendum. In this context, it may not be surprising that early efforts directed towards locating, identifying, and properly burying and commemorating the remains of people killed were deemed insufficient. A survey conducted under the auspices of the International Committee for the Red Cross over ten years after independence found that 86 percent of affected families continue to seek to recover the remains of their missing relatives. The same survey found that even when bodies could not be recovered, local communities expected authorities to recognize

[50] McWilliam & Bexley 2008; Robins, 2010; Kent, 2012

their sacrifices through reparations and the establishment of memorials that could serve as physical alternatives to grave sites.[51]

In the absence of measures by the national state, however, local communities across the country took matters into their own hands, erecting their own memorials for victims. A number of these memorials were deliberately placed in public spaces in what appears to have been a deliberate effort to solicit public recognition for the sacrifices made in the name of the Timorese nation. Lia Kent has documented some of these efforts in Liquica, Suai, Maliana, and Lautem. She notes that:

> Local memory projects contest the national leadership's current entreaty to focus on the future rather than the past by publicly declaring that the past is important and that victims' suffering continues to resonate in the present. In addition, they seek to enlarge current official categories of recognition which have focused on acknowledging the contribution of 'veterans' who fulfilled leadership roles during the Resistance. They are statements about the need to recognize the many so-called povu kiik (small people/ordinary people) who suffered.[52]

Although Timorese national authorities took steps to honor fallen Timorese military heroes, including the ongoing search for the remains of the martyred resistance leader Nicolau Lobato, the establishment of the Heroes' Cemetery at Metinaro (see Chapter 5) and pensions for surviving family members (see Chapter 4), such measures did not initially extend to civilian victims. More recently, however, according to one senior official, the Timorese government has worked with local communities and civil society groups to support the establishment of permanent memorials at the Santa Cruz Cemetery, at the site of the Suai massacre, and other locations.[53] The failure to adopt these and other measures earlier, however, surely contributed to a sense of disappointment among the many thousands of affected families and hampered efforts to promote a stronger sense of national identity.

Creation myths, sacred sites, graves, and the *uma lulik* and traditional *liurai* authority structure play an important role in Timorese society, but the evidence suggests that with the exception of adopting *tais* patterns for a number of purposes, international and Timorese nation builders were largely reactive in engaging with these symbols, making only occasional

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[51] Robins, 2010
[52] Kent, 2008, pp. 12-14.
[53] Babo Soares, Dionisio. Personal interview. 24 April 2011.

belated and half-hearted efforts, if at all, to incorporate them in the nation building process. As one local expert has noted, "the Timor-Leste state failed to recognize and incorporate *lulik* values… If this phenomenon continues, many Timorese believe that the country will face many political conflicts and violence in the future."[54] The *uma lulik* and traditional culture, in particular, will almost certainly continue to play an important role in the communal spiritual life of Timorese society and perhaps even in legitimating local authority in the modern, democratic system. Avoiding potential conflicts between traditional and modern politics and finding creative ways to build on rather than undermine this popular form of legitimacy will continue to be a major challenge for Timor-Leste national authorities and may ultimately limit the utility of this institution for nation building purposes. David Hicks crystalized this argument well by noting that conflict between two political cultures - the local *aðat*, or indigenous values and traditions and the more recently imposed Western values of governance and jurisprudence - had "militate[d] against the ambitions of Timor-Leste's government and the United Nations to create an integrated national identity." Hicks argued further that "a synthesis is necessary" and should the would-be nation builders "modify this Western model by accommodating local *aðat*, thus creating a more syncretic single political culture, Timor-Leste would be given more opportunity than it presently has to evolve into a unified nation-state."[55] Despite the early reluctance on the part of nation builders to incorporate and institutionalize these indigenous symbols in the nation, individual politicians and political parties appreciated and sought to leverage their potency in their electoral campaigns.

Voting "Rites": Plebiscites and Elections

The institutions of governance, or the state, are often closely associated with the nation. In fact, the goal of a country's leaders is often to fuse the state with the nation, making alternative articulations of the nation unthinkable. This is normally accomplished by establishing the state's legitimacy among the general population either by means of accountability and/or by providing effective and desired services to the people. There is a robust academic literature that focuses on the question of legitimacy as established through the conduct of democratic elections, being accountable to citizens, ensuring security and stability, upholding rule of law, and providing basic social services. As a young nation forced

[54] Trindade, 2011
[55] Hicks, 2012, p. 26

to build these institutions from the ground up with an insufficient talent pool of educated and experienced civil servants, Timor-Leste has faced and continues to face exceptional challenges in this regard. Its success in these areas and, in particular, its ability to keep pace with the expectations of its citizens will necessarily have a direct impact on the success of the larger nation building project.

The August 30, 1999 Public Consultation

Although it is beyond the scope of this research to analyze every aspect of this ongoing process, this section will examine some of the symbolic and ritualistic elements of governance institutions that form part of the larger iconography of the Timorese nation. Many of these symbols and rituals are closely associated with the modern democratic process that was largely introduced to Timor-Leste following the August 30, 1999 referendum during the United Nations transitional administration and continued following the restoration of independence in 2002.

In fact, as is the case with many modern democracies, one of the most significant rituals incorporated into the Timorese nation building process was the very ritual which led to its independence - the national referendum or plebiscite. The August 30, 1999 referendum was a defining moment in the history of the Timorese nation and in the minds of all Timorese old enough to remember the event. Although most people had to walk for miles to the nearest polling station, a stunning 98.6 percent of registered voters cast ballots in a United Nations-administered vote on the question of whether to accept the proposal to establish Timor-Leste as a "special autonomous province" within Indonesia. Despite overwhelming pressure and intimidation in the months leading up to the vote, 78.5 percent voted against the autonomy proposal (in other words, in favor of full independence instead), unleashing violent retribution by Indonesia and pro-Indonesian forces. As a result, it is perhaps no surprise that elections have developed in the early years of independence as an important and largely successful democratic process that has conveyed considerable legitimacy to the national governing institutions. Subsequent elections for the Constituent Assembly in 2001 and for village chiefs, Parliament, and the Presidency are all public and national rituals that repeat that performance that effectively gave birth to the nation and, consequently, draw on its legitimizing value.

Interestingly, some of the symbolic aspects of that initial plebiscite have also been echoed in subsequent elections. In a country where literacy levels were and remain low by

international standards, ballots have been developed that include imagery to help communicate the choices available to voters. The August 30, 1999 referendum ballot included two images: First, to illustrate a vote in favor of the autonomy proposal was a pictorial representation of Timor-Leste's map with an Indonesian flag planted on the territory and images of Timorese sacred houses, or *uma lulik*, in the background; Second, to illustrate a vote against the proposal was a pictorial representation of Timor-Leste's map with the National Council of Timorese Resistance (CNRT) flag planted on its territory.

(Referendum icons, Images from Wikipedia)

Both images reflect a deliberate attempt to appeal to popular sentiment. By including the depictions of the *uma lulik*, the pro-autonomy image sought to draw an explicit connection between traditional Timorese culture and similar practices found in neighboring Indonesian provinces. By referring directly to the CNRT, the anti-autonomy image sought to evoke the popular support for the resistance movement and political parties that had been unified under the leadership of the popular FALINTIL Commander in Chief and CNRT President Xanana Gusmão (who had been imprisoned in Jakarta since his capture in 1992). Both images included flag icons which carry a deep significance in local culture not merely as political symbols, but also as sacred objects, or *lulik*. The resistance movement was well aware of the importance of symbols in the lead-up to this critical vote. Even before the two sides had reached agreement with the United Nations on preferred symbols, a Commission for Planning and Campaign Coordination (CPCC) was formed under the leadership of Xanana Gusmão and its members moved quickly to launch their campaign. Denied access to most mass communication facilities, they printed thousands of copies of the CNRT flag raised on top of the territory of Timor-Leste and distributed them door-to-door across the country. "We saw the issue of the flag as quite crucial when we reflected on the fact that a majority of East

Timorese villagers were illiterate, and would probably be attracted by symbols rather than written materials," noted the CPCC's head of social communications.[56] These and other images would be reused on subsequent ballots in elections in the years to come.

The 2001 Constituent Assembly Election

The first such election took place in August 2001 to select representatives for the Constituent Assembly which would be empowered to draft the country's first Constitution.[57] For a country with no real experience with modern representative democracy, it was perhaps no surprise that these elections were largely devoid of debate on policy, programs, and priorities. Instead, the campaign was characterized by direct appeals to national values and emotional heart strings; as one observer notes: "the outcome… was rooted in the manipulation of indigenous values, symbols, and the history of the resistance fight."[58]

The election campaign featured direct outreach by the party leaders to each of the districts. Such events tended to follow a particular pattern whereby speeches were given, food and pamphlets were distributed, and the party flags were ceremoniously raised.[59] FRETILIN, in particular, had the most success in associating its campaign with the resistance movement, including the staging of visits to the memorial sites of fallen FALINTIL commanders and newly-christened national heroes Nicolau Lobato and Nino Konis Santana.[60] FRETILIN explicitly asked for support along these lines, arguing that voting for FRETILIN was the best way to honor those who had died during the resistance. This was a particularly powerful appeal in Timor-Leste where virtually everyone lost family members in the struggle and traditional culture venerates ancestors.[61]

Other parties were at a disadvantage with their more limited ability to appeal to the theme of the resistance movement. Xavier de Amaral, a founding member of FRETILIN and President of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste at the time of its initial founding in 1975, but who had fallen out with the party during the occupation when he had advocated talks with the Indonesians, led the recreated Timorese Social Democratic Association (ASDT,

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[56] Araujo, 2000, p. 108
[57] Note: It would also become the first National Parliament, although at the time it was not yet clear whether or not there would be separate parliamentary elections following the adoption of the Constitution.
[58] Hohe, 2002, p. 70
[59] Hohe, 2002, p. 75
[60] Hohe, 2002, p. 75
[61] Hohe, 2002, p. 76

in Portuguese).[62] Mario Carrascalão, a founding member of Democratic Union of Timor-Leste (UDT, in Portuguese) which had opposed outright independence and fought a bitter civil war against FRETILIN in 1975 and subsequently a governor of Timor-Leste during the Indonesian occupation, created a new party, the Social Democratic Party. Fernando "Lasama" de Araujo, the founder of the National Resistance of Students of Timor-Leste (RENETIL) in 1988 and a major player in the clandestine movement and in the Timorese diaspora abroad, meanwhile, created the Democratic Party just a few months before the elections to appeal directly to younger generations of Timorese. Each of these parties either lacked popular brand recognition or was unable to tap into popular support for the independence movement. In addition, while the party leaders were known, at least among certain circles or in certain areas, their personal histories during the resistance lacked the unambiguous moral authority that FRETILIN enjoyed as a party.

The Democratic Party, in particular, made a conscious effort to associate itself with the resistance. At its rallies members of the clandestine movement were called up on stage by the code names they had been known by during the resistance.[63] But Fernando "Lasama" de Araujo and the other former student leaders and intellectuals simply did not have the name recognition of the more prominent heroes of the resistance. Perhaps as a result, facing an uphill battle against FRETILIN in the election campaign, the Democratic Party even resorted to attempts to use the images of Xanana Gusmão and José Ramos-Horta (neither a party member) in their campaign materials until they were rebuked for doing so.[64]

In addition to the resistance movement, political parties also appealed to other sources of popular legitimacy in efforts to broaden their public appeal. These themes - illustrated in the symbols and language employed by political parties during the election campaign - also reflect forms cultural authority prevalent in Timorese society and, therefore, potential alternative poles of national identity. As was the case with the August 1999 popular referendum, party flags featured prominently in the elections for the Constituent Assembly. A prominent feature at all political rallies, including subsequent elections, "the flag… is perhaps the key symbol and identifying marker of allegiance and alliance.[65]" Parties used animal symbols on their flags, for example, to appeal directly to Timorese cultural traditions and values. The crocodile, in particular, as noted above is a sacred animal that is viewed as an incarnation of

[62] Note: FRETILIN was originally established as the Association of Social Democrats of Timor-Leste before being renamed in 1974.
[63] Hohe, 2002, p. 76
[64] Smith, 2004, p. 150, and Babo Soares,et. al., 2003, p. 13

ancestral spirits and an enormously important symbol in Timor-Leste. PSD used the symbol of the crocodile on its flag and PSD leader Mario Carrascalão recounted the crocodile myth in his campaign rhetoric to evoke nationalist emotion and promote his vision for national unity.[66] Another animal used as a political symbol for its association with courage and perseverance was the rooster.[67]

(PSD flag, Image from Wikipedia)

The Association of Timorese Heroes (KOTA) and the People's Party of Timor (PPT), meanwhile, openly campaigned for the maintenance of traditional hierarchy as personified by the local tribal rulers or *liurai*. The symbols used on their flags, as well as that of UDT, sought to evoke traditional culture and values, including sacred houses or *uma lulik*. *Uma lulik,* as noted above, represent the foundational social unit that unites families and clans in villages across the country. Timorese continue to identify themselves in relation to their *uma lulik* and the social structures and connections that it embodies. The use of the *uma lulik* as a symbol, therefore, was an explicit recognition of the continued importance of traditional authorities and customs. Political parties also used the *kaibauk* (a silver crescent headdress or crown stylized after the horns of a buffalo), *surik* (a traditional sword or knife), and *rota* (a traditional rod or staff), all symbols of authority worn or carried by *liurai*.

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[65] McWilliam & Bexley, 2008, p. 70
[66] Hohe, 2002, p. 78
[67] Note: Cock fighting is popular throughout Timor-Leste and nearby parts of Indonesia. The cock is similarly prized in Portugal where it also serves as a national symbol.

(KOTA flag, Image from Antonio Martins)

(PPT flag, Image from Antonio Martins)

(UDT flag, Image from Antonio Martins)

Amid the general lack of public knowledge and awareness of the various political parties, however, FRETILIN was the party with the broadest brand recognition. As a result, it is perhaps unsurprising that the Timorese Nationalist Party (PNT, in Portuguese), which adopted a flag that closely resembled the FRETILIN flag, may have successfully siphoned off some of the votes that were otherwise intended for FRETILIN.[68] ASDT, meanwhile, led by former FRETILIN head Francisco Xavier do Amaral, had adopted an earlier version of the FRETILIN flag similar to that adopted by FALINTIL, CNRT, and, later, the F-FDTL. This, combined with Xavier do Amaral's popular image in his home district of Aileu and his appeal to followers of the dissident group CPD-RDTL, may explain his party's success in

[68] Babo Soares, et. al., 2003, p. 12

Aileu where ASDT won 52 percent of the vote, the only district where FRETILIN failed to win at least a plurality.[69]

None of the other parties, however, were able to overcome FRETILIN's advantages in brand recognition, organizational capacity, funding, and, perhaps most importantly, association with the resistance movement and independence struggle. FRETILIN Secretary-General Mari Alkatiri's prediction of a victory of over 80 percent of the popular vote was not seen as unachievable. FRETILIN was chastised, however, by United Nations officials and other parties, as well as voters themselves, for its use of inflammatory language. In particular, FRETILIN leaders promised a "clean sweep" of the opposition, a deliberate echo of language used by the Indonesian military during the occupation.[70] In the end, FRETILIN failed to achieve the overwhelming victory they were hoping for, but did manage to secure 57 percent of the vote and 64 percent of the seats in the Constituent Assembly. Other parties which managed to draw support included the Democratic Party with 9 percent and PSD and ASDT with 8 percent each.

This election revealed a number of early trends and patterns that continue to characterize the Timorese electoral process. First, as the Timorese nation itself is being constructed on the basis of shared narratives and unifying poles of national identity, Timorese political parties have actively engaged in that ongoing discourse and sought to tap those popular sources of legitimacy for public support. As suggested by the earlier chapter on the origins of Timorese identity, moreover, one of the most powerful such themes appears to be the public support for the resistance movement and the shared suffering endured during the independence struggle. FRETILIN's electoral edge, particularly in this first election, stemmed as much from its advantaged position in that regard as it did from its organizational and financial lead on other parties. Although other parties were not as successful at tapping the public support for the independence struggle in their 2001 campaigns, FRETILIN's advantage dissipated in subsequent elections. Xanana Gusmão's subsequent creation of the CNRT, for example, presented voters with a clear alternative led by an undisputed and popular leader of the resistance. Divisions within the broad public support for the resistance, including between the veterans of the armed resistance and the clandestine movement, for example, also emerged later and were exploited by individual parties.

Another significant pattern visible in this election that was particularly important from the perspective of nation building was the clear emergence of a geographic divide that would

[69] Babo Soares, et. al., 2003, p. 18

persist through subsequent elections and continues even today. FRETILIN polled considerably higher in the eastern districts than in the western districts of the country, specifically 67 percent in the *firaku* districts as opposed to 46 percent in the *kalaʊi* districts.[71] In the wake of the subsequent 2006 crisis and the surfacing of tensions between easterners and westerners, these geographic divisions continued to manifest in the 2007 and 2012 elections and has led to persistent concerns about regional voting blocs and geographic cleavages in the nation.

The 2007 Presidential and Parliamentary Elections

The next major elections took place in 2007, in the wake of a major political crisis in 2006 that had led the country to the brink of collapse. With armed military and police deserters still at large and international peacekeepers and the battered Timorese security services struggling to control violence between rival gangs and martial arts groups in Dili and around the country, the 2007 presidential and parliamentary elections were seen as an opportunity to reset the nation building project. Citizens would have an opportunity to voice their opinions at the ballot boxes and a new government would have a fresh mandate to rebuild and strengthen state institutions. Equally important, elections would once again serve as a public forum for the reaffirmation and articulation of competing nationhood narratives. Following Prime Minister Alkatiri's resignation, Ramos-Horta was selected as a caretaker Prime Minister to lead the FRETILIN government and the country through the 2007 elections.

José Ramos-Horta himself, along with seven other candidates, competed in the presidential elections. The President of FRETILIN and the National Parliament, Francisco (Lu Olo) Guterres and the President of the Democratic Party (PD) Fernando (Lasama) Araujo were the other main candidates. Fourteen separate parties, meanwhile, competed in the subsequent parliamentary elections held a few months later.

President Xanana Gusmão, who had declined to join a political party during the 2001 Constituent Assembly elections and had run as an independent in the 2002 Presidential election, ultimately organized his own political party - the National Congress of the Timorese Reconstruction (CNRT) - to compete in the 2007 elections. The name of the party was an

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[70] Timor-Leste Armed Violence Assessment, 2009, p. 2
[71] King, 2003, p. 753

explicit reference to the National Council of Timorese Resistance (known by the same acronym, CNRT) which had been formed in 1998 to bring together the disparate political movements during the late stages of the Timorese independence struggle. The previous CNRT - to which the then-political prisoner, Xanana Gusmão, was named president - is credited with bringing together the various strands of the resistance and helping to mobilize international pressure on Indonesia and support for eventual Timorese independence. The original CNRT was dissolved after the successful 1999 referendum to pave the way for a multi-party political system in an independent Timor-Leste. Xanana's appropriation of the CNRT label several years later for his new political party was an obvious attempt to appeal for broad national support[72] or, as one observer noted, to "wrap… himself in the metaphorical banner of independence."[73] It was also no accident that the new CNRT also adopted a flag that closely resembled the original CNRT flag which, in turn, was based on the original FALINTIL flag.[74]

As was the case in the Constituent Assembly election in 2001, the parties and candidates in 2007 resorted to familiar themes that appealed to core unifying elements of national identity. Candidate biographies and rhetoric, moreover, emphasized the roles that those individuals played during the resistance, the shared suffering they experienced, adherence to the Catholic Church, respect for martyrs and ancestors, and, where applicable and advantageous, personal and hereditary connections with local communities.[75] "Campaign symbolism promoted heroic images of the respective leaders, their contributions to the national struggle for independence and their capacity to reclaim the much sought after *Unidade Nacional* (National Unity)," wrote one observer.[76] Ramos-Horta's campaign, for example, featured posters depicting him together with the Roman Catholic Pope and co-Nobel Prize winner Bishop Belo, suggesting that he enjoyed the support of the Church.[77] Candidates

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[72] Leach, 2009, p. 224
[73] Kingsbury, 2009, p. 163
[74] Other parties adopted similar strategies. Xavier de Amaral's decision, for example, to reuse the name the Timorese Social Democratic Association (ASDT), was a reference to FRETILIN's predecessor, one of the original political parties established in the wake of the Carnation Revolution. Separately, in 2007 a splinter group from FRETILIN adopted the moniker FRETILIN-Mudança (FRETILIN-Change), but was later forced to change to the Front for the National Reconstruction of Timor-Leste, or simply, Frenti-Mudança.
[75] Silva, 2008.
[76] McWilliam & Bexley, 2008, p. 69
[77] Molnar, 2010, p. 127

also relied heavily on the support of local resistance veterans and traditional village leaders to campaign in their communities.[78]

Candidates often highlighted their differences, for example between "authentic" Timorese and mixed-heritage *mestiços* or between those who had spent the resistance in Timor-Leste as opposed to abroad. Less obvious were specific appeals along the divisive east-west fault line that had emerged in the 2006 crisis, although at least one observer noted that FRETILIN Secretary General Alkatiri referred to "the suffering of easterners" in the 2006 crisis on his eastern campaign stops.[79] Xanana Gusmão, for his part, challenged FRETILIN's efforts to symbolically equate the party with the successful resistance movement and the creation of the Timorese nation. In a prelude to his campaign rhetoric, he noted in his June 2006 speech that "[n]owadays, we hear that it was only FRETILIN that carried out the struggle… but please do not throw sands to the eyes of the People because it was the entire People who voted [for independence]." In response to accusations that he, himself, was a "divisive" force, Gusmão argued, with considerable sarcasm that

> As far as the politicians and the highly educated ones are concerned, everyone must join FRETILIN, whether they are the Police, F-FDTL, public employees, business people, sucos, hamlets, buffaloes, ants, trees, grasses, and everything should join FRETILIN. Timor-Leste is FRETILIN, and FRETILIN is Timor-Leste. There should not be anything other than FRETILIN, or a people other than FRETILIN's. This explains the saying that "Xanana divides Timor-Leste"…

In the end, FRETILIN was defeated by coalitions in both electoral contests. Although it continued to dominate in the three easternmost districts, confirming a geographic divide in voter loyalties, FRETILIN lost a significant percentage of the overall vote when compared to the results of the 2001 Constituent Assembly elections (29 percent in 2007 compared to 57 percent in 2001). The drop in support can probably be attributed to the emergence of Xanana Gusmão's CNRT party as an competitor for the resistance narrative mantle and general dissatisfaction with FRETILIN's performance in office, particularly during the 2006 crisis. Particularly marked drops in support for FRETILIN were observed in the western districts of the country.[80] With the support of Gusmão as well as most of the runners-up from the

[78] Silva, 2008, pp. 169-73
[79] McWilliam & Bexley, 2008, p. 74
[80] McWilliam & Bexley, 2008, p. 77

inconclusive first round of presidential elections, Ramos-Horta defeated Francisco Lu Olo Guterres in the second round with 65 percent of the total vote. Although FRETILIN won the largest single share of the votes in the parliamentary elections, here, too, the opposing parties lined up to form a parliamentary coalition behind CNRT with Xanana Gusmão as Prime Minister.

In an explicit acknowledgment of the divisions that had threatened to plunge the country into civil war and continued to manifest themselves in the election results, newly-elected Prime Minister Gusmão dedicated his new mandate to "all Timorese, from Los Palos to Oecussi." He noted further that, "[l]ast year, we all were participants and spectators to violence that lives on as a nightmare, part of both our distant and recent past. We accept, with disappointment, the reopening of wounds that were not healed and the opening of profound new ones." Gusmão proposed that "we free ourselves from ties of the past, dignifying the heroes of our liberation and with the strong foundation of our culture and the sense of belonging to a community, we will build for all a better Timor-Leste."[81]

The elections proved to be a decisive and successful event in the development of the country and nation. Voter participation was high and the elections were deemed free, fair, and credible, albeit with a number of incidents of election-related violence, particularly after the final results were determined. FRETILIN initially challenged the legality of President Ramos-Horta's decision to allow the CNRT to form a government with the other parties, but ultimately allowed for a relatively peaceful transfer of power and assumed the role of the country's major opposition party. Whereas in the 2001 Constituent Assembly elections FRETILIN had been largely successful in casting the party as both synonymous with and integral to Timorese national identity, in 2007 Gusmão and others successfully challenged that narrative.

One should be careful not to assume that electoral victories automatically convey popular legitimacy. While this has become an article of faith in established democracies, in much of the developing world elections are not seen as sacrosanct. This is particularly true in young democracies. In Timor-Leste, in fact, there were many in FRETILIN who believed that because the party had been founded as a "front" organization representing all of the Timorese people and given its instrumental role in ultimately delivering independence to the

[81] Gusmão, 8 August 2007.

country FRETILIN had an inherent "right" to govern.[82] Following the conduct of a free and fair election in any new democracy, perhaps an even more important turning point comes later when the initial ruling party faces electoral defeat and must peacefully surrender power to an opposing party or coalition. In the case of Timor-Leste, this critical juncture came after the parliamentary elections in June 2007. It was far from assured that FRETILIN would accept "defeat" at the polls and equally problematic that in the case of a FRETILIN "victory" other parties would accuse the FRETILIN government of manipulating the electoral process.[83]

The ritual of voting in free, fair, and credible elections has certainly contributed to the success of ongoing nation building efforts in Timor-Leste, conveying no small amount of legitimacy to the elected governments and the institutions of state. National elections in Timor-Leste have also proven to be both arenas and occasions for political parties and politicians to deploy nationalist rhetoric and symbols in an effort to mobilize popular support. The extent to which particular rhetoric or symbols resonate with the public therefore provide us with some indications as to the success of the nation building process. The universal appeal of the resistance narrative and the importance that the public attaches to the role of specific individuals and parties during the occupation suggests that the narrative of the independence struggle is firmly entrenched in the national consciousness. At the same time, election results have demonstrated that the mantle of the independence struggle is still actively contested by major political parties. In addition, parties have had some success in appealing to differences in the resistance narrative itself, appealing specifically to veterans of the armed or clandestine branches of the movement or to the suffering of victims of the occupation. These themes will be explored further in later sections of this dissertation.

Other symbols invoked by almost all of the parties include those associated with traditional authorities and local customs. As shown above, however, Timorese nation builders and the state itself largely neglected these sources of authority in their early efforts to construct the nation. The appeal of these symbols, although perhaps not a determining factor in the election results, nevertheless suggests their continued potency as sources of popular legitimacy and point to an underlying potential for conflict between the state and the village or between modernity and tradition.

Finally, the actual pattern of voting that has emerged in successive elections reveals the alarming potential for a geographic cleavage in the nation. In a more developed democracy, a political party's dominance in a particular geographic region of a country might not be a cause

[82] Kingsbury, 2009, p. 165

for alarm. In a young, developing democracy like Timor-Leste, however, geographic and regional cleavages have the potential to undermine the nation building effort. FRETILIN's dominance in the eastern districts of the country in successive elections and the fact that perceptions of geographic differences played a contributing role in the 2006 crisis is an indication that Timorese nation builders failed to anticipate and adequately address a major challenge to national unity.

The Constitution and National Symbols

The drafting of a national constitution is a seminal event in the formation of any nation. Timor-Leste was no exception. For the purposes of this research, moreover, the entire drafting process and the final document itself shed considerable light on the intentions of the Timorese nation builders and their efforts, including key decisions regarding national symbols as well as the various contests and negotiations over those symbols. Although only time will tell whether the Timorese document itself can achieve the iconic status enjoyed by other national constitutions, the text of the Timorese document was nevertheless clearly crafted as part of the national narrative of that new nation.

National Narrative and National Symbols

Ideally, the debating, drafting, and adoption of the foundational text for a new democracy would be a unifying process that gives the broader public a direct say and stake in the future of their own nation. On the other hand, finalizing a constitution requires difficult decisions on a broad range of fundamental issues that are likely to uncover deep divisions between political parties and politicians, ethnolinguistic groups and regions, and many other elements of the general public. The process in Timor-Leste failed to live up to the highest ideal expectations and aspects of the final product have been subject to criticism.[84] On the other hand, others have pointed out that the process was nevertheless peaceful, democratic, and included considerable efforts to ensure appropriate transparency and public consultation[85]. With the benefit of hindsight in looking back over the last decade, it appears

[83] Note: The 2007 and 2012 elections will be examined in more detail in subsequent sections of this paper.
[84] Aucoin & Brandt, 2010, pp. 269-271; The Asia Foundation, 2004, pp. 4-5; Babo Soares, et. al., 2003, pp. 25-33.
[85] Nicholson, 2002, p. 204

that aspects of the process and the document itself reflect clear divisions between key actors and, even if they did not specifically exacerbate those differences, they certainly failed to resolve them.

Perhaps the key decision involved the process by which the Constitution would be drafted. Decision makers at the time opted against having a group of technical experts or apolitical public representatives develop the initial draft, but instead delegated that task to the 88 members of a Constituent Assembly elected on August 30, 2001 specifically to debate and draft the Constitution of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste. That process took place over the course of the following months and after a brief period for public consultations the Constitution was formally adopted on March 22, 2002 and came into effect on May 20, 2002 - the day on which the United Nations formally restored independence in the country. Given the political circumstances and context at the time, this effectively gave FRETILIN, the party that dominated the August 30, 2001 Constituent Assembly elections, considerable influence over the process and, therefore, over the selection of key symbols and rituals to be adopted as part of the national identity of Timor-Leste. Perhaps the most significant such image is the articulation of a clear narrative arc connecting the declaration of independence by FRETILIN on November 28, 1975, to the resistance struggle against Indonesia, to the independence of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste. The preamble acknowledges the leadership of FRETILIN, the subsequent establishment of the National Council of the Maubere Resistance and the National Council of Timorese Resistance, salutes the contributions of the armed, clandestine, and diplomatic fronts in the resistance, and concludes that "the preparation and adoption of the Constitution of the Democratic Republic of East Timor is the culmination of the historical resistance of the Timorese People."[86]

An entire section of the Constitution is dedicated, in fact, to the "Valorization of the Resistance," acknowledging the contributions of those who fought for independence, promising "special protection" for their dependents and those disabled in the struggle, and calling for tribute to be paid to national heroes.[87] This section includes the following clause: "The Democratic Republic of East Timor acknowledges and values the secular resistance of the Maubere People against foreign domination and the contribution of all those who fought

[86] Republica Democratica de Timor-Leste, Constitution of the Democratic Republic of Timor Leste, preamble.
[87] Republica Democratica de Timor-Leste, Constitution of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, Part I, Section 11.

for national independence."[88] The inclusion of the phrase "Maubere," a previously derogatory term appropriated and repurposed by FRETILIN in 1975 (as described in Chapter 2) as part of its nationalist campaign,[89] appears to have been a deliberate attempt to associate the modern Timorese nation with FRETILIN and its earlier nation building efforts.[90]

The Constituent Assembly also discussed and selected the actual symbols which would represent the nation itself: its national flag and anthem. Perhaps every single country uses the flag and associated rituals to symbolically represent the nation and the mere sight of one's flag flying in the breeze evokes a strong sense of national pride in citizens the world over. It was no accident, therefore, that the flag raising ceremony to mark the restoration of Timor-Leste's independence inspired precisely those sentiments.

> Tens of thousands of elated East Timorese cheered and wept with joy last night as they celebrated the birth of their tiny nation…The mood at the independence venue at Taci Tolo arena, just outside Dili, was one of subdued elation until the moment when a black, red and gold flag was hoisted and fireworks lit up the night sky. The raising of the flag - a symbol of the resistance during a bloody 24-year Indonesian occupation - triggered shouts of "Freedom!" and "Viva East Timor!" The independence proclamation ended more than 450 years of foreign rule… The East Timor flag was handed by six former members of Falintil's freedom fighters to six members of the East Timor Defence Force and then raised… Minutes later, Xanana Gusmão - a 55-year-old poet and former guerrilla leader - was declared the country's first head of state.[91]

As noted earlier, moreover, flags hold a particular significance in Timor-Leste and are revered as *lulik* or sacred objects and where they connote the "exchange of values that life and society is based on."[92] Despite some earlier discussion and consideration of adopting the CNRT flag, it was no accident in the end that the FRETILIN-dominated Constituent Assembly adopted a national flag that closely resembled the one originally adopted by FRETILIN and flown when it declared Timorese independence on November 28, 1975. The

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[88] Republica Democratica de Timor-Leste, Constitution of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, Part I, Section 11.
[89] Jolliffe, 1978, pp. 103-5
[90] Note: Additional elements of the national narrative inscribed in the Constitution include an affirmation of the role of the Catholic Church in the resistance and the critical need for justice and reconciliation. Both of these will be explored in more detail in subsequent sections.
[91] McCall, *"South China Morning Post,"* 20 May 2002.
[92] Hohe, 2002, p. 80

Constitution not only enshrined the decision, but also laid out a telling interpretation of the symbol itself:

> The National Flag is rectangular and is formed by two isosceles triangles, the bases of which are overlapping. One triangle is black and its height is equal to one-third of the length overlapped to the yellow triangle, whose height is equal to half the length of the Flag. In the centre of the black triangle there is a white star of five ends, meaning the light that guides. The white star has one of its ends turned towards the left side end of the flag. The remaining part of the flag is red. The colours mean: yellow – the traces of colonialism; black – the obscurantism that needs to be overcome; red – the struggle for national liberation; white – peace.[93]

Similarly, the Constitution adopted "Pátria, Pátria, Pátria , Timor-Leste a nossa nação," also used when FRETILIN declared independence in 1975, as the new national anthem to be sung at all official ceremonies. Although written and composed by Timorese, the song is sung in Portuguese. The translated lyrics are as follows:

> Fatherland, fatherland, Timor-Leste, our Nation
> Glory to the people and to the heroes of our liberation
> Fatherland, fatherland, Timor-Leste, our Nation
> Glory to the people and to the heroes of our liberation
> We vanquish colonialism, we cry:
> Down with imperialism!
> Free land, free people,
> No, no, no to exploitation.
> Let us go forward, united, firm and determined
> In the struggle against imperialism,
> The enemy of people, until final victory,
> Onward to revolution.

The articulation of the national narrative and selection of these national symbols by the FRETILIN-dominated Constituent Assembly was not without controversy. Along with the decision to establish May 20, 2002 itself as the "Restoration of Independence Day" (a date which also corresponds to the anniversary of FRETILIN's establishment) and a subsequent law establishing November 28 as the "Proclamation of Independence Day" (commemorating

FRETILIN's 1975 unilateral declaration of independence), these measures were criticized as an overall blatant effort by FRETILIN to 'wrap itself in the flag' and associate the party with the nation's new symbols. One observer summed up those concerns by noting that "the process of drafting the constitution was… haunted by dissatisfaction and protests by opponents of FRETILIN, and claims that FRETILIN unilaterally imposed its will, thus 'undermining' the view of smaller parties during the drafting process."[94]

According to an interviewee, Xanana Gusmão had been among those who had opposed FRETILIN's selection of the national flag, hoping instead to choose another symbol that would not reignite some of the 1975 tensions.[95] Although accepted by most Timorese, tensions over the flag continued for several years among certain groups. Colimau 2000 launched a movement in 2006, for example, demanding that the flag be changed to promote recognition of *all* the parties that played a role in the independence movement, not simply FRETILIN.[96] A later section of the Constitution, however, sets limits on the ability to subsequently modify the choice of the flag and the proclamation of independence day, underlining FRETILIN's determination to make the choice of these important national symbols irrevocable.[97]

An incident at the Independence Day ceremony in May 2009 illustrates both the lingering controversy as well as the growing popular acceptance of the flag. In the presence of the President, Prime Minister, and over a thousand onlookers, the Timorese flag was inadvertently dropped by a member of the honor guard and allowed to touch the ground. Although the Prime Minister later publicly apologized for the incident, many Timorese observers saw it as an ill omen[98] and at least a few still saw it as a sign to replace the "FRETILIN" symbol with a new national flag.[99] Despite such concerns, most Timorese, however, have largely embraced the flag and this and other symbols are now fused with the popular conception of the nation. Still, the perception in the early years that FRETILIN had

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[93] Republica Democratica de Timor-Leste, Constitution of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste.
[94] Babo Soares, et. al., 2002, p. 29
[95] Max Stahl. Personal interview. 4 June 2011.
[96] Scambary, 2013, p. 206
[97] Republica Democratica de Timor-Leste, Constitution of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, Part IV, Section 156; also cited in Leach, 2002, p. 44
[98] Various. Personal interviews. July 2009 - July 2011.
[99] Crook, 26 May 2009.

appropriated the nation's symbols was cause for concern, particularly among other political parties and those opposed to FRETILIN's vision for the country.[100]

These decisions in this foundational document appear to have fueled a major contest in the ongoing nation building process. With the resistance narrative permanently inscribed in the national historical narrative and public consciousness, it has also become the principal prize for political parties and individuals seeking to appropriate the mantle of the resistance and the popular legitimacy that it conveys. FRETILIN's control of the Constituent Assembly, however, enabled it to create a number of powerful associations between the party and that narrative. As opposition party representatives and ordinary citizens have pointed out, FRETILIN's approach in the Constituent Assembly was not inclusive and the result was a critical missed opportunity to create a more unifying national narrative.

The Presidency

Among the most potent national symbols in any country are specific state institutions, like monarchs or heads of state, who literally embody the nation. Amid deepening tensions between FRETILIN and the popular former CNRT President Xanana Gusmão during the early years following the 1999 popular referendum, FRETILIN used its influence in the Constituent Assembly to put forward a draft constitution severely limiting the powers of the presidency, which they correctly anticipated would be easily won by Gusmão. This created an institution lacking in strong executive or decision-making authority. Lamenting the lack of authority vested in that office, Gusmão reportedly told reporters before the April 2002 presidential election which he would go on to win that the President would have only the power "to eat and sleep."[101] Nevertheless, the office was accorded important symbolic authority. The Constitution specifically states that the President is "the Head of State and the *symbol and guarantor of national independence and unity of the State* and of the smooth functioning of democratic institutions" (emphasis added). Additionally, the President is designated as the "Supreme Commander" of the defense forces - another important national symbol that will be described in more detail in Chapter 4.[102] The Constitution also clearly lays out what it expects to become an important national ritual by stipulating that the President shall be inaugurated

[100] Note: The Timorese national emblem was adopted only on January 18, 2007. It, too, is replete with symbolism echoing that of the flag, traditional culture, the resistance, and national unity.
[101] Aucoin & Brandt, 2010, p. 270
[102] Republica Democratica de Timor-Leste, Constitution of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, Section 74.

in a public ceremony at the National Parliament and shall take an oath of office obliging the officeholder to "abide by and enforce the Constitution" and dedicating him or her to the "defense and consolidation of independence and national unity."[103]

Xanana Gusmão, despite his initial protests, went on to run and easily won the first direct election to that office on April 14, 2002 with 82 percent of the vote.[104] Although he chose to run without a particular party endorsement, eleven of the country's political parties offered him their support; FRETILIN meanwhile chose not to endorse either Gusmão or his opponent, Xavier do Amaral.[105] Despite the limited powers afforded to the President by the new Constitution, Gusmão's overwhelming victory gave him a popular mandate that he used, at times, to contest decisions by the FRETILIN government. The tension between Gusmão and FRETILIN over the coming years, in fact, created the appearance of an institutional conflict between the Presidency, on the one hand, and the National Parliament and Government, on the other, undermining the legitimacy and potency of these symbols of the state and nation. Nevertheless, the fact that the first three incumbents of the office of the President - Xanana Gusmão, José Ramos-Horta, and Jose Maria Vasconcelos (better known as Taur Matan Ruak) - were each well known to and deeply respected by the Timorese public for the critical roles they played in the liberation movement has certainly helped establish the Presidency as a unifying national symbol.

Language and Culture

The drafters of the Timorese Constitution were also acutely conscious of the fact that almost every nation around the world is at least partly defined by a shared language. The question of identifying and adopting such a language or languages was and remains particularly problematic for Timor-Leste. Despite its small size and population, Timorese speak over a dozen distinct languages and dialects that are largely unique to the country. Following over two decades of occupation by its neighbor, a large majority of the population spoke Indonesian - a language that was arguably more useful, but also closely and painfully associated with that brutal period. Instead, Tetum and Portuguese which had been associated

[103] Republica Democratica de Timor-Leste, Constitution of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, Section 77.
[104] Note: His opponent, Francisco Xavier do Amaral, the former FRETILIN President who served briefly in 1975 before the Indonesian invasion, had already admitted that he fully expected to lose to Gusmão and was running on democratic principle.
[105] Shoesmith, 2003, p. 243, and Babo Soares, et. al., 2003, p. 21.

with the resistance struggle, were both adopted as official languages. The Constitution also stipulated that Indonesian and English would be used as "working" languages.

Any decision on national languages was fraught with potential problems. Indonesian, although widely spoken, was unacceptable due to its association with the occupying power during the resistance period and the simple fact that most of the Indonesian educators had fled during the post-referendum violence in 1999.[106] Nor was there a history, experience, infrastructure, or cadre of personnel fluent in English to make that language a reasonable option. Most Timorese, meanwhile, accepted that Tetum, although widely spoken, was insufficiently developed as a language to serve many official functions.[107] Portuguese, of course, was spoken by only a small portion of the population, predominantly older elite who had received some education during the Portuguese colonial period. Nevertheless, given the history, existing knowledge base, the desire of the Timorese political elite to pursue close relations with Portugal and the Portuguese-speaking world, and Portugal's commitment to assist Timor-Leste in developing local proficiency in the language, Portuguese appeared to be a logical choice. That said, at least one observer has noted that the purported desire to associate Timor-Leste with other Portuguese-speaking countries may have been "a form of justification and an attempt to quell general dismay at the choice of Portuguese as an official language."[108] Regardless of the original intentions, however, there are indications that this approach has since been embraced by much of the Timorese population who routinely express solidarity with Portugal, Brazil, and other Portuguese-speaking countries. There was some controversy at the time, though, over whether Portuguese should be designated as a permanent or merely a transitional official language. Despite the fact that suggestions to the contrary had been made in a majority of the country's districts during public consultations, the Constituent Assembly in the end adopted Portuguese as a permanent official language.[109]

Although the other options were equally problematic, the decision by the FRETILIN-dominated Constituent Assembly certainly created the appearance of favoring not only the older generation over the more numerous younger Timorese who had little or no exposure to that language, but also the small group of Timorese exiles who had lived abroad, primarily in Lusophone countries, during the occupation. At a minimum, many Timorese "expressed their

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[106] Note: Even though many Timorese continue to use the language in daily life and consume Indonesian television and radio broadcasts from across the border.
[107] Ramos-Horta, Jose. Personal Interview. 30 May 2011; Taylor-Leech, 2008, pp. 166, 169, 171.
[108] Molnar, 2010, p. 93
[109] Aucoin & Brandt, 2002, p. 264

resentfulness concerning the lack of public consultation" on the issue.[110] Whereas national languages have often proven to be among the most powerful unifying symbols of the nation in other countries, this has not yet proven to be the case in Timor-Leste. The emphasis on Portuguese in the legislative, administrative and judicial sectors has effectively excluded many Timorese. In particular, younger Timorese who were educated in the Indonesian-imposed curriculum during the occupation, or who actually studied at Indonesian universities, felt that the emphasis on Portuguese limited their employment prospects in the new state.[111] The decision to educate Timorese youth in Portuguese, moreover, has faced considerable challenges, including the lack of Portuguese-speaking teachers. Younger Timorese attach considerable value to Tetum as a vehicle and expression of their national identity, but only a few reject Portuguese outright and most seem to accept the value of retaining Portuguese as a means of connecting the country with the wider Lusophone community and the outside world.[112]

Tetum, meanwhile, has continued to develop and will likely assume the role of the dominant national language in the future. In 2004, the Timorese government issued a decree explicitly acknowledging the role of Tetum in its nation building efforts: "Tetum is essential to the construction of the nation and the affirmation of Timorese identity, and so its use constitutes a constitutional imperative requiring urgent implementation…"[113] The decree goes on to note "the strategic importance of the Tetum language in cementing national unity" and establishes the National Institute of Linguistics at the National University of Timor-Leste as the official administrator and coordinator of Tetum orthography. In accordance with the decree, moreover, English and Indonesian are not to be used for public signs unless accompanied by Tetum and Portuguese.[114] In executing this mandate, moreover, the National Institute of Linguistics adopted a deliberate policy to avoid and eventually eliminate loan words and influences from Indonesian while giving precedence to Tetum and Portuguese-based vocabulary.[115] Tetum has, in fact, incorporated a considerable amount of Portuguese vocabulary over time, strengthening the linkage between the two languages and, perhaps, ultimately facilitating their stable coexistence.

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[110] Molnar, 2010, p. 92
[111] Various. Personal interviews. May 2009 - July 2011.
[112] Taylor-Leech, 2008, p. 171.
[113] Republica Democratica de Timor-Leste, 2004.
[114] Republica Democratica de Timor-Leste, 2004.
[115] Taylor-Leech, 2009, p. 45.

Given the difficulties inherent in rebuilding the education system, promoting universal literacy, and developing Tetum as the official language, it was unsurprising that little effort has been made to preserve and develop Timor-Leste's dozen or so other indigenous languages. The Constitution does recognize them as "national" albeit not "official" languages, but the inevitable focus on Tetum and Portuguese has likely marginalized them over time. Recently, however, the Ministry of Education has considered measures to encourage the use of "mother tongues" during the early years of education to maximize efficiency and facilitate a smooth transition for children into the formal education system.

In a further expression of its vision for the new nation and its place in the world, the Constitution also calls for the new country to "maintain privileged ties" with Portuguese-speaking countries. Due in no small part to Portugal's tireless support for the resistance during the Indonesian occupation, Timor-Leste's founding fathers made a conscious decision to overlook past injustices from the Portuguese colonial period and to embrace the deep historical, cultural, and linguistic ties with modern Portugal. This aspect of Timorese identity also helped the new nation draw a clear distinction between its people and the close kin and neighbors in the former Dutch colony and modern-day Indonesian West Timor. At the same time, the Constitution called for "special ties of friendship" with its neighbors and other countries in the region, an implicit recognition of the real challenges facing small, impoverished Timor-Leste and the need to normalize relations with its large neighbor and former occupier, Indonesia.[116]

Finally, the Constitution also acknowledges one of the most significant nation building challenges ahead - incorporating strong and diverse local traditions and cultures that have deep roots across the country. The Constitution stipulated that one of the primary objectives of the State would be "to assert and value the personality and the cultural heritage" of the Timorese people. In addition to Tetum, for example, "other national languages shall be valued and developed by the State." The Constitution also called for supporting public radio and television to "protect and disseminate the culture and the traditional values" of the country. These limited measures, however, are believed to be insufficient and do little to redress what is otherwise a strong bias towards a modern and primarily Western understanding of political thought and democratic ideals.[117] The conflict between the relatively newer state apparatus and local traditions is still playing out in various spheres, perhaps most significantly in the

[116] Note: This relationship and other efforts by Timor-Leste to situate the nation through its foreign policy will be examined in more detail later.
[117] Hicks, 2013, p. 34

process of decentralization and the establishment of locally-elected village and municipal authorities.

The drafting and adoption of a Constitution is a seminal event in the foundation of any modern, democratic country. In the case of Timor-Leste, as with other countries, it was a unique opportunity to articulate a national narrative and select symbols that help to "construct" the nation. The drafters of the Timorese Constitution were not working from a blank slate and were constrained by history, events, and political realities in some of the choices that they made. At the same time, it appears that, at least in some regards, this may have been a missed opportunity to unify the nation.

To begin with, the narrative arc of resistance and the struggle for independence was undoubtedly going to feature prominently in the Constitution regardless of the composition of the Constituent Assembly. At the same time, the language and associations employed clearly emphasize the role of FRETILIN and the armed resistance somewhat at the expense of others who contributed or simply suffered during the independence struggle. Equally important, the omission of a call for inclusivity left unresolved the question of reconciliation for those Timorese who may have opposed outright independence.

There also seems little doubt that FRETILIN used its dominant political position in the Constituent Assembly and, indeed, in the country at the time, to ensure that many of the nation's symbols, including the flag, anthem, and national holidays, were closely associated with the party. At least some among the political elite and the general population saw these choices as giving FRETILIN an unfair political advantage in future elections. At the same time, a majority of Timorese also associated FRETILIN itself and these symbols with the resistance movement and have accepted them as legitimate national symbols. As time passes, it would seem that any political advantage associated with these icons will dissipate with each successive election.

Similarly, the decision to elevate the Portuguese language and maintain privileged ties with Portuguese-speaking countries appears to have created some discord and an ongoing debate in Timorese society. As Portuguese takes hold in the education system and as Tetum both incorporates Portuguese vocabulary and develops as a modern language in its own right, this controversy, too, will likely lose fervor and diminish in time. So, too, did the Constitution indicate a reluctance or predict the belated realization of the need to acknowledge and incorporate - where possible and useful - local, traditional authority alongside the development of modern, democratic institutions. Managing these debates and balancing these

concerns will therefore continue to be among the challenges and opportunities for Timorese nation builders going forward.

Missteps and Missed Nation Building Opportunities

This chapter has focused primarily on examining some of the deliberate efforts by Timorese nation builders to construct a sense of nationhood based on various sources of popular and cultural authority and legitimacy. As noted in the previous chapter, although the Indonesian occupation destroyed the country's basic infrastructure and left Timorese society severely traumatized, the Timorese people nevertheless emerged with a strong commitment to independence and unity centered on shared suffering, the Catholic Church, the Tetum language, and traditional and cultural values. The primary focus of international and Timorese nation builders in the early years was to build state institutions and instill democratic norms and practices, an enormous and ongoing effort that was best exemplified by the adoption of a Constitution, the conduct of free and fair elections, and the establishment of a government. In the process, however, nation builders paid less attention to the development of unifying symbols and national narratives.

Specifically, the powerful narrative of the resistance struggle became the primary subject of contestation between various political parties during successive elections. FRETILIN, moreover, used its electoral victory in the 2001 election and its dominant position in the Constituent Assembly to inscribe its narrow version of that narrative in the national Constitution, including the adoption of its own party symbols as national symbols over the objections and concerns of other political parties. The resistance narrative as articulated in the Constitution and by FRETILIN, moreover, establishes a problematic and de facto hierarchy in Timorese society that privileges armed resistance veterans above clandestine veterans above mere victims. The next chapter of this dissertation will explore this issue in more detail. Finally, while the Constitution pays lip service to the need for justice and reconciliation, it implicitly fails to articulate a vision for including those Timorese who may have been outright opponents of independence.

Another important omission by international and Timorese nation builders was the failure to incorporate traditional culture and authority into the new, modern nation-state. Relatives of those who lost family members during the occupation were disappointed with what they perceived as insufficient efforts to locate the missing and/or memorialize their

sacrifices. Timorese myths of origin, indigenous symbols (with the exception of *tais*), and, most importantly, local sources of authority as represented by the *uma lulik* and *liurai* were not only largely ignored, but also set up for potential conflict with the newly-established system for elected village chiefs. Although the strength of these traditional systems varies from local community to community, the fact that almost every single political party made efforts to appeal to them during the national elections suggests that they represent a potent source of potential legitimacy and a missed opportunity for nation building.

This and the subsequent chapters indicate that beyond the development of effective state institutions of democracy and governance, reaching a shared consensus in adopting appropriate national symbols that respect history, myths, culture, and tradition is also an important aspect of the nation building process. The next chapter will further examine how the adoption of such symbols is a process that is actively contested within society and how these early failings and missed opportunities and the consequent fragility of Timorese nationhood may have contributed to subsequent national crises. The sharp geographic divide in the early elections, for example, turned out to be an indication of a regional cleavage in national identity.

Chapter 4. A New Nation in Crisis

Following the Indonesian occupation and the early years of United Nations administration, newly-independent Timor-Leste and its fledgling government and state institutions faced the significant challenges of satisfying public expectations for health, education, jobs, and economic wellbeing. At the same time, Timorese leaders struggled to maintain the strong sense of unity and national identity that had helped the Timorese people persevere in their struggle for independence. Major challenges to these efforts quickly emerged. First, differences between the government and the Catholic Church over the question of religious education led to a serious political crisis in 2005, revealing a deep divide over the role of the Church in defining Timorese identity. Next, divisions and dissatisfaction in the Timorese security forces led to a major crisis that witnessed the virtual collapse of the Timorese army and police, skirmishes and armed clashes on the streets between partisan proxies, and general social disorder and unrest that led to further violence and a mass displacement of population. This chapter will examine that crisis and how fissures in the nation contributed to a political crisis that very nearly led to state collapse. Finally, many Timorese expected the government to deliver justice for crimes committed during the Indonesian occupation. The various criminal justice and truth-telling procedures, which dragged on for years, were never likely to meet high expectations for justice, but also ran the real risk of exacerbating divisions among Timorese society and between Timor-Leste and neighboring Indonesia. Managing that process has proved to be a major challenge but - in contrast to those which led to the Catholic Church and 2006 crises - one in which the Timorese government has so far managed to avoid open conflict. All three of these examples highlight the dynamic and contentious nature of the nation building discourse, challenging earlier nationalism scholarship that overemphasized the role of the political elite that process. These same examples also illustrate how such contests and a weakly shared sense of national identity can contribute to political crises and instability.

The Catholic Church and Timorese Identity

Catholicism is indisputably a core element of Timorese national identity. As discussed extensively in the above chapter on the origins of Timorese national identity, the fundamental role played by the Catholic Church, particularly during the Indonesian occupation, ensconced the religion, its institutions, symbols, and rituals firmly in the Timorese national psyche. The primary challenge for the post-independence state and nation builders was to incorporate that identity into the modern nation and negotiate the appropriate space and role for the Catholic Church.

The Early Years

Over the course of the first few years following the Indonesian occupation, the Catholic Church continued to play a critical role in society and seemed largely content to avoid any overt involvement in Timorese politics. Both the United Nations and the initial Timorese administrators explicitly acknowledged the importance of the Church and invited Church representatives to play a role in key deliberations. When UNTAET created the National Consultative Council in 1999 and its successor, the National Council, in 2000 to give Timorese greater input into UNTAET decisions and administration issues, for example, a Catholic Church representative was invited to serve on both bodies, which were also both expected to consult with Timorese civil society, including religious groups.[1] The Church also played an important role in cooperation with relief organizations to provide humanitarian assistance to refugees and displaced persons and was consulted regularly, along with other civil society organizations, on key political issues, including political party registration, civic education, and the transition calendar.

The drafting of the Constitution by the Constituent Assembly was the first major opportunity in the nation building process for the negotiation and definition of the future role of the Church. Following the announcement of the decision by the Constituent Assembly to approve an article in the draft Constitution establishing the separation of Church and State, Bishop Filipe Ximenes Belo of Dili signed and sent a letter to the Assembly proposing the elimination of that article.[2] This was also a recurring theme during the public consultations

[1] UNTAET, 1999 and UNTAET, 2000.
[2] UNTAET, Daily Briefing, 29 Jan 2002.

conducted around the country before the formal adoption of the Constitution, with many Timorese calling for Catholicism to be declared the official religion of Timor-Leste.[3] Bishop Belo also criticized the Constituent Assembly for the abbreviated consultation schedule, calling for more time to be allocated, "This is our Constitution, our life, our future and our faith - therefore we shouldn't be in a hurry."[4] In the end, as noted above, the Constituent Assembly paid tribute to the Church's role in the resistance movement, but Catholicism was not adopted as the official religion and the article on the separation of Church and State remained. The political leadership at the time, therefore, acknowledged the Church as a symbol of the nation, but set out some limits on the role they envisaged for the Church going forward.

The 2005 Crisis

The FRETILIN government overplayed its hand, however, in late 2004 when the Council of Ministers approved and the Ministry of Education announced its intention to remove Catholic doctrine from the compulsory list of subjects taught in primary schools. A pilot project was planned for January 2005 in which religious instruction would be optional, students would not be formally evaluated, and any associated costs would not be covered by the state.[5] The government could not have realized that this would soon lead to widespread protests and the most serious challenge to date to Timor-Leste's national unity and stability.

It is important to highlight the fact that the Church had a long history dating back to the early years of the Portuguese colonial period of playing a dominant role in education in Timor-Leste. The Church leadership clearly believed the proposed changes would have a serious and potentially debilitating impact on that role and the Church's long-term influence in Timorese society. The announcement of the decision, moreover, appears to have come as somewhat of a surprise and without appropriate consultation with the Church's leadership. Additional factors which likely exacerbated the impending conflict were the fact that much of the Catholic clergy harbored deep historical suspicions of the FRETILIN party, its socialist roots, and a perceived antagonism towards the Church. Finally, it was probably not lost on many that Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri himself was a member of the small, albeit long-established, minority Muslim community.

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[3] UNTAET, Daily Briefing, 1 Mar 2002.
[4] UNTAET, Daily Briefing, 20 Feb 2002.
[5] Hicks, 2011, pp. 120-121

In contrast to its quiet and largely apolitical role to date, the reaction to this announcement clearly signaled the Church's intentions. Bishop Nascimento of Baucau commented publicly that such legislation was "anti-Christian" and he and his fellow Bishop Silva of Dili released a pastoral note in February laying out the issue and arguing forcefully that state-funded religious education is justified for the purpose of imparting moral and cultural values in a society where the vast majority of the public had opted for the Catholic faith. Concluding that "[p]ublic school has a role of educating according to some values, including the transcendental values of the religious dimension of life… [and] those values are transmitted through culture, history, and faith," the Church leaders underscored education's fundamental role in nation building and staked a claim for Catholicism in Timorese national identity.[6] Within the space of a few weeks, the FRETILIN government found itself facing an assortment of outspoken opponents on the issue as several opposition parties publicly sided with the Church and even the President of the Center for the Islamic Community of Timor-Leste added his voice to the chorus of opposition to the proposed changes.

Faced with this attack, Prime Minister Alkatiri defended the proposal, noting that the government was also supported by the National Parliament and was motivated by an effort to implement the principle of separation of Church and State enshrined in the Constitution (which he referred to as the "Bible" of the State).[7] The crisis escalated further when the Church leadership responded, purportedly on behalf of the Timorese people, arguing that the dispute was not merely over religious education, but instead represented a fundamental disagreement between the government and the "people" over "ideology, principles, values and expectations." The Church accused the Prime Minister of disrespecting the Bible, moreover, by comparing it to the Constitution.[8]

Pressing their advantage, the Bishops stepped further over the line between religion and politics and ratcheted up the pressure on the government by issuing a public statement on another potentially explosive issue - ongoing efforts to pursue justice and reconciliation for the crimes and violence committed during the Indonesian occupation. This issue, addressed in more detail later in this chapter, is deeply entwined with the shared suffering experienced by Timorese during the resistance and, therefore, the narrative at the core of Timorese national identity. After considerable maneuvering on this sensitive issue, the government had taken steps beginning in December to support a bilateral Truth and Friendship Commission with

[6] ETAN, March 2005.
[7] Silva, 2007, p. 221
[8] Silva, 2007, p. 222

Indonesia and were working in March and April to finalize the terms of reference for the Commission. Many doubted whether the Commission would be granted the authority to punish perpetrators of the violence. In the midst of these negotiations, the Bishops released a public statement on April 9 demanding accountability and justice, arguing that "the Catholic community will not condone impunity for crimes against humanity," chastising and calling on the government to honor its commitments to bring about justice.[9]

On April 12, Prime Minister Alkatiri accused the Church leaders of interfering in politics and behaving like an "opposition party," criticizing them for precipitating a crisis on the eve of an international donor conference and a visit by the Indonesian president. Although he indicated an openness to having Church representatives help oversee the pilot program, he nevertheless challenged the Church's claim to speak for the public and asked for the genuine views of the Timorese people on the issue.[10] The Church responded and within a week up to 5,000 anti-government demonstrators poured into Dili for demonstrations that would last for almost three weeks.

Over the course of the crisis, the demands of the protestors expanded beyond the narrow question of religious education to become a frontal assault on the legitimacy of the government and Prime Minister Alkatiri, in particular. In addition to the question of justice, the protestors challenged the government's record in combatting corruption, protecting media freedom, managing the country's oil and gas resources, providing assistance to FALINTIL veterans, and ensuring adequate food, health and education services.[11] In a letter addressed to the FRETILIN Central Committee and the President of the National Parliament, Church representatives accused the Prime Minister of "introducing a societal model that is not in accordance with the identity of the Timorese people" and appealed for the dismissal of Dr. Mari Alkatiri as Prime Minister.[12] Such calls for the Prime Minister's dismissal or resignation were not only echoed by the demonstrators on the streets of Dili, but the issue of religious education which had instigated the crisis was conspicuously absent in the rhetoric employed by the protest.[13]

By appealing to the FRETILIN Central Committee and to the National Parliament, the Church was carefully limiting its challenge to Prime Minister Alkatiri, his government, and his policies. In other words, they did not challenge the state itself or FRETILIN, the political

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[9] ETAN, April 2005.
[10] Silva, 2007, p. 222
[11] Silva, 2007, pp. 223, 229
[12] Silva, 2007, p. 224

party that dominated the Parliament and was itself a potent symbol of the resistance and the nation. At first glance it might appear odd to draw such a distinction between Prime Minister Alkatiri and his party. In fact, he and key members of his government were among a small coterie of Timorese who had "returned" from abroad where they had been members of the diaspora during the long Indonesian occupation. The dominant role of such individuals in key government positions during the early years of Timorese independence had led to some tension with the vast majority of Timorese who had stayed and suffered under the occupation. Those who "returned" were disparaging over the lack of skills and experience on the part of those who had remained (or at least were perceived as being disparaging). The "returned" diaspora, meanwhile, were seen as privileged and lacking in appreciation for the experiences of those who had remained.[14] Attempts to shape the narrative by both sides during the crisis included efforts by the government to label the protestors as "pro-autonomy" (a reference to the pro-Indonesian position in the August 30, 1999 "popular consultation") and by the protestors questioning the relevance of "international" models and the Timorese *bona fides* of the Prime Minister and his government.

As the demonstrations continued and the rhetoric escalated on both sides, President Gusmão came out publicly to condemn the demonstrations and announced that he would not allow the protests to bring down the government. Noting that the objectives of the protest had shifted dangerously, Gusmão acknowledged the right to demonstrate, but reminded people that governments could be replaced only in elections. Implicitly recognizing the symbolic struggle over the fundamental question of Timorese national identity, Gusmão told journalists that he disapproved of the use of "partisan symbols" in a religious demonstration and of religious symbols being used in political protests.[15]

After a couple of unsuccessful negotiation attempts, the crisis was finally resolved with the mediation of President Gusmão and affirmed in a joint declaration on May 7. In short, the government conceded that religious education would continue to be a regular part of the state-funded curriculum, although parents would have the right to refuse such classes for their children. The declaration reaffirmed, moreover, the contribution of Catholicism to Timorese national identity and morality, as well as to the socioeconomic, political, and cultural development of the country. The Church leaders also extracted a commitment to ensure that abortion (except in cases where it was "absolutely necessary" to avoid the mother's death) and

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[13] Hicks, 2013, pp. 126-8
[14] Silva, 2007, pp. 224-228
[15] Hicks, 2013, p. 129

prostitution would continue to be defined as crimes in the Criminal Code.[16] With the announcement of the declaration the protests came to a peaceful conclusion and although Prime Minister Alkatiri and his government continued in office, the result appears to have been an unambiguous victory for the Church.

There is little doubt that the Church has played and will continue to play a fundamental role in shaping national identity in Timor-Leste. As one of the primary founding documents of the new nation, the report produced by the Commission for Reception, Truth, and Reconciliation just a few months later (and discussed in detail later in this chapter) also reaffirmed that:

> The Catholic Church has a significant place in East Timorese history and society… the Church was a strong advocate for human rights in Timor-Leste during the Indonesian occupation… it has a responsibility and resources to continue as a major force for human rights in the new democratic era… The Commission recommends that… The Church continues its mission to protect and promote human rights in Timor-Leste both through its services to the community in health, education and other areas and, where necessary, through public advocacy in defence of human rights.[17]

The governments led by Prime Minister Xanana Gusmão after the 2007 and 2012 elections explicitly adopted policies that acknowledged the Church's role. According to one of Gusmão's close advisors, the previous FRETILIN government had not provided "one cent" to support the Church and its activities, whereas Gusmão's government provided not only a regular budget to each of the dioceses, but also supported the renovation of major religious monuments in Dili, including the National Cathedral, the Motael Church, and the Cristo Rei monument. In addition, as noted earlier, the Gusmão government also plans to support the renovation of the sites of major massacres at religious sites, including the churches in Suai and Liquica, as well as the Santa Cruz cemetery in Dili.[18] As part of its effort to recognize the veterans of the resistance, moreover, the government also established the Order of Dom Martinho Lopes, in the name of one of the most outspoken Timorese Church advocates

[16] Hicks, 2013, pp. 130-1
[17] CAVR, Executive Summary, 5.6.
[18] Babo Soares, Dionisio. Personal interview. 24 April 2011.

during the resistance, to be awarded to members of the clergy who participated in the struggle.[19]

Perhaps only the Church itself and its leaders in Timor-Leste can say exactly what sort of role they envision playing in the continued development of Timorese national identity. The Church, like the nation itself, however, faces similar challenges in the post-independence era. The Indonesian occupation and the struggle for independence provided a clear, unifying mission, but it has been more challenging to coalesce around similar objectives since 1999. The Church in Timor-Leste was previously administered as a single diocese until late in the Indonesian occupation when it split into two in 1996 and, more recently, into three in 2010. Leadership of the Church is therefore now divided between three separate bishops. It would likely take another serious threat to the Church's role in society or its principal equities to motivate it to step beyond its traditional pastoral role in local communities.[20]

As alarming as the 2005 crisis between the Church and the FRETILIN government proved to be for the young nation, it was merely a precursor to a much more serious crisis that was simmering beneath the surface and would explode in violence the following year.

Nation at a Breaking Point: The 2006 Crisis

Less than a year after the resolution of the confrontation between the government and the Catholic Church, the young nation was faced with an even more serious crisis that brought the country to the brink of collapse. In the process, the crisis exposed deep fissures in the developing sense of nationhood, many of which continue to present challenges even today. On the surface, the 2006 crisis has been alternatively described as a conflict between the army (F-FDTL) and the police (PNTL) or as a clash between easterners (*lorosae* or *firaku*) and westerners (*loromonu* or *kaladu*). Closer analysis reveals, however, that these and other questions at the core of national identity were all contributing factors. Although Timor-Leste continues to grapple with the lasting impact and ramifications of the crisis, this section will examine, in particular, the events of 2006, the subsequent elections in 2007, and the attacks on President Ramos-Horta and Prime Minister Gusmão in 2008.

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[19] World Bank, 2008, p. 22

[20] Babo Soares, Dionisio. Personal interview. 24 April 2011.

FALINTIL and the Veterans of the Resistance

The Forças Armadas de Libertação de Timor-Leste (the Armed Forces for the Liberation of Timor-Leste), or FALINTIL, was founded on August 20, 1975, as the armed wing of FRETILIN during the civil war that took place during Portugal's rapid decolonization and in direct response to an attempted coup by the UDT. In the face of the Indonesian invasion, the Timorese population quickly unified behind FALINTIL and in the initial stages of the conflict FALINTIL inflicted heavy losses on the Indonesian forces and protected Timorese who managed to flee from the combat zones. By the end of 1977, however, the Timorese had sustained severe casualties and FALINTIL retreated to the eastern districts of the island, unable to sustain its earlier battlefield successes.[21] As a result, the people who lived in these districts were subjected to some of the worst violence of the entire occupation, a fact that has fed a sense of resentment on the part of easterners towards communities in other parts of the country that they perceived as having cooperated with or accommodated the Indonesian occupiers. By the end of 1979, FALINTIL's leaders had been largely killed or captured, many soldiers had returned to their homes, and the remaining forces of about 700 soldiers had been reduced to a guerrilla movement.[22] Those killed included the former FRETILIN Prime Minister and nominal President and leader of the resistance following the invasion, Nicolau Lobato.

It was at this low point that Xanana Gusmão, heretofore a junior commander, was selected in March 1981 as Commander in Chief of FALINTIL.[23] As noted in Chapter 2, Gusmão subsequently initiated a long campaign to abandon FALINTIL's party affiliation and advance his own vision for unifying the nation in a single resistance movement, including reaching out to the supporters of the UDT. This new approach came at a price, however, as one observer noted "the act of detaching FALINTIL from FRETILIN was soon rejected by hardliners within FALINTIL, and remains the source of many present day conflicts."[24] Gusmão reportedly faced down a confrontation with three prominent hardline FALINTIL commanders in 1984. Subsequently, one allegedly surrendered to the Indonesians, another was dismissed from FALINTIL, and the third disappeared. There are those, however, who remain deeply suspicious of the circumstances surrounding these events and continue to

[21] Rees 2004, pp. 38-9
[22] Rees 2004, p. 39
[23] Rees 2004, p. 40
[24] Rees 2004, p. 40

question Gusmão's course change.[25] In 1987, Gusmão formally severed the connection between FALINTIL and FRETILIN, created the National Council of the Maubere Resistance (CNRM) to bring together FRETILIN, UDT, and other nationalist parties, and made FALINTIL the armed wing of the CNRM. The new approach proved successful in rebuilding popular support and a clandestine movement to support the armed guerrillas. The 1991 Santa Cruz massacre, in particular, attracted international attention and support. Gusmão himself was captured by the Indonesian security forces in November 1992, imprisoned in Jakarta, put on trial, and spent the remainder of the resistance movement as a prominent political prisoner. FALINTIL Commander Taur Matan Ruak and the bulk of the FALINTIL command structure remained fiercely loyal supporters of Gusmão and his approach.

FALINTIL had long been the most powerful symbol of the independence movement and, consequently, had earned the admiration of much of the Timorese public. FALINTIL's final act in support of the independence struggle came in the wake of the August 30, 1999 referendum when the resistance forces heeded orders from Xanana Gusmão to stay in their 'cantonment' despite violent provocations by the Indonesian army and pro-integration militia groups in order to debunk Indonesian claims of interfering to put an end to "civil conflict." As those groups lashed out in retaliation for the pro-autonomy vote, killing dozens, setting fires, destroying much of Timor-Leste's infrastructure, and forcibly displacing a large part of the Timorese population, FALINTIL's painful decision to stay out of the fight exposed the unprovoked, violent vindictiveness of the pro-integration forces and helped persuade the international community to pressure Indonesia to withdraw, allow international peacekeepers, and ultimately recognize Timor-Leste's independence. José Ramos-Horta later personally awarded his own 1996 Nobel Peace Prize medal to the then-FALINTIL Commander Taur Matan Ruak in recognition of his sacrifice and restraint.[26]

A number of Timorese leaders - including Xanana Gusmão and José Ramos-Horta - had suggested earlier that an independent Timor-Leste might follow the "Costa Rican" model and dispense with the need for an army altogether,[27] but this notion was abandoned in the wake of the violence that followed the August 30, 1999 popular referendum. Following the arrival of the International Force for East Timor (INTERFET), the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) and its civilian police forces, up to

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[25] Rees 2004, p. 42
[26] Ramos Horta, Jose. Personal interview. 31 May 2011.
[27] Ramos Horta, Jose. Personal interview. 31 May 2011.

1,500 FALINTIL soldiers remained in a cantonment 30 kilometers south of Dili. Plans for demobilization and future security arrangements proceeded slowly, however. UNTAET was ill-prepared for demobilization activities and most international donors faced self-imposed restrictions on working with armed groups, restricting the assistance available to support the basic needs of the FALINTIL troops.[28] As a result of the poor conditions in the cantonment and FALINTIL's perception that "it was being marginalised in the planning discussions,"[29] morale and discipline began to deteriorate. Within a few months hundreds of troops left the cantonment to return home and FALINTIL leadership threatened to withdraw its cooperation if its status was not resolved.[30] Under pressure, UNTAET commissioned a formal study of security requirements and recommended force structure options. In September 2000, the UNTAET-established Transitional Cabinet approved a modified version of one of the study's options calling for a professional corps of 1,500 supported by 1,500 volunteer reservists.[31] Discussions continued with UNTAET seeking to limit the number of FALINTIL regulars to be recruited into the new force and avoid commitments leading to higher future operating costs and the FALINTIL High Command striving to maintain control of demobilization and secure international assistance and approval for the new force. The decision reached was that the first 650 members of the professional force would be selected from among FALINTIL applicants and the remainder would be professionally recruited, but that FALINTIL itself would decide which members would make the transition.[32]

The first 650 members were selected from among 1,736 applicants on January 28,[33] and on February 1, 2001, the Forças Defesa de Timor-Leste (Defense Forces of Timor-Leste) or FDTL was formally established. Undoubtedly, the selection was a difficult decision for the FALINTIL Command and a tremendous disappointment to the many who were not selected. It is important to note, however, that those FALINTIL selected for recruitment, particularly the officers, tended to hold strong personal allegiance to Xanana Gusmão and FALINTIL Commander Taur Matan Ruak, while there was a sizable minority who were excluded who had an "acrimonious relationship" with them.[34] In addition, the initial recruitment led to a sociolinguistic, geographic, and ethnic imbalance in the new force with a predominance of individuals from the country's eastern districts, particularly in the officer corps, compared to

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[28] Rees, 2004, p. 46
[29] Ball, 2002, p. 176
[30] Ball, 2002, p. 176
[31] UNTAET: de Mello's Statement to Security Council 29 September 2000.
[32] Rees, 2004, pp. 47-8
[33] Ball, 2002, p. 180

those from the western districts.[35] Concerns on this score were raised by both sides in broad focus groups discussions conducted in the following weeks.[36] This process sowed the seeds of inter-regional tension that would ultimately come to the fore in the 2006 crisis.

Despite these challenges, the February 1, 2001 ceremony highlighted the explicit intention to retain the powerful symbolism of FALINTIL as a unifying element of the young nation's identity. In his remarks, Commander Taur Matan Ruak reassured the audience that the event did *not* signify the "death" of FALINTIL and affirmed that although the F-FDTL's structure, doctrine, and training would be distinct, "the seed from which this new Force is germinated is FALINTIL's… Therefore we are guaranteeing the continuity of the spirit of FALINTIL, the legacy of its history, its symbolism and its bond with the People of East Timor."[37] Some were concerned over the initial decision to drop the name FALINTIL in naming the new forces simply the Defense Forces of Timor-Leste (FDTL). The new name had been attributed as an effort by Xanana Gusmão, members of the political elite outside of FRETILIN, and the United Nations to sever the historic link and association between FALINTIL and FRETILIN.[38] Taur Matan Ruak noted further in his remarks that the name was obviously "transitional" and that it would up to the duly elected Timorese institutions to decide on a formal name when the United Nations formally restored independence to the country.[39]

International and Timorese nation builders adopted a deliberate policy to preserve and even elevate FALINTIL as a symbol of the new nation. As a result, however, some of the historic divisions within FALINTIL came to the fore and were compounded even further by the exclusion of large numbers of FALINTIL veterans from participation in the new FDTL. These grievances became intertwined with misperceptions and deep-rooted resentment between easterners and westerners, adding a dangerously divisive geographic fissure to the equation. These issues were quickly exploited by a number of groups purporting to represent the interests of neglected resistance heroes and maligned veterans.

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[34] Rees, 2004, p. 49
[35] Ball, 2002, p. 180
[36] National Democratic Institute, 2001, p. 1
[37] ETAN, 1 February 2001.
[38] Kammen, 2012, p. 111

The "Veterans Problem"

The symbolic influence of the F-FDTL derives in large part from the high public esteem accorded to the FALINTIL veterans and their role in the resistance. The exclusion of many of these veterans from the new force and the perceived failure of the Timorese government and state to properly recognize them for their sacrifices soon developed into a major challenge and destabilizing factor in the development of the new nation. Dissatisfaction among the veterans began even before the final decision was made on F-FDTL recruitment. Many had already been excluded, for example, from the newly-established National Police of Timor-Leste (PNTL) in favor of younger applicants or those with experience working for the Indonesian police (POLRI) during the occupation period. Equally significant, however, were the poor conditions and the perceived ill-treatment of the FALINTIL veterans in the cantonment for more than a year while the United Nations and the Timorese political leadership failed to address their concerns. United Nations officials, in particular, "lacked an appreciation of community esteem for FALINTIL, and saw the Timorese resistance as party to a civil war rather than as a victorious liberation movement that enjoyed almost universal community support."[40] In addition, differences among veterans - many of whom had never previously cohabited together - came to a head during their time in the cantonment. One senior officer, Cornelio Gama (also known as L-7), who had long-standing differences with the FALINTIL leadership, abandoned the cantonment in April 2000 and returned home with a number of his followers and their weapons.[41] In the end, the dismantling of FALINTIL and the exclusion of large numbers of veterans from the F-FDTL engendered a wave of resentment. As noted in a subsequent World Bank report:

> The long uncertainty in the cantonment, the lack of Timorese authority under UNTAET, followed by the rush to demobilize and establish the new defense force, never gave the FALINTIL members an opportunity to discuss and plan the transition for FALINTIL as an institution or its soldiers as individuals. Neither UNTAET nor the Timorese leadership

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[39] Such was the case, in fact, when the FRETILIN-dominated Constituent Assembly formally changed the name to FALINTIL-Defense Forces of Timor-Leste (F-FDTL) in the Constitution in May 2002.
[40] World Bank, 2008, p. 7
[41] Rees, 2004, pp. 46-7

> devoted sufficient time and resources to educate the public or even the FALINTIL soldiers as to why FALINTIL was to be demobilized.[42]

The FALINTIL Reinsertion Assistance Program (FRAP), administered by the International Organization for Migration, provided limited, short-term support to those FALINTIL veterans who were excluded from the F-FDTL, including transportation back to their home communities and limited subsistence allowances for five months. Veterans soon began to clamor for appropriate "recognition" for their sacrifices. In addition, Timorese who had been involved in the clandestine movement also believed they deserved similar recognition. The limited opportunities available in the F-FDTL, PNTL, and the Timorese civil service, combined with high unemployment, contributed to the dissatisfaction and soon led to the creation of a number of veterans groups. In addition to expectations for monetary assistance, these groups focused on "respect for veterans, official consultation with veterans, and more of a voice for veterans in nation building."[43]

Following the creation of the F-FDTL, veterans' issues became "one of the most important sources of potential instability"[44] and directly contributed to early violent crises. One of the first groups to emerge was the Popular Council of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste (CPD-RDTL, in Portuguese), a group that has consistently challenged the very legitimacy of the state, arguing that "veterans are the sole bearer of legitimacy" and calling for the restoration of the original republic proclaimed in 1975.[45] In addition to its involvement in a number of violent incidents, CPD-RDTL proved adept at organizing its followers, with some noting that its public celebrations were better attended than those of the government.[46] Another group, the Association of Former Combatants, was established by Rogerio Lobato, the original Defense Minister in the FRETILIN-established 1975 government who had spent the Indonesian occupation in exile in Mozambique. Rogerio Lobato used this group to mobilize crowds and demonstrate his influence even as he lobbied for a senior position in the future Timorese government. According to one report, the group registered several thousand people and demanded cash payments for identification cards and promises of employment, fueling tensions and early debates over who were bona fide veterans.[47]

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[42] World Bank, 2008, p. 7
[43] World Bank, 2008, p. 10
[44] World Bank, 2008, p. 38
[45] International Crisis Group, 2011, p. 15
[46] Scambary, 2007, p. 4
[47] World Bank, 2008, p. 9

Another significant group was Sagrada Familia, established by Cornelio Gama (see above), who "nurtured bitter, historical grievances against the FALINTIL command, and against Xanana in particular."[48] Like CPD-RDTL, Sagrada Familia was reportedly involved in several violent incidents. Gama later formed his own political party, the National Democratic Union of the Timorese Resistance (UNDERTIM, in Portuguese), specifically dedicated to defending the interests of veterans.[49] Yet another group described by one expert as "the most feared and controversial" was Colimau 2000. Originally founded in 1987 as a clandestine group supporting the independence movement, its modern incarnation included veterans as well as other sympathizers, many poor, illiterate, rural peasants. Strongest in the Ermera region, it is believed to have connections to former militia groups, and is known for its sect-like religious practices.[50]

Among the most visible indications of what has come to be known as the "veterans' problem" were a series of violent incidents in late 2002 and early 2003. Rogerio Lobato, following his eventual appointment as Minister of Interior in the first FRETILIN-led Timorese government in May 2002, used his influence to recruit disaffected veterans into the PNTL in an attempt to create a counterweight to the F-FDTL.[51] Minister Lobato marginalized the PNTL leadership and used his Association of Former Combatants to stir up public resentment.[52] Popular disaffection with the PNTL manifested in a November 2002 attack by disaffected veterans on the Baucau police headquarters and later in December 2002 riots in Dili over the PNTL's mishandling of the arrest of a student. In the midst of these events, President Gusmão blamed Minister Lobato for stirring up public opinion, failing to provide security, and called for his resignation.[53] Members of Colimau 2000 are suspected of having been involved in a subsequent violent incident in Atsabe in January 2003 that killed 7 people and led to a bungled F-FDTL operation.[54]

Other veterans' groups avoided involvement in such incidents, working instead to mobilize support and peacefully advocate on behalf of their members. One of the largest groups was founded by Xanana Gusmão, the Association of Veterans of the Resistance, and

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[48] Scambary, 2007, p. 7
[49] Note: The party won over 3 percent of the national vote in the 2007 parliamentary elections and 2 seats in parliament and ultimately joined Prime Minister Gusmão's governing coalition. The party did not cross the 3 percent threshold in the 2012 elections, however.
[50] Scambary, 2007, p. 10
[51] International Crisis Group, 2006, p. 5
[52] Rees, 2004, p. 52
[53] Baker, *"Sydney Morning Herald,"* 2002.

included a reported 18,000 members countrywide, including many who were active in the clandestine front. Separately, the FALINTIL Veterans Foundation was more strictly limited to actual FALINTIL veterans from the early years of the resistance and its directors included a number of active, senior FALINTIL commanders.[55]

Public support for the veterans and the important role of the resistance in the independence struggle was and remains strong, reflecting the importance of the resistance struggle in the country's historical narrative and sense of identity. The power of this symbol was such that it was subsequently written into the Constitution (as described in Chapter 3). In September 2002, President Xanana Gusmão created a series of commissions to work with these groups and communities to register the veterans, noting the need to differentiate between "real" veterans and those seeking to manipulate the system.[56] The process proved to be complex and lengthy. Registrations were initially conducted for veterans of the armed resistance between 2002 and 2004 and an additional commission was established to register civilian veterans of the clandestine resistance between 2004 and 2006. After consolidating and verifying the data, over 75,000 registrations were processed.[57] Following the 2006 crisis - in which a number of veterans groups were implicated in the violence (see below) - and the subsequent 2007 elections, however, newly-elected Prime Minister Xanana Gusmão reopened registration to address complaints of missing data and unrecorded claims. This led to another flood of 125,000 additional registrations.[58]

A compensation system was established for veterans of the armed resistance. Actual financial payments depended on the length of service and ranged from modest one-time payments for those who served up to 7 years to life-time pensions between $230 and $575/month for longer-serving veterans or heirs of "martyrs of national liberation."[59] This tiered system led to fraudulent claims exaggerating length of service and subsequent efforts to verify such claims led to societal tensions and even conflicts. Benefits for the clandestine resistance veterans have proven to be even more complicated. These individuals did not serve the resistance exclusively, but nevertheless risked and even sacrificed their lives for the cause. In fact, their day-to-day employment was critical cover for their service to the resistance.

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[54] Rees, 2004, p. 20; Note: Rees also notes that this incident may have been the result of an assault by militia groups from West Timor.
[55] Wallis, 2013, p. 154
[56] World Bank, 2008, p. 11
[57] World Bank, 2008, p. 18
[58] International Crisis Group, 2011, p. 6
[59] International Crisis Group, 2011, p. 7

Additionally, the covert nature of their work dictated that it be kept secret and compartmentalized, making it difficult to prove years later.

The very nature of the process has been intricately connected to ongoing nation building efforts.

> The veterans registration and the creation of the law was an exercise in nation building. Coming at a critical time when the form and function of most of the institutions of the new state were unfamiliar to most people the veterans policy development process involved thousands of people including many rural poor and/or politically disaffected in a national process… Anticipating the recognition of individual contributions to the formation of the new state, the registration elicited recognition of the state itself.[60]

Even over a decade later, the current government continues to make this a priority, pledging "to honour the past and our national heroes," stating further that "[i]t is important to the dignity of our nation that our veterans are provided with the respect and the support that they rightfully deserve." This recognition will include not only social security payments and scholarships for children of veterans, but also "support to ensure that the story of our national liberation will be preserved."[61]

Given the dominant role of the resistance in Timorese national identity, moreover, an individual's "place" in the Timorese nation is directly connected to his or her role during the occupation. This has created an informal hierarchy within the Timorese nation with the veterans of the armed resistance occupying the patriotic heights. The inclusion of an explicit promise to "valorize the resistance" in the Timorese Constitution, the subsequent process of registering veterans claims, and the actual system of benefits have all further reinforced this hierarchy of patriotism.

At the same time, this has exposed significant societal tensions and an unresolved contest over national identity. First, the distinction between the armed and clandestine resistance will undoubtedly raise concerns as the government struggles to streamline and manage the much larger number of civilian claims. In 2011 alone, $72 million was budgeted for veterans benefits, six percent of the entire national budget.[62] Even with Timor-Leste's Petroleum Fund, available funds and competing priorities will limit the government's

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[60] World Bank, 2008, p. 31
[61] Republica Democratica de Timor-Leste, 2012, Section 2.4.7
[62] International Crisis Group, 2011, p. 1

generosity and ability to satisfy future expectations. Second, where on that hierarchy does one place the much more numerous Timorese who suffered as victims of aggression and violence during the Indonesian occupation? The theme of shared suffering was highlighted above as an important unifying narrative during the occupation. It has also featured prominently in independent Timor-Leste and been invoked by nation builders and politicians alike. The plight of victims emerged not only in the veteran registration process, but also in the concurrent public consultations and thousands of interviews conducted by the Commission on Reception, Truth, and Reconciliation (CAVR, in Portuguese). The CAVR even recommended that the government develop a victims' reparation program, but members of parliament have blocked consideration of such legislation until after the veterans problem is addressed.

Finally, another important group has been virtually silenced in the face of the dominating role of the narratives of resistance and suffering in the nation building process. A small-but-not-insignificant portion of the Timorese population supported continued integration within Indonesia, including some portion of the 21.5 percent who actually cast ballots for the integration plan during the August 30, 1999 referendum. While many of these people are certainly among those who fled the country in the subsequent violence and are perhaps among the Timorese refugees still living in West Timor, others were patriotic Timorese who simply believed at the time that the country would be better off as an autonomous part of Indonesia. In the context of the dominant resistance narrative, one researcher has described this group as being implicitly cast as the "villains" in the new nation.[63] Formerly pro-integration supporters and even a descendant of one such family have complained about being treated as "second class to those involved in the resistance."[64] One FRETILIN parliamentarian, for example, pointed to the presence of formerly pro-autonomy individuals in Prime Minister Xanana Gusmão's 2007 government as a source of bitter contention.[65] Such antipathy on both sides is likely widespread even if infrequently articulated.

The veterans problem, which is still not fully resolved, is clearly one consequence of a nation building process that has constructed a historical narrative that esteems and privileges certain members of society. While the broad narrative itself appears to be widely shared and is unlikely to be challenged, there is already evidence of contests over where the hierarchical

[63] Wallis, 2013.
[64] Wallis, 2013, p. 138
[65] Anonymous, Personal interview, 28 September 2009.

lines are drawn and how and whether the country should acknowledge the roles of many others in that history.

The 2006 Crisis: The Chronology of Events

The formation of the new Timorese security services, the creation of the various veterans groups, simmering discontent over the economic situation, and agitation over the perceived mistreatment of veterans all formed part of the complex backdrop and context for the 2006 crisis. The situation was particularly fragile when the Timorese security services assumed full responsibility for law and order following the peaceful resolution of the confrontation between the government and the Church and the withdrawal of the bulk of United Nations peacekeepers in May-June 2005. In retrospect, that withdrawal appears to have been premature and international forces would be called to return to Timor-Leste almost exactly a year later.

Although the root causes of the crisis date back to 1999 and even the Indonesian occupation, the immediate trigger for the events of 2006 began in January when a group of 159 F-FDTL soldiers signed a petition and sent it to President Gusmão, Minister of Defense Roque Rodrigues, and F-FDTL Commander-in-Chief Taur Matan Ruak. In the petition, the soldiers complained that they were the victims of systematic discrimination within the F-FDTL and were being denied promotions and other accommodations as a result of their geographic origin (Note: The claims were made by soldiers from the western districts). President Gusmão met with a group of them in early February and facilitated the appointment of a Commission of Inquiry to look into their concerns. Later that month, after the Commission's failure to resolve the issue, the group - which had since expanded to almost 600 soldiers - abandoned their barracks in protest, arguing that their grievances were being ignored. Following consultations over the next few weeks between Prime Minister Alkatiri, Defense Minister Rodrigues, and F-FDTL Commander Taur Matan Ruak, the soldiers were ordered to return to their barracks and dismissed for desertion when they refused.

On March 23, President Gusmão gave a speech seen by many to have further inflamed the situation in which he publicly opposed the decision to dismiss the soldiers - who came to be known as the "petitioners" - and legitimated a number of their grievances. While accepting the F-FDTL Commander's right to dismiss the soldiers, Gusmão called the decision

"incorrect" and that "the root of the problem was discrimination not indiscipline."[66] In April the petitioners, along with a number of supporters, requested and obtained permission from the PNTL to conduct a peaceful demonstration and came to Dili to protest their treatment. The protests came to a head on April 28 in front of the Government Palace when police were unable to manage the demonstration and it devolved into a riot. Five people were killed, over two dozen wounded, over 100 homes were destroyed, and over 20,000 people fled their homes in the ensuing violence at the Government Palace and other locations in Dili. During the unfolding crisis, Prime Minister Alkatiri ordered the F-FDTL to intervene and support the PNTL. On May 3, the commander of the F-FDTL military police unit, Major Alfredo Reinado, deserted his post with about 20 fellow soldiers, a few PNTL officers, and weapons and munitions to protest what he later argued was an illegal order to use military force against the protestors. He and his group took refuge in the hills outside of Dili, initiated contact with the petitioners, and later joined that group.

Over the next several weeks, the crisis continued to escalate with armed clashes between the petitioners and their supporters and the F-FDTL and other groups. Specific attacks took place at the PNTL headquarters, near the F-FDTL headquarters, as well as at the houses of General Taur Matan Ruak and relatives of Minister of Interior Lobato. In addition to direct clashes between elements of the F-FDTL and PNTL, both sides distributed weapons to assorted civilian martial arts groups aligned with them. These groups and other, perhaps opportunistic, gangs created a situation of terror and panic in Dili and other parts of the country as they set up illegal checkpoints, claimed neighborhood "turf," and began to violently target populations they perceived as supporters of the other side. On May 24, in the midst of the crisis, Foreign Minister Ramos-Horta called for international peacekeepers to restore order to Timor-Leste; Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia, Portugal responded and deployed forces in the following days. The violence continued, however, and it was not until after considerable political maneuvering, ultimata from President Gusmão and others, and the resignation of Prime Minister Alkatiri on June 26 that things began to settle down. By the time the worst of the violence had subsided, over three dozen people had been killed (including 12 PNTL officers and 3 F-FDTL soldiers), about 70 people were injured, about 1,650 houses had been destroyed, and approximately 150,000 people had been displaced from their homes.[67]

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[66] Gusmão, 23 March 2006.
[67] United Nations Independent Special Commission of Inquiry, 2006, p. 42

In the end, however, this proved to be the first stage in a drawn-out crisis that continued through the 2007 presidential and parliamentary elections and led directly to a dramatic February 2008 attack on the newly-elected President Ramos-Horta and Prime Minister Gusmão, and the ultimate arrest and subsequent trial of the rebel soldiers and petitioners who carried out that assault. Often attributed primarily to the weakness of state institutions and the rule of law,[68] the true underlying causes of the crisis were much more complex and continue to present challenges to national unity and stability even years afterwards.

2006 Crisis: The Causes

There is no doubt that Timor-Leste's fledgling security services not only proved incapable of maintaining law and order, but essentially broke down in the face of the crisis. Few would dispute the fact, moreover, that the rapid intervention of international peacekeepers was instrumental in preventing the further collapse of the state and an outbreak of widespread civil conflict. Nevertheless, even the peacekeepers were unable to stem the continued violence and displacement of large numbers of people from their homes, much less repair the damage done to the Timorese security services and institutions of governance. The crisis exposed deep fissures in the young nation itself and it would take considerable efforts by the Timorese political leadership, civil society, and the people themselves - with renewed international support - to put the nation building project back on track.

The most immediate cause of the crisis stemmed from the dissent within the F-FDTL as expressed by the petitioners over their perceived lack of equal promotion and assignment opportunities. These grievances were not merely the result of organizational policies and poor administration, however, but instead reflected deeper divisions in Timorese society that had been reproduced in the new state institutions. As noted above, at the time of the creation of the F-FDTL in early 2001, the FALINTIL Command selected only 650 of the 1,736 applicants to form the core of the new F-FDTL force. A preponderance of those selected, especially to staff the new officer corps, were soldiers from Timor-Leste's easternmost districts of Baucau, Los Palos, and Viqueque. Recognizing the imbalance, the F-FDTL Command recruited heavily from Timor-Leste's western provinces over the next couple of years as it staffed a new, professional battalion. In the end, however, the F-FDTL senior command and officer corps continued to be dominated by soldiers from the eastern districts, who, due at

[68] United Nations Independent Special Commission of Inquiry, 2006, p. 16

least in part to their status as veterans of the resistance, also benefitted disproportionately from preferential assignments.

Although Timor-Leste has a large number of potential ethnic and linguistic cleavages, the division between easterners (alternately referred to as *lorosa'e* or *firaku*) and westerners (called *loromonu* or *kaladu*) did not fall neatly along those lines. There were perceived differences and even long-standing stereotypes that had been observed as far back as the Portuguese colonial period, but most observers and Timorese themselves have argued that the division is primarily geographic and only assumed real meaning during the crisis.[69] Of particular relevance to the current crisis and the evolving question of national identity was the fact that many easterners looked down upon westerners for having performed what they perceived as a lesser role in the resistance movement. The FALINTIL resistance fighters had taken refuge in the eastern districts during the Indonesian occupation and relaunched the independence struggle from bases in that area. Meanwhile, the proximity of the western districts to the Indonesian border had led many there to adopt a more publicly collaborative approach, albeit often while remaining active in the clandestine resistance. Among the frequent complaints voiced by the F-FDTL westerners was the fact that they were the targets of disparaging remarks and scorn regarding the role of the *loromonu* during the resistance. These and other complaints, including promotion policies and the difficulties associated with visiting their home districts while on leave from the F-FDTL base in the far eastern district of Los Palos, were raised by 42 soldiers dismissed in December 2003 and by another group that met with President Gusmão in February 2005.[70]

The dissatisfaction within the F-FDTL and among those veterans who had been excluded from the F-FDTL recruitment in 2001 was exacerbated by resentment over the circumstances surrounding the creation and ongoing development of the PNTL. Viewed as the key institution with internal security responsibilities, the PNTL benefitted from generous international assistance as it was built from the ground up. Although all of the recruits were vetted for human rights violations, it was unsurprising that given the small pool of experienced applicants, over 300 of the initial PNTL recruits - mostly westerners - had previously served as police officers with the Indonesian police services (POLRI) during the occupation.[71] They formed a small part of the overall force, but as was the case with the F-

[69] Note: The voluminous CAVR report, *Chega!*, for example, failed to uncover such tensions between easterners and westerners.
[70] International Crisis Group, 2006, p. 6
[71] Rees, 2004, p. 52; Simonsen, 2006, p. 589

FDTL, as more experienced officers they assumed relatively more senior positions in the new PNTL.[72] It was unfortunate that the circumstances of the initial establishment of the two security services contributed to perceptions among the public, as well as members of the police and army themselves, that the institutions reflected geographic biases and were disposed against one another.

As noted previously, the Minister of Interior, Rogerio Lobato, who assumed office and responsibility for overseeing the PNTL in May 2002, exacerbated the situation by using his influence to recruit disaffected veterans and westerners in an attempt to shape the institution into his own instrument and as a counterweight to the F-FDTL.[73] The brother of deceased FRETILIN leader and national hero Nicolau Lobato, Rogerio had aligned himself with a number of the FALINTIL veterans who had been excluded from the new F-FDTL. Although he inherited a PNTL that already included a core of former POLRI officers, Minister Lobato worked to marginalize them and enhance his own influence by using his veteran groups to stir up public resentment.[74] Popular disaffection with the PNTL manifested in a November 2002 attack by disaffected veterans on the Baucau police headquarters and later in December 2002 riots in Dili over the PNTL's mishandling of the arrest of a student. In the midst of these events, President Gusmão blamed Minister Lobato for stirring up public opinion, failing to provide security, and called for his resignation.[75]

Ambiguity regarding the roles and responsibilities of the security services also contributed to the tension. In January 2003 when the PNTL and international peacekeepers were unavailable to respond to a domestic disturbance, the F-FDTL was called to launch an operation in Atsabe (in the western district of Ermera and a former base for anti-FRETILIN forces in 1975). F-FDTL troops antagonized the local community and members of the veterans' group Colimau 2000 by arbitrarily arresting dozens of people who were subsequently released for lack of evidence. This soon led to a push by Minister Lobato to create two heavily-armed, paramilitary police units within the PNTL, the Rapid Response Unit and the Border Patrol Unit, a development that was seen by the F-FDTL as an infringement on its responsibilities.[76] In yet another incident reported by the *Timor Post* in Los Palos in January 2004, the F-FDTL panicked local residents by rioting and firing their weapons in the air to protest the PNTL's failure to punish a civilian who injured an F-FDTL

[72] Simonsen, 2006, pp. 589-90
[73] International Crisis Group, 2006, p. 5
[74] Rees, 2004, p. 52
[75] Baker, *"Sydney Morning Herald,"* 2002.

soldier in an altercation.[77] In July 2004, meanwhile, intervention by the PNTL's Rapid Response Unit to stop a demonstration by a FALINTIL veteran was criticized as disrespectful and heavy-handed.

Even as the state institutions responsible for maintaining stability struggled to establish their public legitimacy and effectiveness, heavy-handed rule by the FRETILIN-led government also contributed to public unrest. This approach was best characterized by FRETILIN's domination of the Constituent Assembly and the drafting of the Constitution and its subsequent decision in early 2002, over the objections of the opposition parties, to convert that Assembly into the country's first National Parliament without new elections. The FRETILIN government's handling of some key legislation followed the same pattern. The 2003 Immigration and Asylum Law was passed over the objections of NGOs, President Gusmão, and the Court of Appeals, and the 2004 Law on Freedom, Assembly, and Demonstration was passed with provisions that were seen to protect public officials from criticism.[78] The hurried appointment, moreover, of 62 FRETILIN loyalists to 65 of the country's total subdistrict administrator positions was seen as an over-politicization of the new state apparatus.[79] The 2005 conflict with the Catholic Church over the issue of religious education also revealed widespread dissatisfaction with FRETILIN's style of governance.

This issue was dramatically highlighted in the midst of the 2006 crisis when FRETILIN held its party congress in May to select the party leadership in advance of the upcoming 2007 elections. When a breakaway group threatened to challenge the party leadership, Prime Minister Alkatiri was accused of intimidating and perhaps even bribing party members before calling for an open vote in violation of the electoral law and the party's own procedures for secret ballots. Criticism of Prime Minister Alkatiri and his leadership circle was not limited to governance and party decisions. Many people believed that, at a minimum, he and the others in the "Maputo clique" who had spent the Indonesian occupation in exile in Maputo and other locations, were simply out of touch with the average Timorese. For example, the "Maputo clique" is believed to have used the term *supermi* (a popular brand of Indonesian instant noodle) as a derogatory reference to young Timorese who spent time studying in Indonesia. In another illustrative anecdote, Prime Minister Alkatiri was once reported to have disparagingly referred to members of the clandestine movement. One of the key roles played

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[76] Rees, 2004, p. 20
[77] Asia Pacific Solidarity Network, January 2004.
[78] Simonsen, 2006, pp. 582-3
[79] Simonsen, 2006, p. 583

by clandestine members of the resistance was to serve as a "box" or *"caixa"* where supplies and weapons could be stashed, a dangerous role much appreciated by the armed resistance. Demonstrating his lack of understanding or appreciation for the on-the-ground resistance, Alkatiri is quoted as saying dismissively: "What is this *caixa*? *Caixa*, *caixão*, *caixota*… what is this?"[80] Some even believed that he and his government were guilty of nepotism and corruption, as was evidenced, for example, by government contracts for fuel, weapons, and road construction that went to the Prime Minister's brothers.[81]

As one observer noted, "[t]he government's top-down, non-inclusive way of doing politics combines with limited transparency and little tolerance for criticism to form a political culture that is not conducive to nation building and the rooting of democratic processes…"[82] Frustration among the opposition parties and their supporters was high, especially given the fact that they would be frozen out of political decision-making until at least the elections scheduled for 2007. The fact, moreover, that FRETILIN drew its strongest support from the eastern districts while other parties were stronger in central and western districts, as evidenced by the results of the 2001 Constituent Assembly elections, further reinforced the emerging easterner vs. westerner distinction described above.

Yet another factor that contributed to this volatile mix was connected to the land and property situation in Dili, the capital city and de facto "center" between east and west. In the violence and destruction which followed the August 30, 1999 popular consultation, large numbers of Indonesians, pro-autonomy civil servants, and others abandoned their homes in Dili and fled to Indonesia or the countryside to take refuge. As it happened, most of the abandoned houses were then occupied by easterners who felt entitled to the spoils of victory after their role in the resistance. The right to ownership of many of these properties was contested by westerners who claimed to have fled merely because of the Indonesians.[83] These simmering grievances contributed to the 2006 crisis when many took advantage of the breakdown in security to stake their claims or exact revenge. According to some accounts, most of the houses which were burnt down in 2006 fell into that contested category.[84]

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[80] Max Stahl. Personal interview. 4 June 2011.
[81] Kingsbury, 2009, p. 139
[82] Simonsen, 2006, p. 584
[83] Trindade & Castro, 2007, p. 13
[84] Trindade & Castro, 2007, p. 13

There is little doubt, therefore, that the east-west issue emerged as a divisive factor that contributed to the 2006 crisis. President Gusmão himself lamented the existence of such discrimination and flagged his concerns on its potential long-term impact on the F-FDTL.[85]

> The poorly defined national identity, particularly in the absence of a common enemy post-1999, is critical to an understanding of how the east versus west distinction has arisen in recent years. This division infected both F-FDTL and PNTL prior to 2006, as manifested in actual or perceived acts of discrimination and nepotism. Additionally, political interests and communities have become embroiled in the issue.

At the same time, however, widespread dissatisfaction with the FRETILIN government and the weakness of state institutions, particularly the security services, combined to create an environment in which such divisions among the populace could be exploited for political and personal gain.

While the 2005 conflict between the FRETILIN government and the Catholic Church centered on differing views of how to define the nation and the respective roles of institutions and symbols in representing the nation, the 2006 crisis illustrates the more fundamental challenge of whether the nation would successfully overcome potential internal divisions. Just as the nation itself is "imagined" by its people, so, too, can it be "deconstructed" by those seeking to advance personal or political goals. Ultimately, however, the decision to step back from the brink of the crisis and the intervention of international peacekeepers presented an opportunity to put the nation back on track.

The ultimate denouement of the 2006 crisis came only on February 11, 2008, when Major Reinado and a group of petitioners came into Dili and were involved in separate attacks at the homes of President Ramos-Horta and Prime Minister Gusmão. The exact circumstances of the incidents remains unclear, but it appears that the rebel soldiers were engaged in an unsuccessful attempt to kidnap or assassinate the President and Prime Minister. As a result of the attack, Major Reinado and another rebel were killed and President Ramos-Horta was seriously wounded. He was evacuated to Australia for extended medical treatment and the President of the National Parliament, Fernando "Lasama" Araujo assumed responsibilities as the Acting President of the Republic. The government moved quickly to form a temporary joint F-FDTL/PNTL command to assume responsibility for security in the wake of the crisis. President Ramos-Horta recovered, returned in April, and

[85] Gusmão, 23 March 2006.

resumed his official duties. The remaining rebels surrendered to authorities over the next several weeks. After a lengthy trial, most of the rebels were sentenced to lengthy prison terms, although President Ramos-Horta eventually pardoned the attackers, arguing that they, like others, were victims of the 2006 crisis.[86]

There were clearly multiple causes to the conflict, including weak governance and security institutions. At the same time, the roots of the conflict also lay in the fragile Timorese sense of national identity and a contest over the ultimate vision of the nation. Whereas the 2005 crisis was essentially a clash between the Timorese government and the Catholic Church over the definition of Timorese national identity and the Church's specific role and place in the nation, the 2006 crisis was much more complex and multi-faceted. At its core, however, the still-immature sense of national identity had frayed along several key fault lines. The petitioners reflected concerns among the public that easterners were being privileged over westerners. Veterans groups and others felt they had not been accorded the respect and rewards they deserved given their status in the Timorese nation. Together with the serious institutional weaknesses in the Timorese state and security services and generally poor economic circumstances, these factors led to the collapse of the weak security institutions and the breakdown of law and order. Years later, Prime Minister Gusmão reflected back on that period: "We recognised that we were fragile because we were unable to leave behind the traumatized past of conflict and because our institutions were still weak – so we understood that peace building and state building go hand in hand."[87]

In contrast to the 2005 and 2006 crises, however, successive Timorese governments have so far managed to avoid another potential crisis motivated by a deep and abiding desire on the part of large portions of the Timorese population for justice for the crimes committed before, during, and after the Indonesian occupation. Despite bitter memories and continuing demands for justice, Timorese leaders have balanced a less-than-perfect judicial process with more successful efforts to forge a compelling historical narrative that acknowledges Timorese suffering and to promote processes of mutually beneficial local and international reconciliation.

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[86] Belford, "East Timor President's Clemency Extends to His Attackers," *New York Times*, 1 November 2010.
[87] Gusmão, 25 September 2012.

Balancing the Search for Justice and Need for Reconciliation

Just as the resistance movement and independence struggle formed part of the core narrative defining Timorese national identity, so, too, did the shared suffering accompanying that struggle. The violent civil war in 1975 and the brutal and repressive Indonesian occupation claimed up to 200,000 lives and affected every single family in Timor-Leste, uniting the vast majority of the population in the independence struggle. Consequently, recognition of that suffering and seeking justice for the crimes that were committed not only became a top priority for the new country, but quickly formed a core part of the nation building process itself. When that search led inexorably to potential conflict with Timor-Leste's large and indispensable neighbor, Indonesia, however, the Timorese government faced difficult decisions in balancing justice and promoting reconciliation. This section examines this major element of Timorese national identity and its potential for contributing to yet another national crisis.

Some nations - like Timor-Leste - are forged in difficult historical circumstances and achieving consensus on a definitive national narrative is at the core of the nation building process. As Timor-Leste embarked on its nation building project it was clear that the unity and success of the nation itself required the Timorese people to tell their stories and develop a common understanding of the painful road they had traveled together. Given the conflicting Indonesian and Timorese historical narratives and the complex reality of modern relations between the two countries, it is unsurprising that the various multi-year processes have failed to satisfy public expectations of justice in Timor-Leste. That said, considerable progress was made in the search for truth and - to a lesser degree - reconciliation. One of the most significant outcomes, for example, was the CAVR Report, *Chega!* - now an important national symbol itself. Equally important, however, were the painful truth-seeking and story-telling rituals associated with the process itself.

Commissions of Inquiry

Even amidst the overwhelming tasks of ensuring security, establishing state institutions, laying the foundation for democracy, providing basic humanitarian assistance, rebuilding

infrastructure, and resettling refugees and displaced persons following the August 30, 1999 "popular consultation" and the ensuing violence, the United Nations and the international community were keenly aware of the need to launch efforts to pursue justice and accountability for the crimes committed in Timor-Leste, as well as the importance of those efforts to long-term reconciliation and the nation building process. The authority and credibility of the United Nations itself had been called into question given its direct role in facilitating the agreement that led to the popular consultation and in executing the referendum that precipitated some of the worst crimes. Meanwhile, under considerable pressure and scrutiny for its role in the ongoing violence in Timor-Leste, Indonesia itself took independent measures to demonstrate a measure of transparency and accountability.

Even as the International Forces East Timor (INTERFET) began deploying under Australia's leadership in September 1999 to restore security and stability in the devastated province, two separate meetings convened, one in Jakarta and one in Geneva, in attempts to ensure some measure of justice and accountability for the ongoing violence. The Indonesian National Human Rights Commission in Jakarta met on September 23 and established an Independent Commission of Inquiry (hereafter the "Indonesian Commission") that was mandated to gather facts on human rights violations committed in Timor-Leste since January 1999, investigate the degree of involvement of state apparatuses and other national or international agencies, and compile the findings to be used as evidence for a Human Rights Court. To ensure its objectivity, the composition of the Indonesian Commission included four civil society representatives in addition to five members of the National Human Rights Commission.[88]

Meanwhile, a Special Session of the U.N. Commission on Human Rights convened in Geneva from September 24 to 27 in the wake of the widespread violence and reports of human rights violations that followed the popular consultation. The Commission adopted a resolution condemning the violence, calling on national judicial systems to bring individual perpetrators to justice, and urging the U.N. Secretary-General to establish an International Commission of Inquiry (hereafter the "International Commission") to look into the human rights violations that had occurred in Timor-Leste since Indonesian President Habibie offered to allow the territory to vote on an autonomy measure in January 1999 and to make recommendations on future action. Although the Indonesian and the International Commissions conducted their work in parallel over the next few months and even met with

[88] Cohen, 2003, p. 16

one another on multiple occasions, they operated independently and did not share as much information as may have been possible or useful. Despite that, they both reached similar conclusions that widespread human violations had occurred and that the Indonesian armed forces and pro-integration militia were directly implicated in those violations. The Indonesian Commission focused its attention on over a dozen specific incidents of human rights violations. By examining the context of those incidents, however, the Indonesian Commission also concluded that based on the available evidence there was a strong indication that "planned, widespread, and systematic gross violations of human rights had occurred… with the support and participation of the Indonesian military."[89] The Indonesian Commission's report recommended that over 100 individuals be investigated as suspects, including the former Commander and Deputy Commander of the Indonesian Armed Forces and other high-ranking Indonesian military and civilian authorities.[90]

Summarizing its own findings in a separate report, the International Commission also found that there were gross human rights violations, including a pattern of intimidation and terror waged against pro-independence groups before the popular consultation; vindictive killings, attacks, and destruction of property after the vote; forcible displacement of thousands of Timorese to West Timor; and systematic destruction of evidence. The International Commission also found evidence of support for pro-autonomy militia groups by the Indonesian civilian authorities, police, and military, as well as the direct involvement, in certain cases, of Indonesian forces in the intimidation and terror campaign.[91]

In taking direct testimony from over 170 individuals, the International Commission appears to have merely scratched the surface of a deep desire by the Timorese to engage in what would be an ongoing search for truth and justice. The International Commission noted that:

> It appears that, for the… Timorese, lodging complaints and seeking justice without fear was a new experience and their willingness to testify… an expression of this new-found freedom. Victims and witnesses came to testify despite living amidst destruction and despite their lack of food and other basic needs. Most of them came on foot, since there was total lack of transport. Wherever the Commission visited, men, women and children warmly greeted it. The people… seemed to express a sense of joy despite the hardship and violence. The members of the

[89] Cohen, 2003, p. 17
[90] Cohen, 2003, p. 17
[91] United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 31 January 2000.

> International Commission of Inquiry were confronted with testimonies surpassing their imagination.[92]

Recognizing the fundamental role that the justice and reconciliation process would play in Timor-Leste, U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan himself commented in his presentation of the report to various United Nations bodies that, "I believe the United Nations has an important role to play in this process in order to help safeguard the rights of the people of East Timor, promote reconciliation, ensure future social and political stability."[93] The challenge for the United Nations, Timor-Leste, and the nation building project, therefore, would be to ensure that the voices of the victims would be heard, some measure of justice would be served, and, perhaps most importantly, the process would contribute to long-term reconciliation and national unity.

The Pursuit of Justice for "Serious Crimes"

The reports of the two Commissions raised expectations for a thorough judicial process that would ensure justice and accountability, but the actual experience that unfolded over the next few years would fail to meet those expectations. To begin with, although the International Commission had recommended the establishment of an International Human Rights Tribunal to prosecute the crimes committed, that proposal was ultimately rejected in favor of separate national judicial processes that would take place in Timor-Leste and Indonesia. Following up on the International Commission's report, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for East Timor, Sergio Vieira de Mello, issued UNTAET Resolution 2000/15 in July 2000 to establish judicial panels with jurisdiction for investigating and prosecuting serious crimes committed in Timor-Leste between January 1 and October 25, 1999. The Indonesian Attorney General, meanwhile, sent a team to conduct a follow-on investigation, and the Indonesian Parliament subsequently passed - and the Indonesian President signed - a law establishing its own Ad Hoc Human Rights Court to prosecute crimes committed in Timor-Leste.

Assessments of these proceedings, however, have concluded that there were major shortcomings in the processes carried out in both countries. In Indonesia the process was deemed "manifestly inadequate" by a U.N.-appointed Commission of Experts subsequently

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[92] United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 31 January 2000.

mandated to review the judicial proceedings in both Indonesia and Timor-Leste.[94] The problems in Indonesia began with the original mandate of the Ad Hoc Human Rights Court. It was more limited than that of the Indonesian Commission, focusing only on crimes committed between April and October 1999, on four specific incidents, and in only three of the thirteen districts of Timor-Leste. In addition, critics charged that key evidence was omitted and the actual trial proceedings were careless and ineffective. Of particular significance, moreover, was the failure of the Ad Hoc Court to establish a connection between Indonesian state apparatuses and the pro-integration militia groups, instead simply attributing much of the violence to conflicts between local groups and factions. Finally, the Ad Hoc Court did not adequately seek to determine the command responsibility of the relevant state apparatuses, instead potentially downgrading offenses from acts of commission to acts of omission or negligence.

Although the Indonesian Commission had specifically named over 100 individuals who should be prosecuted, the Ad Hoc Court tried only 18 individuals and only 6 defendants were found guilty and awarded prison sentences ranging from 3 to 10 years. All but one of those decisions, including the one against the former Indonesian Governor of the province, Abilio Soares, were overturned on appeal.[95] The sole remaining conviction, moreover, was against Eurico Guterres, a Timorese militia leader (the other defendants were Indonesian) and he was also subsequently released by the Indonesian Supreme Court before the end of his sentence on the basis of new evidence.[96] Observers concluded that "the failure of these trials to meet international standards, and to achieve legitimacy in the eyes of national and international observers, rests on the lack of commitment on the part of the Indonesian Government."[97] The process failed, moreover, to correct the prevalent Indonesian narrative that portrayed the events in Timor merely as sporadic, spontaneous violence between conflicting local factions and the Timorese independence movement itself as the result of international provocation. This lack of accountability provided no sense of justice or basis for reconciliation for the Timorese victims struggling to construct their own shared historical narrative and unified nation.

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[93] United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 31 January 2000.
[94] United Nations Security Council, 15 July 2005, Annex I, p. 6
[95] "Anger as E.Timor last Indonesian governor acquitted of rights abuses," *Agence France-Presse*, 6 November 2004.
[96] "Indonesia Releases Former East Timor Militia Leader," *Agence France-Presse*, 4 April 2008.
[97] Cohen, 2003, p. 61

Expectations were understandably higher for the U.N.-led criminal proceedings in the Dili Court, but here, too, the process was not without serious flaws. On the positive side of the ledger, the Serious Crimes Unit filed 95 indictments against 391 individuals, interviewed over 6,000 witnesses and submitted hundreds of formal witness statements to the Special Panels.[98] The Special Panels completed 55 trials, convicted 84 defendants, 24 pleaded guilty, 4 were acquitted, and charges against 13 were dismissed or withdrawn. Sentences ranged up to 33 years in the most serious cases.[99] A Defense Lawyers Unit established mid-way through the process, moreover, was credited with "genuine and vigorous efforts" to uphold the rights of the accused.[100] In so doing, the process contributed to the rule of law and sense of accountability, as well as encouraged truth telling and reconciliation.

On the other hand, the failure of the process to ensure accountability for those who committed the most serious human rights violations undermined its overall credibility. There are pending charges against 339 individuals outside the jurisdiction of Timor-Leste (presumably mostly in Indonesia) and Indonesian officials evinced no desire to cooperate in the process, either by making witnesses available or by extraditing accused individuals.[101] Most observers and analysts concluded, in fact, that "the main obstacle to accountability is Indonesia."[102] Although the Dili-based process included direct support from the United Nations and participation by international experts and judges (as well as Timorese), the process was deemed severely underfunded in comparison to similar proceedings in other countries. The lack of both financial and personnel resources and the pressure to complete the proceedings in a relatively narrow time window left the process open to considerable criticism. Finally, some, like Kingston, blame the failure of the process on the lack of will on the part of the international community, and specifically the United States. They argue that given the U.S. desire to secure Indonesia's cooperation in the war on terror, it was reluctant to hold Indonesia accountable for past crimes committed in Timor-Leste by pressing, if necessary, for an international tribunal.[103]

At the same time, this analysis would be incomplete if it ignored the important dynamic at play within Timor-Leste between the political leadership engaged in the larger nation building project and the genuine desire on the part of many Timorese for justice. This conflict

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[98] United Nations Security Council, 15 July 2005, Annex I, p. 19-20
[99] United Nations Security Council, 15 July 2005, Annex I, p. 32
[100] United Nations Security Council, 15 July 2005, Annex I, p. 36
[101] "Indonesia Will Ignore UN Indictments of Ex-Officials," *AP,* 25 February 2003.
[102] Kingston, 2006, p. 273
[103] Kingston, 2006, pp. 273, 283, 295

came to a head when senior Indonesian officials were indicted in Timor-Leste, despite the potential negative impact on efforts to build a foundation for long-term peace and prosperity. The only serious potential security threats to the new country were likely to emanate from its larger neighbor. Aside from a potential direct incursion by Indonesian forces over unresolved border issues, the tens of thousands of Timorese refugees in West Timor held as virtual hostages and former pro-autonomy militia groups could also be a threat or destabilizing factor. Timor-Leste's development also depended to a large degree on trade, investment, and economic ties with Indonesia, not least for the majority of its food imports.[104] Finally, linguistic and cultural ties, as well as simple proximity and opportunity, had continued to spur thousands of young Timorese to pursue higher education opportunities at Indonesian universities. There was a lack of political will on the part of senior Timorese officials to risk jeopardizing the long-term nation building project by pursuing charges against the most senior Indonesian officials, including former Indonesian Defense Minister and Commander of the Armed Forces Wiranto.[105] As President Gusmão himself said,

> We can best honor that struggle and those sacrifices by building a better democracy here, improving governance and providing better services to the people. We also must respect the courage of the Indonesians in accepting our independence and not disrupt their progress toward democratization by demanding formal justice. The political situation remains fragile in Indonesia and there is a risk that we could help unite forces opposed to SBY's [President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono] reform agenda. It is absolutely in our interest to see our huge neighbor succeed in these reforms; that is our best protection.[106]

Gusmão and others continued to echo these views years later. When asked how he would reconcile public calls for justice and accountability with the failure of the process, for example, then-President Ramos-Horta said that based on his extensive travels throughout the country, he believed that people were more concerned about their immediate economic situation. He left open the possibility of pursuing justice at a future date, but noted that "Indonesia has not yet tried Indonesians who committed crimes against other Indonesians, much less crimes committed in a foreign country."[107]

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[104] "Timor-Leste-Indonesia Bilateral Relations Improve," *Antara News,* 27 September 2013.
[105] United Nations Security Council, 15 July 2005, Annex I, pp. 24-6, 86
[106] Kingston, 2006, p. 282
[107] Ramos-Horta, Jose. Personal interview. 30 May 2011.

The CAVR

Even as formal judicial proceedings were launched to investigate and prosecute the serious crimes committed in 1999, a separate process was initiated to look further back and examine the long and painful history of the Indonesian occupation. A movement to establish a "truth commission" along the lines of a number of international examples and precedents, including most notably in Latin America and South Africa, was launched by civil society, Church, and community leaders, supported by UNTAET. A proposal for an independent commission was presented to the First National Congress of the CNRT (the National Council of Timorese Resistance) in August 2000 where it was unanimously endorsed. A steering committee appointed to conduct consultations with local communities across the country encountered broad public support for the proposal. UNTAET Resolution 2001/10 was issued on July 13, 2001 formally creating the Commission for Reception, Truth, and Reconciliation (CAVR, according to its Portuguese acronym) with a mandate to examine the history from April 25, 1974, which marked the fall of the dictatorship in Portugal and the beginning of the decolonization process to October 25, 1999, the date on which the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 1272 establishing UNTAET as the transitional administration for Timor-Leste. This period spanned the domestic violence from 1974-1975, the Indonesian invasion, over two decades of Indonesian occupation, as well as the violence following the August 30, 1999 "popular consultation." In 2002, seven National Commissioners and 29 Regional Commissioners were appointed and the CAVR began its work.

The CAVR was not seen as an alternative to formal judicial proceedings, but instead served as a complementary process empowered to address a number of important objectives that the formal justice system could not. These included uncovering mass human rights violations over an extended period, identifying the underlying patterns and causes of such violence, airing the accounts of victims, and providing additional forms of accountability.[108] Among other authorities granted to the CAVR was the power to provide names and evidence to the Prosecutor General with recommendations for prosecution. In addition to recommending specific prosecutions, however, the CAVR was tasked with completing a report on its findings and making recommendations to prevent future human rights violations. Another major part of its work would be to promote reconciliation, including the implementation of the Community Reconciliation Processes, the object of which "was to

[108] Stahn, 2001, p. 954

support the reception and reintegration of individuals who had caused harm to their communities through the commission of minor criminal offences and other harmful acts."[109] In cases of minor offenses, the CAVR was empowered to convene panels of local community leaders to hear complaints and recommend appropriate punitive measures (e.g., community service, public apology, reparations) which, if accepted, provided the accused with immunity from further prosecution.[110]

The CAVR's mandate was subsequently reaffirmed by the Constitution when it came into effect on May 20, 2002, and its mandate was extended on multiple occasions. Finally, on October 31, 2005, the CAVR completed its work and presented its report - over 2,500 pages long - to the President of the Republic. Based on thousands of interviews and original testimony, the CAVR report, entitled *Chega!* - the Portuguese word for "Enough!" or "No More!" - now represents one of the most comprehensive and definitive accounts of Timor-Leste's modern history. Equally important, because both the process of compiling the testimony and the report itself were conducted by and for the Timorese people, it has become one of the country's most potent symbols of national identity. The CAVR Commissioners themselves appeared to have been quite conscious of their role and that of the report:

> [O]ur mission was to establish accountability in order to deepen and strengthen the prospects for peace, democracy, the rule of law and human rights in our new nation. Central to this was the recognition that victims not only had a right to justice and the truth but that justice, truth and mutual understanding are essential for the healing and reconciliation of individuals and the nation. Our mission was not motivated by revenge or a morbid or political preoccupation with the past. The CAVR was required to focus on the past for the sake of the future…[111]

The Timorese political leadership also shared this view of the CAVR's role in the ongoing nation building process, as is evident from the careful management of the report as well as decisions on how to institutionalize the CAVR and memorialize its findings and evidence.

At the time of the CAVR's establishment, the Association for Ex-Political Prisoners proposed to rehabilitate the Comarca - a former Portuguese and Indonesian prison in Dili - and establish the CAVR's headquarters in the historic building. Funding was provided by the

[109] CAVR, 2005, Part II, pp. 2, 12-13
[110] CAVR, 2005, Part II, pp. 12-13
[111] CAVR, 2005, preface, p. 2

Japanese government for the rehabilitation and work on the building was completed in 2002. It is important to note the historical and emotional significance of the site. The Comarca has been described by one scholar as "the most important repository of national memories of the Indonesian occupation."[112] Built in 1965 as a Portuguese prison, it was subsequently used by FRETILIN, during the brief period after independence was declared in 1975, and then by Indonesian authorities when the prison became notorious for housing supporters of the resistance. Former prisoners have reported that the conditions of the prison were horrifying and overcrowded, and that torture, sexual abuse, disappearances, and extralegal killings were common.[113] The Comarca stood as a symbol throughout the Indonesian occupation and was "infamous as a place of suffering."[114] It was closed only in the violence after the August 30, 1999 referendum when the final prisoners escaped and the building was burned to the ground.[115] The plan from the beginning was not only to use the rehabilitated building as the temporary headquarters for the CAVR, but also to preserve it as a "memorial of human rights abuse… so that future generations are reminded of Timor's traumatic past."[116]

The CAVR and its staff, which eventually totaled over 200 people, moved into the building in 2002; conducted their research, investigations, and reconciliation programs; produced regular updates on its activities; and presented its final report. The report states up front that "[t]he Commission was not a court of law" and that its "work to establish the truth… has several purposes," including:

> - To understand better the forces which have shape East Timorese society and the nation, and to draw lessons from the past which can nurture a culture of peace and respect for human rights and the rule of law;
>
> - To foster an awareness and understanding of the past in all citizens of Timor-Leste, especially among the young and in future generations, so that by remembering and honouring the suffering of our people during these years of conflict we learn to appreciate the difficult challenges they faced, how they coped with those challenges and value in particular those who made a contribution to lasting peace and freedom in our land.[117]

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[112] Leach, 2009, p. 149
[113] Coupland, 2005; Neil Barrett, "The Truth of the Matter," *The Age*, 17 June 2004.
[114] Coupland, 2005, p. 4
[115] Coupland, 2005, p. 20
[116] Coupland, 2005, p. 2
[117] CAVR, 2005, Executive Summary, p. 16.

The findings of the report are too extensive to detail here, but the following highlights are particularly relevant for the nation building process. The Commission:

- compiled 7,669 individual statements, including 91 from Timorese who had been displaced to West Timor; over 1,000 interviews focused on specific subjects, including 15 VIP interviews conducted in Timor-Leste and Indonesia;
- conducted a statistical survey of 492 graveyards across the country and a retrospective mortality survey of 1,322 randomly-selected households in 121 villages;
- conducted 1,371 community reconciliation proceedings of which over 90 percent were completed and resolved;
- conducted a series of 7 national and 52 sub-district public hearings, as well as a series of about 300 national and village-level healing and participatory workshops to support victims and discuss the impact of the conflict on communities;
- implemented an outreach program to refugees in West Timor and a monitoring program for returned refugees;
- and, implemented an urgent reparations program for a limited number of victims of human rights abuses with severe and immediate needs.[118]

Based on this information gathering, activities, and programs, the Commission provided a historical account that largely corresponds with other scholarly interpretations which:

- detailed the hasty Portuguese decolonization in 1974 and the violent civil war between UDT and FRETILIN in August-September 1975 that claimed up to 3,000 lives;
- described the Indonesian intervention and brutal occupation, including the Indonesian government's violation and the Indonesian military's forcible suppression of the Timorese right to self-determination (although the Indonesian people were not to blame and elements of Indonesian civil society actively supported Timorese self-determination);
- highlighted the evolution of the resistance movement, including the fundamental role played by the resistance's diplomatic efforts, the support of the Portuguese government and civil society, as well as the Vatican and the Catholic Church, and, finally, the belated support of the United Nations and its member states in 1999;
- asserted the failure of the United States, Australia, and other key international actors to strike the right balance of support between Timor-Leste's right to self-determination and their strategic and economic interests with relation to Indonesia until 1998-99.[119]

[118] CAVR, 2005, Executive Summary

Of particular note were the estimates provided of:

- 18,600 killings and disappearances and between an additional 84,200 and 183,000 conflict-related deaths due to hunger and illness (above and beyond the normal peace-time rates), including 2,634 deaths in 1999 alone;
- Over half of the households surveyed were subjected to displacements due to the conflict;
- Over 22,000 arbitrary detentions, 11,000 cases of torture, and estimates of thousands of sexual assaults.[120]

The Commission held the Indonesian state accountable for the illegal use of force and "massive, widespread and systematic" human rights violations including "widespread and systematic executions, arbitrary detention, torture, and rape and sexual slavery" that amounted to "crimes against humanity and war crimes." The Commission reported having found conclusive evidence of Indonesia's failure to distinguish between civilian and military targets, destroying of food sources, as well as its forcible displacement, internment, and deliberate starvation of tens of thousands of Timorese.[121] With regard to the events of 1999, in particular, the Commission found that "senior members of the Indonesian military, police and civil administration" were involved in a program of mass human rights violations intended to influence the outcome of the "popular consultation," including "through the creation of new… militia groups and the strengthening of existing ones."[122] The Commission also scrutinized key domestic players and found that FRETILIN, FALINTIL, and the UDT were also guilty to a lesser degree of human rights violations against fellow Timorese, particularly in the period before and immediately following the Indonesian invasion.

The Report also included a series of recommendations, a number of which directly relate to the country's nation building efforts. First and foremost, despite the Commission's own contributions toward truth and reconciliation, the Report points out that the perpetrators of the most serious crimes detailed in the report have not been brought to justice. Recognizing the difficulty and complexity of ensuring justice for such crimes, the Report nevertheless points out the dangers of failure in this effort: "Respect for the rule of law and the organs of

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[119] CAVR, 2005, Executive Summary
[120] CAVR, 2005, Executive Summary
[121] CAVR, 2005, Executive Summary, pp. 146-8
[122] CAVR, 2005, Executive Summary, p. 148

the state responsible for its administration, a fundamental pillar of the democratic transition in Indonesia and nation building in Timor-Leste, will always be extremely fragile in this context."[123]

In addition, the Report notes that: "Citizenship symbolises our unity as a nation. It is based on a sense of belonging to this country, national pride and commitment to our people, values and common future. It is essential to nurture the sense of citizenship."[124] In addition, Timor-Leste's "unique way of life and culture," which was denied to varying degrees by Portugal and Indonesia, should be "further developed as a source of national identity and nation-building."[125] Educators were encouraged to use the resources created and collected by CAVR to enrich the curriculum and assist in the "teaching of history, political science, conflict-resolution, international relations and law."[126] The government was encouraged to seek the repatriation of "Timorese artefacts, documents and culturally-related material currently outside the country" and to "restore and preserve sites and materials of particular cultural importance damaged or destroyed during the conflict… to serve as a reminder to future generations of the destruction of 1999 and the challenges that had to be faced… in establishing the new state."[127]

Explicitly recognizing its own nation building role, the Report also recommended creating a post-CAVR institution to engage in follow-on activities to further those efforts:

> The Commission has made a certain contribution to the nation building process of Timor-Leste… This transition will be an ongoing and long process… many aspects of its work should be followed up as part of the national effort to build a society based on acknowledging the truth of the past, non-violence, reconciliation and reparations. The work of recording, preserving and sharing the truth of our history, of continuing the promotion of lasting reconciliation, and of creating a society based on human rights and the rule of law can all be enhanced by the establishment of an institution to carry on aspects of the Commission's work.

Specifically, the Commission recommended that such an institution be empowered to implement the Recommendations in the Report, promote further reconciliation in Timor-Leste, and preserve the Comarca and the CAVR archives as a national memorial and heritage

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[123] CAVR, 2005, Executive Summary, p. 184
[124] CAVR, 2005, Executive Summary, p. 166
[125] CAVR, 2005, Executive Summary, p. 167
[126] CAVR, 2005, Executive Summary, p. 167
[127] CAVR, 2005, Executive Summary, p. 167

site. The archives, comprising thousands of multi-media records, were declared a "unique part of Timor-Leste's national heritage" and should form the basis of a continuing effort to establish a permanent archive of historical materials. The Report recommended that they be maintained at the Comarca site as part of a human rights center to "remember, honour and learn from Timor-Leste's recent human rights history."[128]

Commission on Truth and Friendship

Even as the CAVR and other justice processes continued to play out, Indonesian and Timorese political leaders began to explore the creation of a bilateral truth commission in late 2004. It had already become apparent at that time that the effort to punish the perpetrators of serious crimes in Indonesia would not meet Timorese or international expectations of justice. As a result, international pressure as well as bilateral tensions combined to give the leadership in both countries an incentive to create another mechanism that might bring some measure of resolution to the issue. According to one news source, the idea originated in Jakarta as a means of preempting a proposal that had been circulating for a United Nations review team to be appointed to look at the issue.[129] Presidents Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and Xanana Gusmão agreed in principle at a meeting in Bali on December 14, 2004 to the creation of a Commission on Truth and Friendship (CTF) and details for its mandate and terms of reference were worked out over the next several months.[130]

Opponents to the proposal did not hesitate to voice their concerns. Critics complained that there had been no consultations with key stakeholders before the CTF initiative was announced, nor was the decision debated or ratified in the parliaments of either country.[131] One Timorese critic noted in an Indonesian op-ed that "[i]t appears that the underlying aim of the [C]ommission is to put bilateral relations… ahead of justice for the victims or rights abuses."[132] As noted earlier, in the midst of the ongoing dispute over the issue of education, the Timorese Bishops of Baucau and Dili issued a statement saying that "the Catholic community will not condone impunity for crimes against humanity," implicitly admonishing the government to honor its commitments to bring about justice.[133] Although the creation of

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[128] CAVR, 2005, Executive Summary, pp. 189-90
[129] Donnan, "'Truth' Panel for East Timor," *Financial Times,* 16 December 2004.
[130] Moore, "Jakarta, Dili to Discuss Massacres," *The Age,* 15 December 2004.
[131] Hirst, 2008, p. 1
[132] Soares, *The Jakarta Post,* "East Timor: Justice for whom?" 2 Feb 2005.
[133] ETAN, March 2005.

the CTF was intended to avert further international scrutiny, U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan went ahead and approved the creation of a U.N. Commission of Experts (referenced above) to review the serious crimes processes in both Timor-Leste and Indonesia. Despite initial objections from Indonesian officials and threats to deny visas, the U.N. Commission was ultimately allowed to visit both countries to conduct its assessment.

Meanwhile, plans for the CTF were finalized in March 2005. In short, the CTF would seek to develop a consensus view of the truth and institutional responsibility for the 1999 events, but would not assign individual responsibility nor pursue prosecution. It would be empowered to recommend amnesty, as well as measures for rehabilitation and reconciliation between the people of both countries. The CTF would include ten members selected from the legal, human rights, academic, religious, and community leaders of both countries, with each President empowered to appoint five members.[134] The CTF members were appointed and the CTF began its work in August 2005.

After details regarding the mandate of the new CTF were agreed, opponents continued to express skepticism and even to label the initiative as an effort to "white-wash" crimes against humanity. Human rights groups criticized its lack of a mandate to assign individual responsibility for crimes or to recommend or initiate prosecutions. One Timorese NGO wrote that given the need to establish truth and justice, "we have serious concerns about the goals, credibility, legitimacy and the likely effectiveness of the CTF."[135] "The effort… will instead absolve individuals of their moral and legal accountability, emphasizing instead institutional roles," another group argued.[136] Notwithstanding the importance of truth between nations, these critics charged that the truth of what occurred was already "well-established" and that what was needed was "real accountability and justice."[137] Nor was skepticism limited to the Timorese and international human rights communities, even some Indonesian civil society experts voiced their concerns.[138] The CAVR in its own Report released later that year sounded a note of caution in encouraging the government to ensure that the CTF be "complementary, not opposite to the work that has been conducted."[139]

Skepticism about the CTF continued throughout the course of its work over the next three years. Observers were sharply critical, for example, of the public hearings conducted by

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[134] Yudhoyono, Gusmão & Alkatiri, 2005.
[135] Lao Hamutuk, 2005, pp. 15-16
[136] ETAN, 9 March 2005.
[137] ETAN, 9 March 2005.
[138] Yudhawiranata, "New International Initiaitve Needed to Create Justice for East Timor," *The Jakarta Post,* 18 May 2005.

the CTF in 2007 in Indonesia and Timor-Leste. The hearings, most of which were in Indonesia, did not adequately challenge witnesses or protect victims and ended up serving as platforms for perpetrators of crimes against humanity "to publicly defend their actions and provide self-serving, highly questionable explanations" for their conduct.[140]

Finally, in July 2008 the CTF submitted its final report to the two Presidents and the report was made public the following month. Somewhat to the surprise of many of the critics of the CTF, the report itself was consistent with previous accounts of the 1999 violence and confirmed the institutional responsibility of Indonesian forces in widespread crimes against humanity.[141] Specifically, the report found that gross human rights violations - including murder, rape, torture, illegal detention, and forcible displacement - were committed by pro-autonomy militia groups supported and at times with the direct involvement of the Indonesian military, police, and civilian authorities. The report also found that pro-independence groups were guilty of similar violations - including illegal detentions - but on a more limited scale. A number of recommendations were also made, including for institutional reform of the security sector and human rights training; measures to facilitate bilateral ties and cooperation, including along the common border; creation of a documentation and conflict resolution center; establishment of a joint commission to investigate disappearances and missing persons; wide dissemination of the report and a joint statement by the two Presidents acknowledging violence, apologizing to victims, and urging reconciliation. Moreover, despite its mandate to do so, the report specifically declined to recommend amnesty or rehabilitation for any persons involved in the crimes committed.[142]

Announcing the report's findings at a public event in July in Bali, Presidents Yudhoyono and Ramos-Horta (along with Timorese Prime Minister Gusmão) acknowledged the violence. Indonesian President Yudhoyono's remark that "[w]e convey very deep remorse at what happened in the past that has caused the loss of lives and property" was reported to have been something short of an actual apology and possibly politically motivated given Yudhoyono's upcoming election battle with some of the Indonesian generals implicated in the report.[143] Nonetheless, others credited the statement as the first major step in overturning the long-held Indonesian counter narrative surrounding the 1999 events and Timor-Leste's independence movement.

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[139] CAVR, Executive Summary
[140] Hirst, 2008, p. 2.
[141] Toohey, "Jakarta Regrets…" *The Australian,* 18 July 2008; Hirst, 2009, p. 10
[142] Commission on Truth and Friendship, 2008, Executive Summary, xii-xxi

Martenus Bere

A more recent incident sheds further light on the difficult balance that Timorese officials have sought to maintain between the principled pursuit of justice and the practical need for friendly relations with neighboring Indonesia. In February 2003, the Serious Crimes Unit issued a warrant for the arrest of Martenus Bere, a leader of one of the pro-Indonesian militia groups accused of being responsible for dozens of murders of disappearances in the Covalima district, including for the infamous Suai Church massacre on September 6, 1999 which led to the deaths of 3 priests and 30 unarmed civilians. Although he was one of the suspects initially slated for prosecution under the Indonesian process, he and others were later dropped from the list because Indonesian authorities claimed they were unable to locate him (despite the fact that he lived openly in West Timor). In early August 2009, Bere traveled across the border and was recognized and apprehended by local citizens in Suai. He was subsequently arrested by the Timorese police and transferred to Dili pending trial.

The arrest came just a couple of weeks before the 10th anniversary of the August 30, 1999 referendum. Timorese officials were busy planning a major celebration of the event and were expecting high-level participation from a number of countries, including the Governor-General of Australia and the Indonesian Foreign Minister. Indonesian regional authorities in West Timor immediately protested Bere's arrest and pressured the Indonesian government to seek his release. Following unsuccessful bilateral discussions to resolve the issue, Indonesia reportedly threatened to cancel the Indonesian Foreign Minister's visit and on the eve of the August 30 celebration, President Ramos-Horta and Prime Minister Gusmão ordered the release of Bere into the custody of the Indonesian Embassy in Dili.

The decision was immediately criticized by the United Nations and other international observers, as well as Timorese civil society groups, the opposition FRETILIN party, and many Timorese citizens. They argued not only that the decision was illegal and unconstitutional, but also that it promoted a dangerous culture of impunity and violated the important symbolic principle of Timor-Leste's pursuit of justice for crimes committed against humanity during and following the Indonesian occupation. Seeking to force the Timorese leadership to account for the decision, members of parliament on September 8 blocked

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[143] Toohey, "Jakarta Regrets…" *The Australian,* 18 July 2008.

approval for President Ramos-Horta's official international travel plans[144], but ultimately backed down when the President threatened to resign if his plans were not approved.[145] Subsequently, Ramos-Horta explained his position on the legality of Bere's release by saying that "not all that is legal supports the national interest and the State's interest." He argued further that good neighborly relations with Indonesia were essential to ensure the continued sovereignty and independence of Timor-Leste.[146] On October 12, Prime Minister Gusmão was also forced to defend himself against a no-confidence vote in an unprecedented, televised session at the National Parliament. Like Ramos-Horta, Gusmão did not dwell on the legality of the decision, but argued simply that "my government prioritizes national interest" and underlined the importance of bilateral relations with Indonesia.[147]

The suffering and sacrifices endured during the resistance struggle are at the core of the Timorese national narrative. In the interest of strengthening national identity and unity as well as their own legitimacy, Timorese political leaders sought to maintain a delicate balance between the pursuit of justice for crimes committed during that period and the promotion of both domestic and international reconciliation. By forcing those leaders to make a stark choice in one particular case, the Martenus Bere incident brought this major contest over Timorese national symbols into sharp relief. Indonesia's stubborn defense of a despicable war criminal not only precipitated a diplomatic incident, but almost caused a serious political crisis in Timor-Leste.

Almost fifteen years after the August 30, 1999 referendum and the violent events that led to Timor-Leste's independence, the search for truth, justice, and reconciliation continues. Acknowledging the shortcomings of the serious crimes process, in August 2006 the United Nations Security Council mandated the establishment of a Serious Crimes Investigations Team as part of the ongoing United Nations Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT). That unit functioned from February 2008 until the end of UNMIT's mandate on December 31, 2012. According to the Acting Special Representative of the U.N. Secretary-General and the head of UNMIT, under the supervision of the Timorese Prosecutor-General, the Serious Crimes Investigation Unit was expected to have finished 335 of 396 investigations before handing

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[144] "E. Timor militia leader's release a 'political decision,'" *Agence France-Presse,* 8 September 2009.
[145] "President's Threat to Resign Inappropriate," *Agence France-Presse*, 9 September 2009.
[146] "PR admite que interesse nacional se sobreponha à legalidade, no "caso Bere," *Lusa News Agency*, September 21, 2009.
[147] "East Timor opposition debates censure motion against government," *Deutche Press-Agentur,* October 12, 2009.

over full responsibility to Timorese authorities.[148] Although individual cases continue to work their way through the Timorese justice system, accountability for those deemed to have borne the most responsibility for the violence, particularly Indonesian officials, remains elusive and closely tied up with political considerations regarding bilateral relations between Timor-Leste and Indonesia.

Taken together, the years of work on the parts of the CAVR and the CTF did make considerable progress, however, in establishing a definitive and truthful account of both the Indonesian occupation and the events of 1999. Although the CTF failed to deliver much in the way of "justice," by corroborating the account of the CAVR and other sources, it helped to affirm one of the key elements of the Timorese national narrative - the achievement of independence through suffering and resistance. Many in Indonesia may continue to question this version of events, particularly surrounding the earlier periods of the occupation, but these deliberative processes and authoritative reports have inscribed Timor-Leste's narrative in the eyes of its people and the international community.

Progress towards reconciliation is more difficult to assess. Within Timor-Leste, there are certainly large numbers of victims and family members and others who continue to clamor not only for justice, but also for appropriate consideration and compensation for their sacrifices and suffering. The limited efforts of the CAVR to promote reconciliation at the community level appears to have been positive but insufficient. Both the CAVR and CTF reports have recommended specific measures that could also advance reconciliation, but implementation of these recommendations has been slow. Although a temporary post-CAVR institution was established on December 20, 2005, for example, and it has continued to follow up on unfinished CAVR activities, no decision has been made on the establishment of a permanent institution as envisioned in the *Chega!* Report. Parliamentary legislation was developed and two bills were submitted for consideration in June 2010 that would establish a reparations program and a National Memory Institute. Discussion of this legislation was initiated in parliamentary committee, but was ultimately deferred. It appears that the primary obstacle is the lack of consensus on several key aspects of the reparations, including the definition of victims and beneficiaries and the appropriate level of reparations. As noted above, moreover, key members of parliament have held up this legislation, arguing that reparations for victims should come only after compensation for veterans is resolved - a clear indication that "victims" fall below "veterans" in the national hierarchy. Implementation of

[148] "UN to stay engaged in Timor-Leste after peacekeeping mission ends, says senior official," *United Nations News*

the CTF report's recommendations has also been halting at best. It took three years before the Indonesian government issued a regulation outlining a plan of action and most of the actual recommendations are still pending implementation. Local and international NGOs continue to urge full implementation, including the establishment of a commission on disappeared persons, but prospects for immediate movement on that and on other recommendations, like reparations, look unlikely.

Reconciliation in the international sense, however, appears to have progressed considerably as evidenced by continued positive bilateral relations between Timor-Leste and Indonesia. The pragmatic approach of the Timorese leadership in prioritizing those relations over efforts to pursue justice has arguably helped Timor-Leste maintain friendly relations with its geo-strategically important neighbor. This appears to have been the case in maintaining privileged access for Timorese students at Indonesian universities, relatively free economic trade, and strong Indonesian political support for Timor-Leste's aspiration to join the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

This examination of the search for truth, justice, and reconciliation highlights one of the key challenges facing would-be nation builders - reconciling conflicts between key elements of national identity. With the Timorese nation so closely associated with its historical sense of shared suffering and injustice, it is perhaps inevitable that the search for truth and justice will continue to be at the core of national identity. When the pursuit of justice risked jeopardizing a pragmatic need for friendly bilateral relations with Indonesia, however, the Timorese leadership prioritized what it saw as the more immediate nation building tasks of ensuring stability and economic opportunity. To date, the broad desire for justice has not precipitated a political crisis along the lines of those experienced over other issues in 2005 and 2006. Nevertheless, the unifying national narrative of suffering has been firmly inscribed in the Timorese psyche and as part of its national identity. As a result, if Timorese leaders hope to continue to avoid a crisis resulting from unsatisfied demands for justice, they will need to remain attentive and constantly engage in careful political calculus to appropriately balance those concerns with other national priorities.

Center, 12 Nov 2012.

Weathering and Averting National Crises

The two major crises examined in this chapter were clearly the result of a range of complex factors, including the country's immature state institutions. At the same time, this analysis clearly demonstrates that contests within the nation building process and Timor-Leste's still-fragile sense of nationhood were contributing factors to both events. The influence of the political elite in the process of constructing the nation is significant, but it would be foolish to ignore the fact that other institutions and societal forces also play a major role in shaping and, at times, contesting the nation.

The 2005 crisis is a clear example of how an institution - in this case the Catholic Church - can successfully challenge the government and assert its influence in the conceptualization of national identity. Although nominally a disagreement about religious education, one of the first major crises that confronted the newly-independent Timorese state was in fact a contest over Timorese national identity and the respective roles of the State and the Church in defining the nation. As a result, the Church established itself not only as a symbol to be appropriated as a component of Timorese identity, but also as an independent actor along with Timorese state institutions and political leaders in the ongoing contest to shape that national identity.

The 2006 crisis represented an even more serious challenge to the nation. Here, the causes were even more complex, but cannot solely be attributed to the breakdown of the security institutions. In fact, the power of perceptions and self identity proved to be a major contributing factor. Perceived divisions and prejudices between easterners and westerners that had infiltrated the army, police, political parties, and even society at large both triggered and fueled the crisis as it developed. Timorese political leaders encouraged and even sought to appropriate the resistance narrative in their nation building efforts. As a result, however, FALINTIL guerrillas and civilian veterans of the covert resistance have become visible symbols of the nation and potent agents themselves in seeking to define Timorese national identity. Veterans groups and associated individuals played active roles in the crisis and continue to advocate in Timorese society both for compensation as well as a place of primacy in the nation itself. Both the 2005 and the 2006 crises amply illustrate how the absence of a firmly-shared sense of national identity can contribute to instability in a newly-developing country.

The final section in this chapter examined the ongoing search for justice and efforts to promote national and international reconciliation. Here, too, is a powerful example of how national narratives in the hands of individuals and societal groups have the power to shape and direct the nation itself. Timorese nation builders have used the sense of shared suffering to unify the nation and sought to leverage that emotion for political support. At the same time, the narratives of the independence struggle and the suffering experienced by the Timorese people have combined to create a distinct hierarchy in society according to service in the resistance. This hierarchy, moreover, has the potential to expose societal divisions between the veterans of the armed and covert resistance; between veterans and victims; and between veterans, victims, and the former "villains" who opposed the independence movement during the occupation. Timorese officials have so far managed avoid another crisis by largely addressing demands for justice with various judicial and truth-telling processes, as well as by using the country's energy revenues to establish systems to compensate veterans. They have not satisfied long-term expectations for both justice and compensation, however, and it remains unclear whether this could lead to further instability or other efforts to contest the nation.

Chapter 5. Embodying the Nation in Monuments, Heroes, and Maps

Although Timor-Leste will undoubtedly face additional challenges and crises as the nation building process continues, it also appears to be entering a new phase in its efforts to consolidate the nation in the eyes of the world and future generations of Timorese. This chapter will examine two key aspects of these efforts. First, Timorese nation builders have already had over a decade to begin developing the means by which they will transmit a sense of national identity to the generations of Timorese that did not personally experience the Indonesian occupation or the struggle for independence. As is the case with other nations, Timor-Leste has begun to identify national heroes and instill a clear national historical narrative in the minds of the people by means of monuments, museums, memorials, and other symbols. Equally important, Timor-Leste has sought to consolidate the nation by literally "mapping" it in the eyes of the world through border and maritime negotiations with Indonesia and Australia. As has been the case with other countries, nation building and state building proceeded hand-in-hand in Timor-Leste. This chapter will highlight the fact that notwithstanding the importance of state and institution building, symbols and rituals also play a critical role and that long-term stability in Timor-Leste depends, in part, on successful nation building in this regard.

History & Heroes: Memorializing Identity

The consolidation of Timorese national identity hinges on both the successful articulation of a consensual sense of national identity in the existing population, but also on recreating that sense of identity among successive future generations of Timorese citizens. National identity is composed of myths, common historical narratives, and shared institutions, but is also literally "constructed" in the form of physical symbols and representations that will help remind and educate people to identify with the nation. Some argue, in fact, that while other aspects of nation building develop a "sense of collective identity, it is the physical and

social expressions that reproduce this and perpetuate the feeling of belonging."[1] This section will examine the progress in the reinterpretation, renegotiation, and construction of national monuments and architecture. Although the interpretation of national symbols and national identity itself is a constant and ongoing process, Timor-Leste provides a unique opportunity to examine this aspect of the nation building process in its formative stages. This section will also examine how post-independence Timorese nation builders have already begun to identify and elevate national heroes, consecrating memorials in their image or prominent structures in their name. Monuments and architecture have the rare capacity to occupy and transform temporal, physical, emotional, and symbolic space in the national consciousness. In so doing, specific monuments, and particularly monumental ruins, have come to symbolize national identity in a number of countries. Unlike many other countries in Southeast Asia, however, Timor-Leste does not possess much in the way of monumental historical ruins. Throughout its recorded history, the territory has been predominantly rural and only recently has begun to develop beyond subsistence agriculture. Nevertheless, Timor-Leste's indigenous cultural heritage and long history of occupation by Portugal and Indonesia have bequeathed the newly-established nation-state multiple, overlapping layers of monumental heritage. A brief examination of the surviving monuments and their origins will set the stage for an analysis of the country's subsequent efforts to construct appropriate national monuments.

Portuguese Colonial Heritage

Like other colonialists, the Portuguese authorities saw their presence in Timor-Leste as a "civilizing mission" that reflected glory on the Portuguese crown. As a result, much of the colonial built heritage was dedicated to memorializing the "discovery" of Timor-Leste, the colonial administrative institutions, and the Catholic Church. Despite the presence of Portuguese colonial authorities in Timor-Leste for hundreds of years, however, there is not a great deal of colonial architecture and monumental heritage remaining. The nature and scope of Portuguese colonial administration was such that its direct impact was limited primarily to Oecussi (the site of the original Portuguese settlement), Dili, and some of the coastal areas. Additionally, much of the built heritage in Dili was destroyed by preemptive Allied bombing during World War II and subsequently during the post-referendum violence in 1999.

[1] Prista, 2004, p. 99

Nevertheless, a few monuments and buildings remain as testimony to the Portuguese imperial legacy and some have even been restored in recent years.

Despite their explicit association with the Portuguese colonial enterprise, "it is surprising, given the tempest-like or even locust-like occupation of the half-island by the Indonesian armed forces and camp followers, that a general desecration of these monuments… did not occur."[2] Those buildings that survived World War II and were subsequently torn down during the Indonesian occupation, moreover, may have been architectural victims of simple modern and pedestrian motives of profit rather than a deliberate attempt to eradicate the remnants of the colonial presence.[3]

(Government Palace in Dili, photo by Jordan Hargrave)

Perhaps the most prominent such monument is the Infante Dom Henrique or Henry the Navigator Monument in the large square in front of the Palácio do Governo (Government Palace). Henry was the Portuguese King who launched the original European voyages of exploration and the monument in Dili was erected in 1960 to commemorate the 500th anniversary of his death. It is inscribed with a quote from the Lusiadas an epic poem by Camões immortalizing the Portuguese 'voyages of discovery': "Por Mares Nunca Dantes Navegados" (Over Seas Never Before Sailed) and contains the traditional Portuguese symbols of state. One historian uncovered a possible clue as to why the Indonesians may have overlooked this statement of imperial grandeur. In a publication of the provincial Indonesian government the statue is incorrectly described as being dedicated to a mere Portuguese colonial ruler in Timor-Leste.[4] The fact that only one of a half-dozen Timorese

[2] Gunn, 2000, p. 228
[3] Gunn, 2000, pp. 230-1
[4] Gunn, 2000, p. 230

interviewed for this dissertation correctly identified the subject of the monument suggests that its historical value has been reduced to that of a remembrance of the Portuguese colonial presence.[5] Nevertheless, the retention of the monument in such a prominent location – it was the site used for the proclamation of Timorese independence and remains one of the country's principal public gathering spaces – reconfirms the conscious decision by Timorese leaders to embrace the Portuguese colonial legacy as part of their national identity.

(Monument in Oecussi, photo by Tourism Timor-Leste)

Far from Dili in the town of Lifau in the isolated enclave of Oecussi stands another monument to the Portuguese "discovery" of Timor. By some accounts the Portuguese first landed in Lifau in 1515 (including those who erected this monument), began proselytizing in the area in 1556, and subsequently established their first permanent settlement in the 1650s. Lifau remained the capital of the Portuguese colony until it was moved to Dili in 1769. The monument bears a cross, shield, and inscription that reads "Here Disembarked the Portuguese in 1515." With regard to the question of nation building in Timor-Leste, Oecussi is a special case. On the one hand, it might be expected that Oecussi's geographic separation and isolation from the rest of the country could diminish the local population's sense of national identity.[6] On the other hand, the deep-rooted Portuguese traditions that were a result of the long Portuguese presence and "the enclave's position as the birthplace of Catholicism in Timor are the source of considerable pride" for local residents.[7] In an interview, a Timorese from Oecussi confirmed his pride in Oecussi's history as the "gateway

[5] Anonymous. Personal interviews. April 2009.
[6] Note: Apart from traveling overland through Indonesia, the normal means of transportation between Oecussi and Dili is by means of a ferry service which suffers from regular interruptions.
[7] Bano & Rees, 2002.

for Portugal" and noted that people from Oecussi sometimes remind other Timorese that, as a result of this unique role "without Oecussi there would be no Timor."[8]

Dili, the capital of the Portuguese colony since 1769, was itself a "Portuguese construction… built around a formally representative urban centre, while the rest of the country – rural and traditional – was kept apart from any modernization process."[9] A number of old Portuguese buildings have been preserved and reconstructed, including the Government Palace, Motael Church, Dr. Francisco Machado High School, the School of the Kingdom of Venilale, and the former Portuguese infantry barracks. Many of these restorations have been conducted with international, and particularly Portuguese, assistance. Although it would probably be worth analyzing each project in detail to ascertain the negotiation of symbols and nation building, this dissertation will focus only on the Motael Church and the Portuguese infantry barracks.

The Motael Church has entered the public consciousness in Timor-Leste as both a symbol of the Catholic Church and of the clandestine resistance. Although significant during the Portuguese colonial period, the Catholic Church as an institution achieved its current prominence and influence during the Indonesian occupation. One obvious reason for this was the critical role played by the Church in offering material and spiritual support to the Timorese in the face of Indonesian violence. As noted in Chapter 2, during the Indonesian occupation Timorese took refuge in churches and relied on the bishops and priests to advocate on their behalf. "Churches were the only place we could go," said one Timorese. "It was an institution that could protect us to some degree."[10] According to another Timorese, churches were also used by the clandestine youth movement to organize their activities.[11] As the site for the 1991 protest that preceded the Santa Cruz Massacre described in Chapter 2, Motael is the most prominent example of churches that are intimately connected to the modern sense of Timorese national identity given their deep spiritual and historical significance for the Timorese people.

[8] Anonymous. Personal interviews. April 2009.
[9] Prista, 2004, p. 94
[10] Anonymous. Personal interviews. April 2009.
[11] Anonymous. Personal interviews. April 2009.

(Portuguese barracks in Dili, photo by Jordan Hargrave)

The former barracks were built on the site of the first Portuguese *fortaleza* or fortress in Dili. Such fortresses were built by the Portuguese in numerous coastal locations across the island. As the physical manifestation of colonial power, the fortress was a major colonial institution and played a key role in local society. Following independence, UNESCO, supported by the World Bank and the government of Portugal, provided technical assistance for the restoration of the old barracks and its intended conversion into the new National Museum and Cultural Center of Timor-Leste. The decision to restore this particular example of Portuguese architecture in such a central location was significant. One Australian visitor commented that "the irony of putting the official, national cultural centre of the new state into the site of the military wing of the first colonisers is not lost on anyone."[12] A Portuguese scholar described it as an "appropriation of Timor-Leste's colonial history" that was conducted with the aim of "objectifying national awareness in urban and architectural terms… The need for physical and social construction in Timor-Leste brought out its shared history with Portugal, making the negotiation of Portuguese and Timorese identities inevitable."[13]

The plan to transform the building into a new museum and cultural center was ultimately shelved, however, and the restoration was completed by the European Union following an agreement with the Timorese government to use the space to house its new diplomatic mission. As part of the agreement, the European Union undertook to incorporate a public space in the building and to hold regular cultural events dedicated to Timorese art and performances.[14] Plans for a national museum, however, are still under consideration and

[12] Losche, 2006, p. 233
[13] Prista, 2004, p. 104
[14] Anonymous. Personal interview. November 2010.

the government has identified an alternative site for a new construction and continues to seek appropriate funding with the assistance of UNESCO.

In addition to the examples discussed above, the Timorese government has adopted policies that prioritize the preservation of all Portuguese colonial heritage. The National Policy for Culture adopted in 2009 states that the "identification, classification, and preservation" of "the forts, schools, and other buildings" is "urgently" needed and will "facilitate the recovery of the memory of an important period of the country's history and contribute to a better understanding of the cultural characteristics of Timor-Leste as the sole Asian member of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries."[15]

Indonesian Monuments

The Indonesian invasion marked a new phase in which Indonesian authorities sought to legitimate their occupation and annexation of Timor-Leste by reinterpreting history and asserting their own narrative through the production of monumental symbols designed to promote a shared anti-colonial identity. They appear to have adopted at least two separate strategies in the construction of "national" monuments, one which coincided with the early years of occupation and another adopted in the years immediately prior to the 1999 referendum. One scholar has characterized the first strategy as the construction of neo-colonial 'integration' monuments that "depict the forced integration of East Timor as a 'return to the fatherland', and portray elements of East Timorese nationalism against the Portuguese as consonant with Indonesia's own anti-colonial struggle against the Dutch."[16] Such pro-integration monuments are still found in towns across Timor-Leste, including many to *Pancasila,* the Indonesian state ideology.

[15] Republica Democratica de Timor-Leste, 2009.
[16] Leach, 2009, p. 147 (also cites Gunn, 2001, p. 10)

(Integration Monument in Dili, Photo by Robin Lauren)

The *Tugu Pahlawan* or Integration Monument in Dili is a typical example of this effort, replicated in other towns as well. Located between the Dili harbor and the commercial center, the statue was inaugurated by the Indonesia Armed Forces Commander General M. Yusuf in 1978.[17] The subject is a traditional Timorese warrior breaking free from the shackles of Portuguese colonialism. The monument bears some resemblance to the Liberation of West Irian Monument in Jakarta, a statue constructed shortly before by Indonesian authorities for a similar purpose.[18] Perhaps the crucial difference between the two statues, however, lies in their locations. "While the Irian monument located in the national capital might, at least by New Order stalwarts, be regarded as a national monument, the Integration monument sited in Dili is palpably perceived by large numbers of independence-seeking Timorese as something imposed from the outside."[19] Despite the failure of this and other pro-integration monuments to fire the public imagination, like the Portuguese monuments before them they have largely been left undisturbed during post-referendum Timor-Leste.[20]

The second strategy adopted by Indonesian authorities, particularly in the latter period of the occupation, was to erect symbols of Christianity in an effort to appropriate the popular legitimacy accorded to the Catholic Church. Ironically, Indonesia itself bears some share of the responsibility for the Christianization of Timor-Leste. Despite centuries of proselytization, the Portuguese never succeeded in converting more than about 30 percent of the local population to Christianity. By the end of the Indonesian occupation, however, over 90 percent of the population identified themselves as Catholic. By banning the use of the

[17] Gunn, 2000, p. 232
[18] Anderson, 1990, p. 273
[19] Gunn, 2000, p. 233
[20] Philpott, 2006, p. 137; Steele, 2002, p. 79

Portuguese language and requiring all Timorese to adopt one of Indonesia's officially-recognized religions (including Christianity), Indonesian authorities played a direct role in driving the Timorese into the embrace of the Church. As a result, a "popular Catholicism… emerged as an expression of common suffering…. Moreover, the decision of the Catholic hierarchy in East Timor to use Tetum, not Indonesian, as the language of the Church, has had profoundly nationalizing effects. It has raised Tetum from being a local language or lingua franca in parts of East Timor to becoming, for the first time, the language of "East Timorese" religion and identity."[21]

(Cristo Rei Statue in Dili, photo by Monizdasilva)

(Dili Cathedral, photo by Joao Amaral)

Indonesia, of course, prides itself on being religiously tolerant towards all of its citizens. As a result, it was perhaps no surprise that the Indonesian authorities made serious efforts in the mid-1990s to appropriate the Church's legitimacy. The Cathedral of the Immaculate

[21] Anderson, 1990, p. 238

Conception – said to be the largest Catholic Church in Southeast Asia at the time – was built and inaugurated by Indonesian President Suharto in 1988, mere months before the impending visit of Pope John Paul II.[22] Another dramatic example of this practice is the massive statue of *Cristo Rei* (Christ the Lord, in Portuguese). Set high atop the Fatocama cape, the 88-foot statue is easily visible to the residents of Dili and the surrounding area. As with the Cathedral, the monument was inaugurated by Indonesian President Suharto himself in October 1996. Much to the chagrin of the Indonesian authorities, however, the inauguration came just a few days after the Nobel Committee awarded the Peace Prize to Bishop Carlos Belo and José Ramos-Horta "to honour their sustained and self-sacrificing contributions for a small but oppressed people."[23] The heightened international media attention that resulted from the award put an uncomfortable spotlight on the Cristo Rei inauguration. Bishop Belo summed up the skepticism in his remarks to the press: "What's the point of building a statue of Jesus if people are not going to be treated according to the gospel? It would be better to improve the situation rather than build statues."[24]

Indonesia's efforts to reinterpret the past and appropriate popular symbols by constructing monuments in Timor-Leste were unsuccessful, but indicative of the larger challenge of integrating Timor-Leste within Indonesia's own sense of national identity. Having contemplated this very question Benedict Anderson concluded that "the Indonesian Government has been unable to incorporate East Timor imaginatively, in the broader, popular sense" and the repressive nature of its occupation and neo-colonialist approach to government certainly contributed to separatism and a distinct Timorese national identity.[25]

From the perspective of the newly-independent country, however, these monuments present an interesting problem. The Timorese are well aware of what the Indonesian authorities sought to accomplish in constructing them. Many know, for example, that the Cristo Rei statue is "redolent with Indonesian nationalist symbolism." The statue is 27 meters in height from base to tip (representing Timor-Leste's status as Indonesia's 27th province) and the statue alone measures 17 meters (in honor of both July 17, the day on which Timor-Leste was integrated into Indonesia, and August 17, the day Indonesia declared independence

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[22] "Dili Cathedral Opened for Use on Feast of Immaculate Conception," *Union of Catholic Asian News,* 28 December 1989.
[23] "Press Release - Nobel Peace Prize 1996". *Nobelprize.org.* 31 Oct 2013
[24] Cited in Gunn, 2000, p. 233
[25] Anderson, 1990, p. 236

from the Netherlands).[26] At the same time, the statue's imagery clearly resonates with Timor-Leste's sense of national identity. The fact that the Cathedral was consecrated by Pope John Paul II during his 1989 visit to Dili may have helped to overcome any negative association with its origin and the prominence of Cristo Rei and its resemblance to similar statues in Lisbon and Rio have earned it some respect with the local population.[27] Most of the Timorese interviewed by this researcher argue that regardless of who built them and for what purpose, both the Cathedral and Cristo Rei now "belong" to Timor-Leste and are the source of considerable pride.[28] These same Timorese also noted that although the Integration monument "evokes only suffering," it too should be kept for posterity and to educate future generations about the Indonesian occupation.[29] To that end, the Timorese government issued a resolution in 2008 officially ceding the responsibility to maintain the statue to the Catholic Church and undertook to provide financial support to the Church for that purpose.[30] Independent Timor-Leste has already begun to reinterpret both the Portuguese and Indonesian-built monuments for its own purposes.

Post-Independence Nation Building

Faced with the daunting challenges of consolidating peace, rebuilding infrastructure, laying the foundations of a new state, and alleviating widespread poverty in one of the world's newest and poorest nations, the national authorities of Timor-Leste have nevertheless devoted considerable attention to the development of shared memory and national identity through the construction of monuments. It is notable that although these "new" monuments are forward-looking in their efforts to represent the Timor-Leste of the 21st century, each of them also seeks to evoke the power of memory by looking backwards; a practice consistent with most nations that routinely seek to root their origins in the past.

Three new museums, in particular, seek to convoke the shared suffering and triumph of the Indonesian occupation and the Timorese resistance movement, as well as display a shared cultural heritage. Museums have the potential to play an important role in the construction of

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[26] Gunn, 2000, p. 233; Cohen, "East Timor Statue is Sign of Hope - and Division," *The New York Times*, 13 September 1995.
[27] "Dili Cathedral Opened for Use on Feast of Immaculate Conception," *Union of Catholic Asian News*, 28 December 1989; Gunn, 2000, p. 234; Cohen, "East Timor Statue is Sign of Hope - and Division," *The New York TImes*, 13 September 1995.
[28] Anonymous. Personal interviews. April 2009.
[29] Anonymous. Personal interviews. April 2009.
[30] Republica Democratica de Timor-Leste, 2008.

national identity. "What we see and do not see in art museums - and on what terms and by whose authority we do or do not see it - is closely linked to larger questions about who constitutes the community and who defines its identity."[31]

The first of these new museums is the Comarca, described as "the most important repository of national memories of the Indonesian occupation."[32] As noted in Chapter 4, the Comarca was built in 1965 as a Portuguese prison, subsequently used by FRETILIN during the brief period after independence was declared in 1975, and then by the Indonesian authorities. The prison became notorious for housing supporters of the resistance. Former prisoners have reported that the conditions of the prison were horrifying and overcrowded, and that torture, sexual abuse, disappearances, and extralegal killings were common.[33] Like most of the buildings in Dili, the prison was destroyed during the post-referendum violence, but was subsequently rehabilitated and used by the Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation in East Timor (CAVR) with financial assistance from the Japanese and Irish governments. The building became a heritage site following the dissolution of CAVR in 2005 and currently houses the CAVR archives, library, exhibition, and public meeting spaces. In addition, the Post-CAVR Technical Secretariat, the ex-Political Prisoners' Association, and the Commission of Truth and Friendship (a joint project of Timor-Leste and Indonesia) have office space at the site.

The Timorese government hopes that the site will serve as a national memorial and human rights center. To that end, the restoration left parts of the original structure intact for public viewing, including jail cells and dozens of examples of original graffiti etched by Timorese prisoners, Indonesian guards and others.[34] Former President (and current Prime Minister) Xanana Gusmão made the following statement after visiting the museum: "I have just walked through the building and saw the amazing evidence of the spirit of the struggle and suffering of the people."[35] As the repository for the CAVR archives and testimony, moreover, the Comarca explicitly seeks not only to memorialize the suffering of the Timorese people, but also to promote national reconciliation. In the words of the Comarca site managers: "Since memorials affect the ways in which we confront the past, present, and future, they, and… their associated archives, have the potential to play significant roles in democracy building, in the promotion of human rights, and in the pursuit of justice.

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[31] Duncan, 1995, p. 9
[32] Leach, 2009, p. 149
[33] Barrett, "The Truth of the Matter," *The Age*, 17 June 2004.
[34] Grenfell, 2005, p. 32; "Comarca," *CAVR (Website)*

Memorials may also serve as state-sponsored forms of symbolic reparation and may help promote other forms of reparation and reconciliation."[36]

(Archive and Museum of the Timorese Resistance (AMTR) in Dili, photos courtesy of AMTR)

Whereas the Comarca taps into the national memory of suffering during the occupation, the new Archive and Museum of the Timorese Resistance (AMTR) evokes the sacrifice and triumph of the resistance itself. The AMTR is housed in the former Portuguese courthouse where it was inaugurated on December 7, 2005, the 30th anniversary of the Indonesian invasion of the territory – a deliberate effort to reclaim that date and memorialize the heroes and victims of the invasion.[37] Permanent exhibitions include many original documents, photos, weapons, and other objects associated with the resistance movement.[38]

The AMTR makes explicit efforts to bridge some of the fissures that have emerged in Timorese society regarding their memory and interpretation of the historical role of the resistance. Consistent with the national narrative that originated during the resistance and was enshrined in the Constitution, separate spaces have been allocated for three distinct components of the resistance movement: the armed resistance, the external front, and the youth and the clandestine front. The museum has worked to expand its collection and exhibition area, collect testimony, and conduct discussion groups with resistance veterans in

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[35] "Comarca," *CAVR (Website)*
[36] Guterres, J.C. "Human Rights and Archives," paper presented to the DTP Human Rights Training, CAVR, Dili (2005) as cited in Leach, 2009, p. 152
[37] Note: The AMTR began to receive direct support from the state budget in 2008.
[38] Note: In the AMTR the objects on exhibition are the primary focus, whereas in the Comarca the building itself is a key part of that museum. The archives of the Comarca are not easily accessed at this time and consist of written and recorded testimony, not original documents.

order to transmit the "symbolic capital" of the Resistance to new generations of schoolchildren. The goal of educating the younger generations is not an idle one. As one of the curators has noted, the history of the resistance represents the country's "collective" consciousness. "Having personally involved virtually all the East Timorese, it is in everyone's memory and is illustrated by a great number of episodes that prove its popular character. Until it is laid down in writing, however, it will remain a mere fact expressed by a fragile memory. In a country where 54% of the inhabitants are less than 15 years old, this memory may disappear within a few decades."[39]

The AMTR reflects a deliberate effort by the government of Timor-Leste to secure the unifying memory of the resistance as a permanent heritage in the current and future national consciousness. The same curator added: "A space of memory and reflection, this institution intends not only to preserve and display the Archive of the Timorese Resistance, but also to convert it into an active instrument of education and citizenship through which all Timorese can better understand their recent history and learn lessons for the present and the future. The construction of the Archive and Museum of the Timorese Resistance represents, therefore, a decisive step in the affirmation of national identity."[40]

Following the 2006 crisis and as part of its efforts to ensure that veterans of the resistance are properly recognized, the Timor-Leste government has also established a "Garden of Heroes" cemetery at Metinaro, outside of Dili. "At the top of the pantheon of East Timorese nationalist memorial sites," wrote one observer, the Garden "is designed as a sacralised national site, to be under permanent honour guard."[41] Government documents explain the decision, "As a nation, we are honouring our past and our veterans. We have inaugurated the Garden of Heroes in Metinaro as a national memorial and place of reflection."[42] Yet even this effort to honor veterans was not without controversy, a representative of a veterans' group pointed out to one researcher that "fallen comrades should be buried in their own districts."[43]

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[39] Mattoso, "O Arquivo da Resistência e a Identidade Nacional."
[40] Mattoso, "O Arquivo da Resistência e a Identidade Nacional."
[41] Leach, 2009, p. 153
[42] "Garden of Heroes," *Timor-Leste Government Results Portal.*
[43] Leach, 2009, p. 154

(Garden of Heroes in Metinaro, photo by Government of Timor-Leste)

Timorese authorities also hope to develop a more conventional national museum for art, history, and cultural heritage in the near future with a deliberate eye towards promoting and perpetuating a sense of national identity. Plans for a National Library and a National Museum, for example, date back to the early years of independence and continue to feature prominently in government plans. According to the 2009 National Policy for Culture, "these institutions will work as centers of promotion for all cultural expression in Timor-Leste. The goals are, on the one hand, to create conditions for the preservation and dissemination of Timorese cultural knowledge, values, materials and practices; and, on the other hand, to connect the past to the present and the future, providing a sense of the culture of the country…"[44] Many countries showcase historical artifacts and examples of "national" art in order to reinforce the development of a national historical narrative and a sense of cultural affinity among the country's diverse population. Recognizing the need to unite the far-flung rural districts of the country as well, the Timor-Leste government also envisions a network of regional cultural centers to "establish a relationship between the government, communities, and national and international NGOs working in culture."[45]

In Timor-Leste, plans to house a national collection in the former Portuguese barracks were abandoned in favor of a current - but as yet unrealized - project to construct an entirely new building.[46] A key question for such a project is identifying the core collection of such a museum. Unfortunately, one of the casualties of the destruction and looting in September 1999 was the Indonesian State Museum of Timor-Leste, established during the Indonesian

[44] Republica Democratica de Timor-Leste, 2009.
[45] Republica Democratica de Timor-Leste, 2009.
[46] Nagaoka, "Rebuilding Social Cohesion of Communities through National Museum of Timor-Leste and Cultural Heritage Education," 12 June 2009.

occupation in 1995.[47] The museum had housed ethnographic, cultural, archaeological artifacts that represented the broad ethnic and cultural diversity of the people of Timor-Leste. International salvation efforts led by UNESCO, the Australian Darwin Museum, and Melbourne University attempted to rescue and recover the collection. Among the items rescued was a unique collection of 35 sacred ancestral wooden sculptures that survived the 1999 looting, reportedly because even the would-be looters believed the figures contained magical powers. Altogether 476 items were recovered and will ultimately be reinstalled as part of a core collection in the future Timor-Leste National Museum.[48] In the meantime, the collection was displayed in the Australian Darwin Museum in 2008-2009 along with that museum's own collection of Timor-Leste art. Even there, the collection's potential role was acknowledged. "Building a museum for the collection is a priority, as a symbol of nation building and as a presentation of the past of Timor to the generations of its present and its future. Young Timorese encountering for the first time the items in the Dili or Darwin collections are often overwhelmed by the depth and beauty of the carvings and textiles they see…"[49] The collection is currently stored at the Ministry of Education under the management of the Secretary of State for Culture pending completion of a permanent exhibition space.

Despite the significant efforts to salvage the collection, however, it remains to be seen whether it will play a central role in the development of a national identity. The museum appears to follow in the European and colonial tradition of displaying traditional objects that previously had little or no art-value for public consumption. Many of the cultural objects to be displayed are traditionally kept in the *uma lulik* or ancestral cult houses and their value and significance is generally limited to the immediate local community where those sacred houses are located. As one expert has noted, "such artefacts, when removed from the immediate context of possession and use, and housed in a museum become someone else's 'heritage'.[50] An anthropologist who has studied Timor extensively reinforces this point in his comments regarding the insularity of Timor's clan-based societal structure: "So thoroughly do Timorese identify an individual with that individual's clan that outside this group he or she has virtually

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[47] Note: The original establishment of the museum may well be another example of Indonesian pro-integration nation-building worthy of closer analysis. Here we will examine only the reconstruction of the museum by the government of Timor-Leste.
[48] Bennett, 2003, pp. 33-4; Lloyd, "From the wreckage," *The Advertiser (Australia)*, 29 November 2008.
[49] Rothwell, "Our neighbour's heirlooms," *The Australian*, 21 November 2008.
[50] Bennett, 2003, p. 34.

no effective social existence."[51] It remains unclear how Timorese will respond to seeing traditional cultural objects on national display.

Another example of a modern Timor-Leste monument, the construction of a statue to honor Pope John Paul II, illustrates a number of the themes already examined in this dissertation. Unveiled in June 2008, the statue is 30-feet tall and is located on the western outskirts of Dili facing the sea at the site where the late Pope celebrated Mass during his 1989 visit.[52] Although smaller in stature, the statue is somewhat reminiscent of the Cristo Rei statue facing the sea on the opposite side of the bay on the eastern outskirts of the city. In a sense, the construction of a complementary homage to Christianity provides some legitimization to the larger Indonesian-era monument.[53]

(Pope John Paul II statue in Tasi Tolu, photo by UCANews)

In selecting Pope John Paul II as the subject for this monument, the Timor-Leste authorities sought to evoke another important historical chapter from the resistance. The Pope's short visit was the only visit by a world leader during the Indonesian occupation and was exceptionally significant for the struggling Timorese. During the Mass he gave for approximately 100,000 people (perhaps 15 percent of the country's total population),[54] the Pope acknowledged the suffering of the Timorese and the death of many innocent people.

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[51] Hicks, 1988, p. 143

[52] Murdoch, "Pope statue a symbol of Timorese freedom struggle," *The Age (Melbourne, Australia)*, 19 April 2008.

[53] Note: The fact that the Pope John Paul II statue was proposed by then-Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri, a member of the small Muslim community in Timor-Leste, provides another symbolic parallel with the fact that Cristo Rei was erected by Muslim-majority Indonesia.

[54] Note: A number of accounts suggested that this number was below expectations because many boycotted the Mass for fear that the Pope's visit would be used to legitimize the Indonesian occupation. See, for example, Hyland, "Catholics plan to avoid Papal mass," *The Advertiser*, 11 October 1989.

After the Mass, which had been covered by international media, about 20 young protestors unfurled banners and chanted slogans calling for independence. A few were injured in the ensuing scuffle between protestors and Indonesian security officials.[55] The event proved embarrassing for Indonesian officials, inspirational for the clandestine youth movement in Timor-Leste, and instrumental in reminding the world that the resistance movement was still vibrant. As Bishop Belo said in an interview after the Pope's death, "with his brief visit to Dili, [the Pope] put this small country, whose people were living for years in suffering and oppression, on the world map."[56] Although the universal Catholic Church was always very cautious in its statements about Timor-Leste because of its concerns about the 5 million Catholics who lived in other parts of Indonesia,[57] the Pope himself would continue to be fairly outspoken and sympathetic on behalf of the people of Timor-Leste up to and following the August 30, 1999 referendum. According to several Timorese interviewed for this dissertation, the former Pope is a worthy subject for such a memorial due to his support for Timor-Leste.[58]

The site of both the Mass and the newly-erected statue is also significant in terms of the young nation's memory of shared suffering. The area called Tasitolu was reportedly used by the Indonesian security forces during the early years of the occupation to torture and kill members of the resistance.[59] The juxtaposition of the monument to Pope John Paul II, a powerful moral and political symbol for the Timorese, and the Tasitolu "killing fields," a site of horror, and suffering, evokes both painful and triumphant memories that unite the nation. As was the case with Cristo Rei, the Timor-Leste government has empowered the Church to maintain the Pope John Paul II statue and has promised to provide funds for that purpose.[60]

Timorese authorities have also been working with local civil society groups to develop plans for the appropriate commemoration of the 1991 Santa Cruz massacre which claimed the lives of almost 300 people and was a seminal event in the resistance movement. The absence of a permanent monument has been taken by some as an indication of official neglect of the significant role played by the younger generation in the clandestine branch of the resistance movement.[61] Others, however, have commended the government for adopting a methodical, inclusive process designed to give local groups and communities ownership of the process.[62]

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[55] Haberman, "Melee Erupts as Pope Speaks in East Timor," *The New York Times*, 13 October 1989.
[56] "Bishop Belo Recalls Pope's Contributions To Nation," *Union of Catholic Asian News, 6* April 2005.
[57] Carey, 1999, p. 82
[58] Anonymous. Personal interviews. April 2009.
[59] CAVR, 2005, p. 85
[60] Republica Democratica de Timor-Leste, 2008.
[61] Leach, 2009, p. 158
[62] Max Stahl. Personal interview. 4 June 2011.

In addition, other important new monuments have almost certainly been overlooked in this review. As noted in Chapter 3, for example, local communities have worked to erect monuments at the sites of massacres and atrocities committed during and near the end of the Indonesian occupation. A monument of an angel at the church in Liquica, for example, commemorates the massacre of 57 people at the hands of pro-Indonesian militia in April 1999. Smaller monuments have also reportedly been erected at other massacre sites.

National Heroes

Among the most critical processes involved in promoting a sense of nationhood and perpetuating it among successive, future generations in any country is the development and incorporation of a cohesive historical narrative into the national education curriculum. Timor-Leste, of course, must engage in this process at the same time as it rebuilds its education infrastructure, trains teachers, develops an entire education curriculum, and balances the role of multiple languages. While this section will not examine the history curriculum in any significant level of detail, it will nevertheless touch on a number of the key symbols and rituals that have already emerged in that evolving process. These include some of those discussed earlier in this dissertation, as well as the means by which nation builders are seeking to elevate and embed those symbols in the national consciousness.

One of the key elements of the evolving national Timorese history is the powerful narrative around shared suffering, stoic resistance, and the steadfast struggle for independence. By connecting the recent experience under Indonesian occupation to the occasional local rebellions against Portuguese colonial rule, this struggle has come to be seen as having spanned almost five centuries and has been associated with the "exceptional and ritualized character of warfare in Timor - the Timorese *funu*."[63] Both before and during the Indonesian invasion a number of Timorese intellectuals worked to construct a nationalist historiography around this theme. They included Abilio de Araujo, José Ramos-Horta in his 1987 work "Funu: The Unfinished Saga of East Timor," and Xanana Gusmão's own writings.[64]

While *funu* itself serves as a symbol and metaphor for the Timorese independence struggle, it is also a potential source for national heroes who can be powerful and compelling

[63] Gunn, 1999, p. 16
[64] Gunn, 1999, p. 24

symbols in the iconography of the nation. Every nation reaches back into its history to identify figures who can personify and unify the "imagined" community. As one of the world's newest nations and one without a long, well-developed, historical narrative, Timor-Leste is still in the early stages of identifying its national heroes. One of the earliest appears to be Dom Boaventura, a Timorese king or *liurai* from the present-day Manufahi district who led a decade-long armed rebellion against the Portuguese colonial authorities that ended in 1912. As one historian has noted, "[t]ypically, nationalist historiography ascribes hero status to rebels against colonial authority. The Boaventura rebellion… is a case in point."[65] Although it is difficult today to know the exact scale of that rebellion, it has certainly had an impact on the popular imagination and today the "name of Boaventura invokes awe and pride among Timorese."[66] As noted in Chapter 2, the founders of FRETILIN recognized the important symbolic role that could be played by Dom Boaventura as far back as June 1974 when several FRETILIN leaders visited the *liurai's* aging widow in his hometown of Same, a gesture that earned them considerable goodwill from local residents at that time.[67]

In a clear sign that Dom Boaventura has been officially adopted as one of Timor-Leste's first post-independence national heroes, President Taur Matan Ruak traveled to Boaventura's hometown of Same in the Manufahi district in November 2012 to commemorate both the 37th Anniversary of the Proclamation of Independence and the 100th Anniversary of the Dom Boaventura Uprising. To facilitate widespread participation in the event the Timor-Leste government declared November 27 and 29 official holidays, along with the annual Proclamation of Independence holiday on November 28[68]. A large statue of Dom Boaventura was unveiled during the celebration. The Timor-Leste Central Bank used a similar image of Dom Boaventura on a new 100 centavos coin (equivalent to $1.00) issued earlier in 2012 in which he was described as "one of the great Timor-Leste historical figures and a symbol of Timorese nationalism."[69]

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[65] Gunn, 1999, p. 16
[66] Gunn, 1999, p. 184
[67] Hill, 2002, p. 72
[68] Republica Democratica de Timor-Leste, V Constitutional Government Press Release, November 23, 2012.
[69] "East Timor 100 centavos 2012 "D. Boaventura the Manufahi"" *catawiki* (website)

(Dom Boaventura coin, www.worldofcoins.eu)

Shortly before the celebrations, Prime Minister Gusmão specifically outlined his government's intent in celebrating the two anniversaries: "We hope that these dates… link us to the more recent past of the struggle for independence and the older roots that made us unique in the regional and world context, and also serve to affirm our sovereign Nation of peace, tolerance and development."[70] President Taur Matan Ruak's remarks at the event in Same also clearly articulate a national historical narrative that connects the colonial rebellions to the modern independence struggle. He attributes the successful achievement of independence, moreover, to national unity and indicates that unity will also be the key to the successful economic development of the country going forward.

> We are commemorating historical events that had great importance in shaping the identity of the Timorese nation… We evoke the struggle of liurai Dom Boaventura against the colonial power. Although his fight launched a powerful challenge to the colonial administration, it did not achieve the consensus of the kingdoms at the time and ultimately turned out to be the first step of a long journey. Our society's aspiration of freedom did not die with Dom Boaventura and it fell to our own generation the sacred duty of finally achieving this ancient dream of ours…
>
> We won independence because we learnt to unite. As I said elsewhere, from our history and my own experience in the fight I take the lesson that divisions among Timorese facilitated the occupation in the ancient as in the recent past. The unity of the people led to victories even against the odds. Timor-Leste won through the resolve and unity of our people…
>
> The time has come to give full meaning to independence and to improve the people's safety and wellbeing we need to develop our country… Timor-Leste has abundant resources. To take advantage of these resources and build a safer and more prosperous country we need unity and hard work.[71]

[70] Gusmão, "Remarks at the Graduation Ceremony for UNTL Students," 26 November 2012.
[71] Taur Matan Ruak, "Remarks on the Commemoration of the centenary of Dom Boaventura and the 37th Anniversary of the Proclamation of Independence," 28 November 2012.

President Taur Matan Ruak was also mindful of the conflict that this historical narrative poses to nation building efforts that seek to maintain linguistic, cultural, and generally amicable ties to Portugal, the former colonial power, as well as friendly, neighborly relations with Indonesia, the former occupier.

> Soon, we will also celebrate the 500th anniversary of the first meeting between Timorese and Portuguese, whose missionaries first shared the Christian faith with our ancestors. From the long contact with Portugal and the Portuguese we kept in our hearts Christianity and the Portuguese Language. Reconciliation has also allowed us to build good neighbourly relations of friendship and cooperation from the very beginning with countries of our region, including our closest neighbours.
>
> We have built strong relationships with Indonesia and Australia, both at bi-lateral and multi-lateral levels, which contribute to the strengthening of regional security and stability…[72]

At the same time, even the elevation of Dom Boaventura to the status of Timor-Leste's earliest national hero was not without some controversy. At the time of the Manufahi rebellion, some Timorese actually sided with the Portuguese, including Nai-Sessu, later to be known as Dom Aleixo Corte-Real, the *liurai* of the neighboring territory of Ainaro. Following his support for the Portuguese against the rebellion and his later efforts in World War II against the Japanese invasion, Dom Aleixo was elevated to heroic status.[73] The current iconization of Dom Boaventura obviously calls into question the historical status of Dom Aleixo and reportedly led one of his prominent descendants and a former Rector of the National University, Benjamin Corte-Real, to boycott the November 2012 event.[74]

Another figure who has emerged as a national hero is Nicolau Lobato, one of the founders of FRETILIN and the first Prime Minister of Timor-Leste following FRETILIN's proclamation of independence on November 28, 1975. Following the Indonesian invasion just several days later, Lobato fled Dili and led the resistance against the Indonesian forces. He was subsequently named the President of the Republic and Commander in Chief of FALINTIL and served in that capacity until he was killed by Indonesian special forces on December 31, 1978. Lobato was the face and the primary symbol of the resistance. His death

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[72] Taur Matan Ruak, "Remarks on the Commemoration of the centenary of Dom Boaventura and the 37th Anniversary of the Proclamation of Independence," November 28, 2012.
[73] Gunn, 1999, pp. 188, 219
[74] Maia, 2012

was an enormous blow to the independence movement and plunged the resistance into disarray until Xanana Gusmão took up the leadership mantle in the following years.

Regular masses are held on New Year's Eve to celebrate Lobato's death and the whereabouts of his remains continue to be a subject of tension in bilateral relations with Indonesia.[75] The country's main airport, a major street in Dili, and the Presidential Palace have all been named for the fallen hero. As noted in Chapter 3, he has been featured on a commemorative stamp and a national award has been established in his name. In a further indication that Timorese authorities are seeking to strengthen the historical narrative of the independence struggle, they posthumously awarded another newly-created award, the Order of Dom Boaventura, meant solely for the "Founding Combatants of the National Liberation Movement" to Nicolau Lobato.

(Nicolau Lobato stamp, www.philateca.com; Nicolau Lobato Medal, http://amrtimor.org/)

As is the case with other key national symbols, FRETILIN has been careful to stress Nicolau Lobato's identification with both the party and the nation. In a sign that both FRETILIN and the state have accepted his status as a national hero, however, then President Ramos-Horta hosted the annual commemoration of his death at the Presidential Palace bearing his name on December 31, 2010. On that occasion, FRETILIN President Lu'Olo remarked that:

> For the first time today the State of Timor-Leste takes on this date as a date registering the history of our people, our struggle for national liberation. For FRETILIN it is the consecration of an undeniable truth. Nicolau Lobato died in combat whilst as President of FRETILIN he also assumed the responsibility as President of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste and the Commander in Chief of FALINTIL. For this reason, and by his actions on behalf of the Maubere people, when Nicolau died he was the head of state and the uncontestable leader of the Maubere people. In this way, from this day onwards, FRETILIN

[75] Murdoch, "East Timor Calls for Hero's Body to be Returned," *Sydney Morning Herald,* 19 May 2012.

> has decided to transfer to the State the responsibility of acknowledging this date as an important date in our history to be commemorated annually throughout our whole country. Today as we commemorate 32 years, we do so before the palace that now takes the name of Nicolau Lobato. FRETILIN expresses its gratitude to the President of the Republic for his timely decision of baptizing this palace with the name of our immortal Nicolau Lobato.[76]

One might have expected that another key founding member of FRETILIN, Xavier do Amaral, would also have been an easy candidate for national heroic status. His role during the occupation, however, does not square neatly with the resistance narrative. Xavier do Amaral was, in fact, the first President of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste upon its declaration of independence in 1974. Following the Indonesian invasion, however, he had a falling out with other FRETILIN leaders over the strategy and tactics of the resistance movement. As a result, he was expelled from the party in 1977 and detained as a prisoner until his capture by Indonesian forces in 1978; a number of his supporters were also purged, imprisoned, or even killed in an effort to silence dissent within the party. Xavier do Amaral spent the remainder of the occupation as an Indonesian prisoner, forced to work for an Indonesian general and frequently used by Indonesia as a mouthpiece to support the integration of Timor-Leste into the country.

Like other prominent Timorese leaders, Xavier do Amaral returned to Timor-Leste following the August 30, 1999 referendum, created his own political party - the ASDT, and ran unsuccessfully against Xanana Gusmão in the 2002 presidential election. President Gusmão pressed the FRETILIN government to rehabilitate Xavier do Amaral and the other victims of the purges during the occupation period, but FRETILIN rejected those efforts and a 2003 proposal by the opposition to recognize Amaral as the original "Proclaimer" of Timorese independence. Ultimately, the parliament came around, however, and Xavier do Amaral was rehabilitated on the eve of the 2007 elections and recognized as both the "Proclaimer" of Timorese independence and also as the country's first President.[77] The Gusmão coalition government that emerged victorious from those elections included ASDT and soon took measures to extended further benefits to Amaral , ultimately burying him with full honors upon his death on March 6, 2012.[78] Following his death, moreover, the parliament

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[76] Guterres, "Speech by FRETILIN President Francisco Guterres Lu Olo at the ceremony in commemoration of the death of President Nicolau Lobato," 31 December 2010.
[77] Republica Democratica de Timor-Leste, 17 July 2007. Note: The fact that the ASDT was expected to win several parliamentary seats in the closely-fought election may have played a role.
[78] Republica Democratica de Timor-Leste, 25 March 2008;17 July 2007; 6 March 2012.

adopted a resolution to rehabilitate all of the victims of the purges, declaring the decisions taken at that time "unjustified" and making them and their surviving family members eligible for veteran benefits.[79] More than an effort to right historical wrongs, this appears to have been a belated measure to address some of the lingering divisions and resentment described in Chapter 4 regarding the overly-narrow, prevailing interpretation of the resistance struggle. Therefore, although Xavier do Amaral's differences with FRETILIN may have prevented him from being readily embraced as a national hero, his rehabilitation may have helped pave the way for a more inclusive narrative of the resistance and vision of the nation going forward.

Nino Konis Santana, another FALINTIL Commander who died only near the end of the Indonesian occupation, has also been elevated to the status of national hero. The country's first national park, established in August 2007, was named after Konis Santana and encompasses 477 square miles of pristine landscape on the eastern part of the island, including Konis Santana's hometown, Tutuala, as well as a maritime area within the Coral Triangle.[80] In addition, according to local newspaper Suara Timor Lorosae, a monument to Konis Santana is planned for Mertutu in the western district of Ermera where he spent his final days in hiding[81] and the Archive and Museum of the Timorese Resistance in Dili includes a replica of Konis Santana's final underground shelter in its exhibition.[82] Konis Santana's ties with communities across the country have made him a particularly appealing symbol for national unity. As one Timorese remarked, "From difficult times and difficult situations, Nino Konis Santana was able to demonstrate national unity. This is the time for young people to continue the unity that he showed through his own good example. That is his legacy."[83] Konis Santana was formally designated a national hero and, according to local news reports, his remains were relocated and interred in a December 2012 ceremony at the new Garden of Heroes in Metinaro.[84]

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[79] Republica Democratica de Timor-Leste, 18 May 2012.
[80] Republica Democratica de Timor-Leste, 26 July 2007.
[81] *ETAN,* "Timor-Leste News," 14 March 2011.
[82] Cochrane, "Museum showcases history of East Timor's resistance," *ABC News*, 27 May 2012.
[83] "Nino Konis Santana: Inspirador Rohan La'ek," *Fundasaun Mahein Blog*, 14 December 2012
[84] *ETAN,* "Timor-Leste News," 20 December 2012.

(Konis Santana, amrtimor.org)

Although the first government of Timor-Leste, led by FRETILIN, moved relatively quickly to memorialize their martyred leader Nicolau Lobato, they were slow to recognize that he may not have been as important for many other Timorese. As one long-time observer of Timorese politics pointed out, "for the vast majority of people," particularly those who did not live through the early stages of the Indonesian occupation, "Lobato was not an important figure."[85] The resistance leaders from the latter stages of the occupation, however, were hugely important. Ironically, "because Konis Santana died and did not actually leave FRETILIN, he therefore became a unifying figure."[86] Although FRETILIN claims Konis Santana as one of their own and portrays him as a staunch advocate of the party, some disagree. By the time he died "he was not the man [FRETILIN] now say he was. He may not have been anti-FRETILIN, but he was very different than those [FRETILIN leaders] in the first government."[87] Konis Santana himself expressed doubts about FRETILIN's early Marxist-Leninist ideology, noting in a 1994 interview that Nicolau Lobato's own authority had been usurped by party radicals and that Lobato had been "forced to choose between the revolutionary way and a normal path."[88] Konis Santana said that he "feared the radical policies that FRETILIN had adopted" and that he fully supported Xanana Gusmão's 'national unity' approach.[89]

Timor-Leste has already taken steps towards memorializing these and other heroes. In addition to the measures described above, the CAVR, in particular, has played a fundamental role in collecting real-life stories and accounts that not only support the resistance narrative,

[85] Max Stahl. Personal interview. 4 June 2011.
[86] Max Stahl. Personal interview. 4 June 2011.
[87] Max Stahl. Personal interview. 4 June 2011.
[88] Jolliffe, 2010, p. 86
[89] Jolliffe, 2010, p. 86

but also have given the Timorese people their own voice in articulating their version of recent history. In addition, by recording and storing archives of documents, testimony, and interviews, the CAVR has established itself as both a repository and a symbol for current and future generations of Timorese. These accounts will certainly be incorporated into new history curricula and used to teach young Timorese not only their national history, but their very national identity. Similar to the CAVR, the Archive and Museum of the Resistance, the Garden of Heroes, and other monuments and memorials will also serve as constant reminders for older Timorese and the means by which future generations can be incorporated into the nation.

Nevertheless, heroes, like other national symbols, are contested by political leaders and by the people themselves. Even heroes like Dom Boaventura, Nicolau Lobato, and Konis Santana are not as uncontroversial as they may seem. Xanana Gusmão himself, also a wildly popular symbol of the resistance, is arguably already a national hero. But unlike Konis Santana, he survived the armed resistance and publicly split with FRETILIN, thereby diminishing the likelihood that he will serve as the same sort of unifying icon for the foreseeable future. Similarly, other key founding fathers of the Timorese nation are still living, active politicians like José Ramos-Horta, Taur Matan Ruak, and Lu'Olo. Although there is no broad consensus on how and whether to elevate these national heroes to iconic and symbolic status, that has not prevented them from leveraging their own brands for political advantage. Gusmão, Lu'Olo, Ramos-Horta, and, most recently, Taur Matan Ruak all sought to leverage their popularity by competing for the Presidency. In addition, recognizing Gusmão's personal popularity, the CNRT modified its symbol for the 2012 parliamentary election ballot by superimposing his face over the CNRT flag.[90] The process of identifying and elevating other appropriate unifying national heroes by consensus, however, is ongoing and also not without some conflict and negotiation.

(John Miller/ETAN)

Successive post-independence regimes have reinterpreted and contested Timor-Leste's history and iconography to identify symbols that best represent a Timorese national identity. Portuguese colonial monuments, for example, have been embraced and reinterpreted to represent Timor-Leste's connection and affinity for Portuguese culture. As one scholar has noted, "In order to survive when Timor-Leste's incorporation into Indonesia was imminent, the island sought an identity that could deny the legitimacy of that integration process. Since ancient traditions were not a sufficiently distinguishing feature, greater importance was attributed to phenomena associated with Portuguese culture.[91] Portugal's role as a champion for Timorese self-determination during the occupation and its generous assistance to the newly-independent country may have reinforced that decision. The fact that many of the country's current leadership is fluent in Portuguese and share a Portuguese-style education while younger generations have neither raises the question, however, of whether this element of national identity will endure. Similarly, the appropriation of symbols of Christianity by the new nation, despite the fact that some were originally erected by the occupying Indonesian authorities, is an acknowledgment of the critical role played by the Church during the dark days of the occupation. As then-President Gusmão said in his acceptance speech, "the Church must play an… important role in building an independent nation."[92] The construction of an additional monument to Pope John Paul II, moreover, is further evidence of the important symbolic role that the Church continues to play in Timor-Leste.

Timorese nation builders also tapped several sources of material to develop new symbols to represent the nation. Sites such as the Comarca, the Archives and Museum of Timorese Resistance, the Metinaro Garden of Heroes, and Tasitolu evoke a unifying national experience of pain, suffering, courage, and triumph that will be critical to ongoing efforts to educate future generations about the role of the resistance. At the same time, at least one scholar has pointed out that the authorities could do more to acknowledge the contributions of all of those who participated in the resistance, particularly the youth and clandestine movement.[93] The delay in erecting a suitable monument to commemorate the victims of the

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[90] International Crisis Group, 2013, p. 10; UNMIT & UNDP, 2012, p. 68
[91] Prista, 2004, p. 98
[92] As cited in Smythe, 2004, p. 211
[93] Leach, 2009

Santa Cruz cemetery massacre in 1991 could be seen as an example of such official neglect.[94] There are recent indications, however, that plans for such a monument are moving forward with considerable leadership and participation from civil society and the families of the Santa Cruz victims. The construction of monuments at local massacre sites around the country may also reflect the population's desire to memorialize the victims of the occupation, despite official attempts to promote reconciliation, forgetting, and closure.[95] Striking the right balance on key issues of remembrance that bridges generational differences as well as other political, regional, and ethnolinguistic differences will remain one of the most difficult nation building challenges in the years to come.

Finally, Timorese nation builders are reaching back in history to identify national heroes who can serve as unifying symbols for the nation. The choice of such figures is complicated, however, by the multiple layers of history and conflict that sometimes placed Timorese in opposite camps. Various institutions and groups are engaged in a process of remembering, re-imagining, and claiming such heroes as a means of strengthening their own ties with the nation. So even in the absence of an obvious historical physical landscape, successive administrators of Timor-Leste have each reinterpreted and built appropriate monuments as part of their nation building efforts. Indonesia's inability to successfully use monuments to create a sense of shared identity between the Timorese and the larger Indonesian population was a reflection of the failure of the broader integration effort. Similarly, the ultimate success or failure of independent Timor-Leste to build a nation and bridge societal differences will also depend, at least to some degree, on its ability to create monumental symbols that unify rather than divide the Timorese public consciousness. The development of monumental and heroic symbols, moreover, has paralleled ongoing efforts to define the nation by means of the ultimate national symbol: the cartographic map that separates TImor-Leste from neighboring nation-states.

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[94] Note: The massacre of up to 200 Timorese youth in a peaceful protest in Dili by Indonesian forces was captured on film by international journalists and was a pivotal event in galvanizing the resistance movement; Philpott, 2006, p. 137; Leach, 2009, p. 158

[95] Kent, 2009

Mapping the Timorese Nation

One of the primary means by which any nation is defined is by agreement with neighboring countries on precisely where one nation ends and another begins. In other words, nation builders draw a circle around the nation to define which people are included in that "imagined" community and to distinguish them from "other" nations. That distinction is often one of the most powerful unifying forces for nations, as was the case with Timor-Leste during the Indonesian occupation. Following the end of that conflict, however, Timor-Leste was effectively deprived of that outside unifying force. Nevertheless, drawing clear lines on maps is no mere cartographic exercise. Such lines assume vivid reality in the minds of the people and help construct a cohesive national identity. In the modern, post-Westphalian, international system, moreover, agreement on such borders and the establishment of a legitimate, national government are the key means to securing international recognition of national sovereignty and a seat at the United Nations. Such recognition by the international community of nations and, indeed, by all foreign citizens of other nations, in turn, provides continual reaffirmation of that particular nation and its national project.

Following the de facto vote for independence in the August 30, 1999 referendum and the conclusion of the transitional United Nations administrative period, Timor-Leste's national sovereignty was recognized by its neighbors and it was admitted as a full member to the international community of nations. A number of key issues remained unresolved, however, including the precise delineation of Timor-Leste's land border with Indonesia and its maritime borders with both Indonesia and Australia. Left unresolved, disagreements over the land border with Indonesia made it difficult to protect against cross-border incursions by smugglers and militia groups, as well as general border disputes that could escalate into armed conflict. The negotiations with Australia were also particularly important. Effective exploitation of the significant oil and gas reserves in the Timor Gap required agreements between Australia and Timor-Leste. The revenues from such resources could then be used to address some of Timor-Leste's critical infrastructure and poverty challenges. The following section will examine the process by which Timorese nation builders mapped their nation and will analyze the extent to which the process and accompanying rhetoric was used to reinforce a sense of national identity.

Drawing the Line Between East and West Timor

One of the major tasks that faced the first government of Timor-Leste was to negotiate its borders with its larger neighbors. Despite the support of both Indonesia and Australia for an independent Timor-Leste, the process is nevertheless inherently contentious and zero-sum in nature. As a result, the respective governments have a tendency to adopt maximalist positions, casting the issue not only as one of national interest, but also of national pride. Aside from the obvious questions of natural resources and property, moreover, the land border with Indonesia has the potential to complicate Timor-Leste's nation building efforts. Although the precise demarcation of the border is ongoing, it is clear that it will trace morphological and not anthropomorphic boundaries. In other words, the lines that divide the communities on either side of the border will follow physical topographical realities like rivers and watersheds. In this important regard, therefore, Timorese leaders would not be able to rely on ethnic, linguistic, or even tribal divisions to reinforce their ongoing nation building efforts.

Both Timor-Leste and Indonesia had good cause for concern regarding the security of their common border. Amid the instability and violence that followed the August 30, 1999 referendum, the border regions near Indonesia became the site of armed clashes in late September between the Australian-led peacekeepers and militia groups. Scores of pro-autonomy militia members eventually fled across the border, taking tens of thousands of Timorese with them. Even after the militia groups had retreated across the border, cross-border 'militia' forays continued for weeks with at least some suspected of having included Indonesian military personnel.[96] Similar incidents occurred over the next few years, including Indonesian use of radio and pamphlets in what appeared to be psychological operation aimed at promoting instability and intimidating Timorese residents across the border.[97] Over the last several years, there continue to be similar border incidents, some attributable to militia groups, others the result of disagreements between law enforcement and/or resident populations on either side of the border.

As a result, Timor-Leste and its international supporters were keenly aware of the dangers posed by the nearly 270-kilometer unsecured and disputed land border with Indonesia. Senior Indonesian officials in Jakarta may have acceded to Timor-Leste's independence, but local Indonesian authorities, military officers, and militia members had not only lost face, but also the lucrative sources of income afforded to them by their former

[96] Kingsbury, 2003, pp. 270-2

positions. Resentful of the pro-independence Timorese and their international backers, they had every incentive to engage in illegal cross-border smuggling and general mischief. Additionally, Indonesia likely was concerned that Timor-Leste not become a platform for Australian or other foreign military deployments ultimately directed at Indonesia. The limited numbers of poorly-trained Timorese security forces available to secure the border, moreover, contributed to the situation and such smuggling was, indeed, commonplace.[98] Minor disputes on the border could easily escalate, raise political tensions, and lead to larger-scale conflict. The lack of security, demarcated borders, and agreements on transit was particularly acute for the remote province of Oecussi, physically separated from Timor-Leste by 60 kilometers of West Timorese territory. In the absence of regular transportation by sea, the residents of that district were effectively cut off from the rest of the country and highly dependent on Indonesia.

The United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) and Indonesia initiated border demarcation negotiations in 2001 and dispatched a team to conduct a demarcation survey in April 2002. The basis for the negotiations was the 1904 Treaty between the Dutch and Portuguese (then the colonial powers on the island of Timor) and a follow-on Award by the Permanent Court of Arbitration in the Hague ratified in 1916.[99] After the restoration of independence in May 2002, the Timorese government assumed full responsibility for these bilateral negotiations with Indonesia and following considerable technical work and multiple surveys, the two Foreign Ministers signed a provisional agreement in April 2005 that demarcated 96 percent of the land border. That agreement left only three segments of the border where the two sides were unable to reconcile their differing interpretations of the treaties and subsequent surveys. One of those segments was subsequently resolved by mutual agreement in June 2013,[100] but negotiations continue on the remaining segments.

There has also been similar, slow progress on the important related questions of border transit arrangements. The limited number of legal border crossings and the prohibitive cost and time needed to secure visas has imposed hardships on the population on both sides of the border. In addition to opening more border transit posts, Timor-Leste has long sought Indonesian approval for a border pass system for residents near the border. In the absence of

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[97] Kingsbury, 2003, pp. 282-4
[98] Kingsbury, 2003, pp. 281-8
[99] International Crisis Group, 2010, p. 2
[100] "Indonesia-Timor Leste agreement on border demarcation is forward step," *Antara News*, 23 June 2013

such legal, regularized system, local border officials facilitate informal, illegal crossings in return for fees that supplement their income[101]. Opening more border markets in conjunction with a border pass system would also facilitate trade and help stimulate legal, economic development.

Mapping the Timor Gap

Despite the recent memory of the brutal Indonesian occupation and real disagreements over borders and property between the eastern and western parts of Timor, the negotiations with Australia over the Timor Gap have proved to be even more contentious than the talks with Indonesia. A brief review of the pre-history of those negotiations is required to put the respective positions of the two countries into proper context.

In 1972 Australia and Indonesia signed an agreement on the seabed boundary between the two countries in the Timor Sea. In that accord, Australia successfully pressed the concept of 'natural prolongation' of the geophysical characteristics of the sea floor, in this case continental shelfs, effectively setting the border close to the Timor Trough (much closer to Indonesia and Timor-Leste than to Australia). That agreement did not cover the border between Australia and Portuguese-administered Timor-Leste, however, leaving what came to be known as the Timor Gap between two sections of territory delimited between Australia and Indonesia. Before Australia was able to reach agreement with Portugal on the Timor Gap, Timor-Leste was decolonized and occupied by Indonesia.

Although Australia's policy with regard to Timor-Leste and the Indonesian invasion was undoubtedly based on a combination of many factors, one of them appears to have been its desire to finalize the seabed delimitation. One observer noted, for example, that Australian oil interests lobbied in 1976 to support Indonesia's annexation of the former Portuguese colony and oil executives accompanied the Australian Prime Minister on a visit to Jakarta in October 1976 in which "he gave tacit approval" of the annexation.[102] Securing access to the oil and gas deposits in the Timor Sea, in fact, appears to have been a motivating factor behind Australia's eventual decision to become the only country to formally recognize Indonesia's annexation of Timor-Leste. That decision, in turn, was heavily criticized by supporters of the resistance movement and has remained a source of resentment for many Timorese even following

[101] International Crisis Group, 2010, p. 12
[102] Nevins, 2004, p. 9

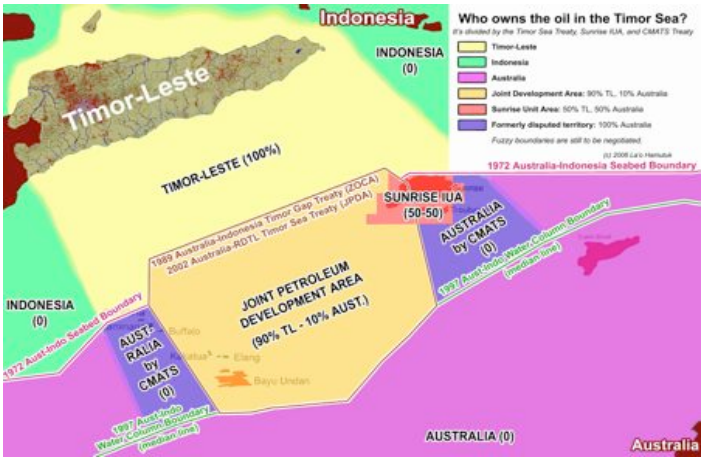
independence. Unfortunately for Australian oil interests, however, in the mid-1970s thinking and jurisprudence regarding international maritime borders began to evolve and the concept of the Exclusive Economic Zone, enshrined in the 1982 U.N. Convention on the Law of the Sea, successfully challenged the concept of 'natural prolongation' within 200 nautical miles of the coast. As a result, Indonesia was determined to drive a much harder bargain over the Timor Gap, particularly with regard to the seabed and its associated resources. Ultimately, the two countries signed an agreement in December 1989 establishing three separate zones in the Timor Gap in which government revenues from oil and gas resources would be divided (50:50 in Zone A; 90:10 in Zone B; and 10:90 in Zone C). A photo of the signing of that agreement on board a jet over the Timor Sea by the Australian and Indonesian Foreign Ministers (see photo below) became a highly evocative symbol in the minds of many Timorese and Timorese supporters. As depicted in the accompanying cartoon from an Australian magazine, the blood-stained treaty became symbolic of what the Timorese saw as Australian greed and treachery.

(La'o Hamutuk)

(Chris Grosz, *The Monthly)*

Mindful of Timorese equities and the controversy over the maritime borders, when the United Nations assumed its role as the transitional administrator of Timor-Leste in 1999 officials carefully refused to recognize the prior agreement, ensuring that the future Timor-Leste government could negotiate its own terms directly with Australia. In fact, even pending

a final agreement on delimitation, Australia and the new Timorese government agreed on May 20, 2002 (the formal date of Timor-Leste's independence) on an interim arrangement whereby Timor-Leste would benefit from a 90:10 split of government revenues from a newly-configured Joint Petroleum Development Area (JPDA), replacing the revenue sharing zones from the prior Australia-Indonesia agreement.



(La'o Hamutuk)

Timor-Leste and Australia remain far apart, however, in their respective positions on delimitation. Timor-Leste has argued that the border should be drawn on the basis of 'equidistance,' a principle which governs a majority of similar international agreements around the world. In addition, Timor-Leste contends that the Timor Gap should be widened and that portions of the territory that Indonesia ceded to Australia rightfully belong to Timor-Leste. Australia, meanwhile, has refused to modify its position in the original negotiations with Indonesia based on 'natural prolongation' of the continental shelfs. By formally withdrawing its maritime disputes, including the one with Timor-Leste, from the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and the International Tribunal on the Law of the Sea in March 2002, moreover, Australia preempted any effort by the future Timorese government to appeal to the ICJ for an independent decision.

A specific area of disagreement emerged in these complex negotiations concerning the exploitation of oil and gas fields that straddled the JPDA and Australian-claimed territory. The Greater Sunrise fields, in particular, which lies mostly in Australian-claimed territory (79.9 percent) and only partially in the JPDA (20.1 percent) has proven to be particularly problematic. Initially, the May 20, 2002 interim arrangement included provisions for those revenues to be divided along the same lines as indicated above, with Timor-Leste receiving 90

percent of 20.1 percent of the total revenues (i.e., the JPDA share) or, simply, 18.1 percent of the total Greater Sunrise field. The Timorese government subsequently decided that this arrangement was unacceptable and refused to submit an implementation agreement to the Timorese parliament for ratification. Woodside, the Australian commercial company which had won the concession to exploit the field, subsequently decided to shelve the project amid the legal uncertainty while political negotiations continued.

The contentious nature of the negotiations has led to the creation of competing national narratives and, in the case of Timor-Leste, directly impacted the ongoing nation building process. From the perspective of Timor-Leste and some supporters in the international community, Australia had recognized the Indonesian annexation of Timor-Leste, struck a bargain with the occupying power, and secured for itself the valuable resources that rightfully belonged to the beleaguered and impoverished Timorese people. Today, from the Timor-Leste perspective, Australia continues to behave like a large, wealthy, greedy neighborhood bully; despite its purported support for Timor-Leste's independence, it was secretly trying to steal that country's resources. Australia, however, believes that it is negotiating in good faith and has offered generous concessions, despite its own national interests. Australians are confused, moreover, about Timor-Leste's lack of gratitude for the considerable political advocacy, economic assistance, and security commitments that it has extended in support of Timor-Leste's independence and economic development. As the negotiations proceeded and key leaders leveled public accusations back and forth, these competing narratives have become entrenched in the minds of the people, particularly the Timorese.

In January 2006, the two countries signed the Treaty on Certain Maritime Arrangements in the Timor Sea (CMATS) which included a new 50/50 revenue sharing formula for Greater Sunrise, but effectively postponed any resolution on the delimitation of maritime borders for the duration of the treaty. There are conflicting views on the merits of this compromise for both sides. In the end, however, what proved to be even more controversial was a decision not only by the governments, but also by the Sunrise consortium led by Woodside, on a development plan for the field. The three options are to build a pipeline to Australia's northern coast, build a pipeline to Timor-Leste's southern coast, or construct a floating liquefied natural gas (FLNG) plant at the site itself. Timor-Leste officials have adamantly argued for a pipeline to Timor-Leste where they hope to build a downstream industry that will generate infrastructure and local jobs. The commercial consortium, however, has proposed the FLNG plant as the most cost-effective option.

What might have once been a strictly commercial decision based on cost-effectiveness and quantifiable risk has since become deeply entangled in acrimonious bilateral political negotiations, as well as public rhetoric and debate. The Australian government has attempted to maintain some some distance from the controversy by deferring to the commercial companies involved. With Woodside, an Australian company, as the head of the consortium, however, the distinction is often missed or ignored by Timorese politicians and observers. Timor-Leste has spent years collecting data and commissioning studies to refute Woodside's arguments about the risks associated with the Timor pipeline option. Irrespective of arguments by some that Timor-Leste itself might actually reap greater benefits from an FLNG plant, the Timorese government has nevertheless committed itself to funding basic infrastructure to support the pipeline option. Most importantly, Timorese leaders have mobilized public opinion by casting the pipeline plan as a matter both of national pride and economic salvation.

In a country that lacks even basic infrastructure and faces widespread poverty and associated health and education development challenges, it is no surprise that the Timorese public is little concerned with foreign policy issues. But as a result of the Timorese government's efforts, the Timor Gap negotiations and the issue of a Sunrise pipeline feature prominently on the public consciousness. The Tasi Mane project, a development plan for the southern coast that includes a sea port, logistics base, gas refinery, industrial park, and associated infrastructure improvements, is not only dependent on the pipeline option, but also became a centerpiece of Prime Minister Gusmão's long-term development strategy. He actively promoted the plan and his vision in a series of public consultations and appearances in all 65 sub-districts of the country in 2010-11. Even in the absence of tangible results from these slow-moving development projects, the mere establishment of an independent Petroleum Fund following the Norwegian model, widely praised by international observers, has contributed to the Timorese public's sense of ownership of the Timor Gap natural resources. As detailed in the most recent government plan, for example, "[t]he Petroleum Fund provides a way of creating a stable and consistent source of revenue that can be used to build the Nation."[103] By casting these resources as the property of the Timorese people and the key to the country's long-term economic development, successive Timorese political leaders have successfully mobilized Timorese public opinion behind their narrative and policies to press Australia for a better deal in the negotiations.

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[103] Republica Democratica de Timor-Leste, Program of the V Constitutional Government, 2012, Section 1.2

The stalemate looked as if it would come to a head early in 2013 when both countries had the unilateral right to terminate the CMATS Treaty because the Sunrise development plan had not moved forward. Instead, Timor-Leste adopted a different strategy that appears to be aimed at pushing the issue back onto the bilateral political agenda between the two countries. In April 2013, Timor-Leste notified Australia of its intent to seek arbitration under the May 2002 Timor Sea Treaty invalidating the CMATS Treaty on the grounds that Australia conducted espionage against Timor-Leste in 2004 and failed to negotiate CMATS in good faith. That arbitration is currently scheduled to begin in September 2014.

Like all countries, Timor-Leste has adopted a foreign policy to advance its key national interests. That policy is in many ways pragmatic, but also reflects the ideals that form the basis of Timorese national identity. Timorese leaders have pursued pragmatic accommodation with Indonesia as they seek to demarcate a line that splits ethnic, linguistic, and tribal groups on either side of their land border. While Timorese leaders initially made concessions in the maritime negotiations with Australia to ensure that they had early access to oil and gas revenues from offshore fields, they have since staked out a more combative, idealistic approach that they believe will unify the Timorese public and provide a clear vision for future development. Both of these represent a clear effort by Timorese authorities to define the nation cartographically and geopolitically. While balancing national interests and the need for good neighborly relations, Timorese leaders have nevertheless used foreign policy to unify the Timorese people around a physical conception of the nation, a conception - at times - in direct conflict with those of Indonesia and Australia.

Consolidating Timorese National Identity

This retrospective analysis of the first full decade of nation building in post-independence Timor-Leste indicates that Timorese leaders have reached back in history in a deliberate fashion to appropriate symbols and narratives to help unify the nation. Even the most unifying symbols or national heroes come with historical baggage, however, and elevating them as national symbols is the subject of considerable controversy and debate. Institutions and societal groups remember, re-imagine, and reclaim particular symbols as a means of strengthening their own ties with the nation. The Timorese case demonstrates, moreover, that the lack of a rich historical physical landscape has not proven to be a major

obstacle to the successful reinterpretation and construction of appropriate monuments in the interest of nation building. Timorese nation builders appear to recognize that he ultimate success or failure of their efforts will depend, at least to some degree, on their ability to identify, elevate, and even create monumental symbols that unify rather than divide the Timorese public consciousness.

Similarly, Timorese leaders are mindful of the need to adopt a foreign policy that not only advances the country's practical interests, but also reflects Timorese national identity. The ongoing demarcation exercise with Indonesia is as much about creating new national distinctions in the minds of ethnic and tribal cousins on either side of the border as it is about putting a line on a map. The unresolved and highly contentious dispute with Australia over the maritime border is as much about unifying the Timorese people in support of their sovereign rights and a hopeful vision of future development as it is about securing the country's fair share of oil and gas revenues. Timorese nation building continues apace in the arena of international relations, in the physical and monumental plazas of Timorese towns, as well as in the minds of the Timorese people. This research indicates that those efforts are both complex and contested, as well as critical to the long-term security and stability of the country.

Timorese national identity, like that of any nation, will continue to evolve and be shaped by an active discourse in Timorese society. In focusing on the more recent nation building efforts there, however, this Chapter offers a tentative and partial response to a fundamental question: Has the nation building project in Timor-Leste moved beyond the early, formative stages and begun to consolidate in the minds of the Timorese public? This research suggests that a consensus is building around a set of symbols and narratives. The Timorese government has devoted increasing resources to developing monuments and memorials, rewriting history and elevating heroes, as well as reinforcing a sense of community by mapping exactly where "we" live and where "our" natural resources lie, in contrast to the competing claims of outsiders.

The challenge going forward, however, is for Timor-Leste to make the transition between the 'hot nationalism' that inspired and followed independence, to the 'banal nationalism' described by Michael Billig whereby everyday reminders of nationhood become commonplace and unremarkable. As noted earlier, Timorese have yet to adopt one of the most ubiquitous reminders of nationhood for any country - their own paper currency - and are, in fact, still carrying and using American dollar bills. The Timorese may have grown

accustomed to the sight of their flag waving on national holidays and the nationalist rhetoric and civic rituals associated with regular elections, but the everyday reminders of the nation and even the state itself remain elusive in the vast rural stretches of the country that lack electricity and adequate schools, much less access to television and newly-rewritten history textbooks. Residents of Dili may walk or drive past the national monuments described earlier in this chapter on their daily commutes and even occasionally frequent the museums, but most Timorese outside of the capital have no ready access yet to either the subtle reminders or the more obvious institutional representations of the nation.

Chapter 6. Conclusion

Timor-Leste has continued to consolidate its nation building efforts over the course of the last few years. In 2012, Timor-Leste held free, fair, and largely peaceful presidential and parliamentary elections. United Nations civilian police handed over full policing responsibilities to the National Police of Timor-Leste (PNTL) and the United Nations Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) came to an end. Early in 2013, Australian and New Zealand military peacekeepers also completed their mission and returned home.

In two rounds of elections on March 17 and April 16, 2012, Timorese voters elected former F-FDTL Commander-in-Chief Taur Matan Ruak to succeed José Ramos-Horta as President. As was the case in 2007, FRETILIN candidate Francisco "Lu'Olo" Guterres won the largest share of the vote in the first round of elections, but failed to pick up additional support in his second round defeat. Similarly, FRETILIN maintained, but failed to build on, its core support base of 30 percent of the vote in the July 7 parliamentary elections, again polling highest in the eastern districts of the country. Xanana Gusmão's CNRT party, however, increased its vote share from 24 percent in 2007 to 37 percent in 2012 (primarily at the expense of some of its former coalition partners), but fell short of winning an absolute majority of seats in the parliament. CNRT quickly formed another coalition government, however, with Fernando "Lasama" Araujo's Democratic Party and Jose Luis Guterres' breakaway FRETILIN group, the Front for the National Reconstruction of Timor-Leste. The new government, led again by Prime Minister Xanana Gusmão, has been in office since August 2012. Even as democratic institutions in Timor-Leste continue to develop and strengthen, so too have Timorese perceptions of national identity. Politicians have continued to appeal to - and have sought to leverage - key national symbols and the Timorese people have responded.[1]

Timor-Leste remains one of the most impoverished and least developed countries in the world, but increasingly large budgets underwritten by petroleum revenues, calculated government hand-outs to target groups (including petitioners, internally-displaced, veterans, and the elderly), and ambitious development plans have met immediate needs and raised expectations for the future. The Petroleum Fund continues to grow, although the government

[1] Kingsbury, 2013: 307-8.

has been criticized for withdrawing funds above its sustainability rate.[2] The Tasi Mane project for downstream petroleum infrastructure on the southern coast continues to be a centerpiece of the government's strategic development plan despite the fact that there is still no agreement on whether the Greater Sunrise deposits will, in fact, be transported to Timor-Leste by pipeline. Timor-Leste has taken Australia to arbitration over the CMATS Treaty and the long-term question of determining the maritime border between them is still unresolved. Similarly, border demarcation talks continue with Indonesia and Timor-Leste continues to press its case - with Indonesian support - for full membership in ASEAN. In the meantime, thorny questions of justice and accountability for individuals who were involved in the 1999 violence have been deferred in favor of good neighborly relations. By all indications, as is the case with Timorese politics, Timor-Leste's economic and foreign policy is heavily influenced both by ongoing efforts to "imagine" the nation and by Timorese leaders' understanding of national identity and corresponding national interests.

The withdrawal of the United Nations police and international peacekeepers highlights the significant security challenges going forward. The process of rebuilding credible and effective police and military forces after their collapse during the 2006 crisis is ongoing. As plans to recognize and provide pensions for veterans continue to be implemented, the number of disaffected groups will likely diminish. That said, there may be increasing pressure and societal tension around the issue of reparations for victims and the treatment of those who broke with or opposed the independence movement. Despite efforts to strengthen the PNTL and F-FDTL, as well as define their respective roles and responsibilities, critics have noted that "the police have become increasingly militarized" and "the military are increasingly involved in everyday policing."[3] A spike in the recurring violence suggests that the Indonesian legacy of martial arts groups and general youth unemployment remains problematic and the Timorese government recently banned several groups and adopt a "zero tolerance" policy for members of the PNTL and F-FDTL caught engaging in such activities.[4]

The Catholic Church continues to play a major role in education, as well as in local communities, remaining an integral element of the Timorese nation, as well as a potential shaping force of Timorese national identity. There are some early indications of future conflicts and negotiations over that role, however. The arrival and growth of some Protestant

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[2] Lao Hamutuk, "How Long Will the Petroleum Fund Carry Timor-Leste?" 25 July 2013.
[3] Wilson, 2013, p. 193.
[4] Republica Democratica de Timor-Leste, Press Release, July 2, 2013; "East Timor Bans Popular Martial Arts Clubs Nationwide Following Deadly Violence," *Associated Press,* 23 September 2013.

churches, for example, has led to some communal tensions in certain towns where they and their proselytizing activities are seen as "divisive."[5] Given the dominant role of the Catholic Church in society, Church leaders will have to work closely with Timorese authorities to manage these tensions and negotiate an acceptable balance between the Church's dominance in that sphere and the legal rights and protections afforded to all groups and religions by the Constitution and local laws.

One of the country's greatest challenges lies in the not-too-distant future - developing the next generation of political leaders. The senior positions of the state, government, and military have been dominated by a small handful of individuals since independence, most of whom are in their mid-60s. The next generation of leaders will not have the same advantage of having played leadership roles in the resistance era and achieved iconic status and national renown in independent Timor-Leste. The fact that the major political parties and the current government have been characterized by a centralization of political power around these same individuals rather than well-developed party platforms will further complicate the inevitable transition. Prime Minister Gusmão's announcement that he intends to resign as early as September 2014 has already precipitated a national dialogue about that impending transition.

That same new generation of leaders will be forced to confront the challenge of avoiding the dreaded "resource curse," whereby an over-dependence on natural resources crowds out investment in other economic sectors and contributes to government mismanagement, corruption, and poor economic outcomes. Timor-Leste has taken measures to avoid this trap, including by creating the Petroleum Fund and a strong Anti-Corruption Commission. At the same time, with only minimal revenues from coffee exports, Timor-Leste is inordinately dependent on oil and gas revenues and has been drawing heavily from its Fund. Timorese leaders argue that major investments in infrastructure are needed to lay a foundation for future economic growth and a diversification of the economic base. Critics counter that the government should moderate its spending and prioritize investments in education and human capital. Prime Minister Gusmão's ambitious vision of transforming the country into a middle-income nation is enticing, but also risks raising public expectations that cannot be met.

What Prime Minister Gusmão and other leaders do seem to realize, however, is that the future of the country depends not only on state institutions and government services, but also on developing a cohesive, unified sense of national identity, including a historical narrative

[5] Early Warning and Response System, 2009, p. 9.

that connects the nation to its past and its future. Writing of her husband in the early years of independence, Kirsty Sword Gusmão noted that,

> Xanana speaks often of the need of the East Timorese to acquire a new sense of nationalism. The patriotism that guided the people in their struggle against foreign domination is no longer relevant. Today nationalism demands of East Timor's leaders, civil servants, and members of the public a commitment to working selflessly to defeat a new enemy: that of poverty and ignorance.[6]

Xanana Gusmão himself said at a recent international conference that "our experience taught us is that it is not possible to achieve development or assume democratic principles without first building our own identity and determining for ourselves the path we wanted to take. Every nation has its own context, its own history, and its own culture…[7]"

Measuring the degree to which a community successfully "imagines" and shares a sense of common identity is exceptionally difficult. As a result, it is tempting to focus on institution and state building and to downplay the importance of nation building. The case of Timor-Leste amply demonstrates, however, the need to examine both the institutional and symbolic aspects of state and nation building. The early nation building experience of Timor-Leste confirms that this ongoing, recursive process is fundamentally important to a young country's political and economic development, indeed, to its very stability. Instability and conflict in these early years was at least partially attributable to ill-conceived nation building efforts or a weak sense of national identity. The 2005 and 2006 crises, in particular, were clear examples of how contests over nation building and a fragile sense of nationhood can trigger, fuel, and perhaps even cause a political crisis.

The influence of the Timorese elites and leadership in "constructing" the Timorese nation reaffirms the theories of "modernist" nationalism scholars of the ability of nation builders to engage in a deliberate nation building process. At the same time, the constraints imposed on those political elites by history and indigenous culture and traditions also emphasizes the fact that the nation is not "constructed" or "imagined" out of thin air or in a vacuum, instead it draws from what some have called "ethno-symbolic" elements from

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[6] Gusmão, 2003: 317.
[7] Gusmão, "Remarks on the occasion of the Opening Session of the Pacific Islands Development Forum," 5 August 2013.

antiquity.[8] This close examination of a nation in its earliest stages of development, however, also supports key aspects of more recent challenges and refinements to the prevailing scholarship on nationalism and nation building.

First, by examining symbols and cultural iconography, in particular, this case study offers evidence that strengthens the arguments of "cultural-symbolist" nationalism scholars who have argued that these elements are critical to whether or not the nation is successfully fused to the state. Early failures by international and Timorese nation builders, for example, to recognize and sufficiently incorporate potent national symbols like the *uma lulik* (sacred houses) and the *liurai* (traditional political leaders) appear to have slowed and impeded nation building efforts. Perhaps even more importantly, the failure to use early opportunities, like the process of drafting and adopting the Constitution, to expand key national narratives around the resistance struggle and shared suffering to include *all* Timorese and not privilege some over others may have weakened the popular consensus on the vision for the nation.

Second, Timor-Leste's experience demonstrates that this is *not* merely an elite-driven process and that institutional actors, groups of citizens, and, indeed, the entire population contests and negotiates the ultimate shape of the nation through a dynamic and ongoing discourse. That process was amply demonstrated by several examples in this case study. In some cases, the very definition of the nation was actively contested by the Catholic Church, the veterans and their associated groups, and even the victims of the resistance as articulated in the CAVR process. In other cases, politicians and political parties competed to associate themselves more closely with the emerging sense of national identity in an effort to bolster their public legitimacy. Timorese leaders have been forced to balance contradictory aspects of the nation, as in the case of the principled search for justice and the practical need for reconciliation with Indonesia. In other cases, by aligning themselves with a compelling national narrative, they have found themselves constrained in their political options, as has been the case with providing benefits for veterans and positioning the country in its contentious negotiations with Australia over oil and gas resources.

Third, this analysis suggests that the combination of Timor-Leste's early nation building failures and its inability to smoothly manage the contentious and dynamic nation building discourse produced a weak sense of national identity that contributed to political crises and instability in the early years following independence. Although the causes of the 2005 Church protests and the 2006 crisis were complex and multi-faceted, there are strong indications that

[8] Note: The Timorese nation building project, however, appears to conform with Anthony Smith's more

divisions within society over key aspects of nationhood contributed to the volatile situations that ensued. This dissertation also examined the ongoing search for justice for crimes committed during and preceding the Indonesian occupation and efforts to promote national and international reconciliation. Timorese leaders appear to have so far managed to balance these sometimes competing demands, demonstrating how inclusive nation building efforts can alleviate such divisions and successfully avert potential crises.

Each of these arguments above should be considered, of course, in the historical context of the extraordinary challenges that faced Timor-Leste and its early nation building efforts. It may simply be inherently difficult for all young nations to navigate the treacherous path on its first steps as an independent country. In addition, even as Timor-Leste embarked on its nation building process, it simultaneously faced the exceptional and monumental tasks of rebuilding infrastructure, developing state institutions from scratch, resettling displaced populations, and addressing crippling poverty and low levels of health and education. It is no wonder that building monuments and patiently nurturing public consensus on national symbols were not among the country's highest priorities. All of this notwithstanding, this dissertation concluded with an examination of more recent nation building efforts, especially following the aforementioned crises. These subsequent efforts to map the nation, identify and elevate national heroes, and memorialize the national history by preserving and constructing appropriate buildings, statues, and museums, while not uncontested, appear to be helping consolidate national identity for the current and future generations of Timorese. Perhaps success will be measured when such national projects are no longer extraordinary at all, but instead are considered routine, everyday, even unremarkable and "banal" reminders of the broad contours of nationhood that Timorese across the country take for granted.

It would be foolish, however, to conclude from this single analysis of Timorese nation building that this complex, multi-dimensional process follows precise or even similar paths in other countries and national contexts. There is a considerable body of literature that suggests, in fact, that nationalism has been a major contributing factor to internal and international conflict around the world. This dissertation's seemingly contrary conclusion that "weak" national identity may also contribute to instability will need to be tested and examined against that and other theories. Even the case of Timor-Leste may yet present alternative causal processes and additional information that were not properly examined in this study.

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expansive definition of *ethnie* than with a narrow interpretation of "ethnicity."

Nevertheless, within the limitations of this research, the analysis undertaken here suggests that further study of the development of national symbols and the connection between such symbols and the strength or weakness of national identity may be worthwhile. Specifically, success or failures in managing that contentious and dynamic process may provide insights into the potential for political crises and instability. Additional case studies in newly-developing countries like South Sudan, Kosovo, and Montenegro where early nation building efforts are ongoing could shed additional light on this important political process. The contested nature of Timor-Leste's nation building process may offer insights for the study not only of newly-developing countries, but also of more developed countries as they occasionally engage in a redefinition of their national identity. If further research confirms these linkages, it may also be worth exploring to what extent weak national identity has contributed to other crises and conflicts in more developed countries, including the Central African Republic, Syria, Venezuela, and Ukraine. Finally, this dissertation's contention that the success or failure of nation building efforts has a direct impact on national stability has considerable implications that should be examined in future studies devoted to international interventions in "failed" and "failing" states and the impact of development programs on stability.

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Interviews

Over the course of the research for this dissertation between 2009 and 2011, I interviewed approximately sixty Timorese and another dozen or so international experts on Timor-Leste. Although the majority of these interviews were informal and anonymous, they nevertheless provided invaluable context, ideas, and guidance for my research. In addition, I conducted more formal interviews and/or had extended conversations and exchanges with the following individuals: President Jose Ramos-Horta, Vice Prime Minister Jose Luis Guterres, General Taur Matan Ruak, Dionisio Babo Soares, Virgilio, Simith, Nuno Vasco Oliveira, Jose "Josh"

Trindade, Joao Saldanha, Nelson Belo, Lurdes Bessa, Augustino Caet, and Max Stahl. Unless I have directly quoted or referenced them, however, the ideas and views expressed in this dissertation are my own.

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