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BRANCHING FROM THE TRUNK:

East Timorese Perceptions of Nationalism in Transition

DIONÍSIO DA COSTA BABO SOARES

A Thesis submitted for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
of
THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

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Except as cited in the text, this work is the result of research carried out by the author

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores contestations over East Timorese 'perceptions' of their political history. Central to this discussion is the East Timorese interpretation of *nacionalismo*. East Timorese use *nacionalismo* interchangeably to mean nationalism, national unity, solidarity and togetherness. It describes a sentiment that has existed since the 'time of long ago' and which remained crucial up until the country achieved independence.

Since 1999 a post independence 'identity crisis' has led many to question this sense of unity (forged through the long resistance against colonialism in its various forms). Division among nationalist factions in the post-liberation period has induced East Timorese to question the strength of their nationalism that has served as the basis for their struggle for independence.

This thesis begins by tracing East Timor's history through both documentary evidence and indigenous Timorese 'perceptions' of their ancestral past. Subsequently, the thesis presents East Timorese perceptions of their struggle against the Portuguese, and explains the dynamics within the East Timorese resistance, including conflict among nationalist factions, which paved the way for further divisions in the post-1999 period. After discussing current East Timorese views about the changes in the political landscape in the post-1999 period and how this has contributed to the changing perception of *nacionalismo*, the thesis highlights other forms of social division which added to the political uncertainties during the period 1999-2002.

Connecting the past and the present is fundamental to the expression of East Timorese views about their political history. History is used to predict or classify events of today and possibly the future. This symmetrical line of thinking explains how the Timorese view the past and the future as two
connected ‘ends’ that facilitate an understanding of colonialism and the unity and division of resistance. In a botanical idiom, this sequence of events is presented as a progression from hun ‘roots’, ‘origins’ ‘past’ ‘history’ to rohan, ‘future’, ‘end’. Nacionalismo is represented as the ‘trunk’ of a tree (nation) where the whole tree (nation) can only stand firm if the ‘trunk’ (unity, nationalism) is strong. Nacionalismo is depicted as having its derivation in ‘roots’ (common sentiment), and harvesting its fruits when independence is finally achieved.

Following the August 1999 referendum, many saw that new branches (new differences and new political groups) were sprouting out of the ‘trunk’ (nationalism), and that instead of strengthening unity, these new branches stretched their own ways, crisscrossing and extending their tips (opinions, ideology) far away from the ‘trunk’. This branching is quite natural and to be expected, however, if it went too far, it could lead to problems. Many East Timorese believed that if the common sentiment of national unity was ignored or weakened, the country might fall apart. If the ‘roots’ (abut) and ‘trunk’ (ai-hun) were to die, the tree (ai), personified as the East Timorese nation, would collapse.
If it were not for *Nai Maromak* (lit., the Shining one) and the *Beiala* (lit., the ancestors), the dedication and patience employed in this endeavour would have been in vain. The challenges I faced during the years of my study would have taken my strength and efforts away had my courage and determination not been cemented by my faith in God, my Lord, and my reliance on the spirit of my forbears. It was partly the ancestors, too, that the people whose views presented in this thesis relied on for the interpretation of East Timorese political history.

My sincere gratitude and deep appreciation goes to my thesis supervisors, Prof. James J. Fox, Dr Andrew McWilliams, Dr Katherine Robinson and Dr Patrick Guinness, for sharing with me their profound knowledge and providing me with relevant comments while I was working on this thesis. I have profited greatly from their invaluable comments and suggestions at different stages of my work. To these people I owe incalculable gratitude.

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To AusAID, I extend my sincere gratitude and appreciation for making it possible for me to study in this prestigious university, and to Ms Lynn Toohey, in particular, I owe invaluable thankfulness for all her assistance.
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my appreciation for their comradeship during our academic years. My particular thanks go also to Ms Kumiko Mizuno, who was not only a good friend, but also helped me with comments and careful suggestions on some of my drafts in the last months of writing this thesis.

To my parents, Saturnino de Jesus Soares and Joaquina da Babo Soares, who sacrificed much to give me the best education they could and have never asked for anything in return, my indescribable appreciation. To my brothers and sisters (Cândida and family, Lucio and family, Estanislau, Adério, Nelia and Leonor) who have continuously, in the face of various challenges and uncertainties during the years of political turmoil in East Timor, since 1999, supported and encouraged me to never give up, I owe immeasurable admiration. In spite of the difficult times they had to go through, I recalled, not one of them has ever asked me to lay my pen down. This thesis would have no meaning without their encouragement and support. My uncles, aunts and cousins who have followed my studies with attention also deserve my appreciation.

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<td>APODETI Pro. Ref.</td>
<td>Associação Popular Democrática de Timor pro-Referendum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASDT</td>
<td>Associação Social Democrática Timorense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIVPOL</td>
<td>Civilian Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNRT</td>
<td>Conselho Nacional da Resistência Timorense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPN</td>
<td>Conselho Politico Nacional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRRN</td>
<td>Conselho revolucionario da Resistência Nacional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRTR</td>
<td>Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DRET</td>
<td>Democratic Republic of East Timor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DSMPTT</td>
<td>Dewan Solidaritas Mahasiswa da Pelajar Timor Timur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ETWAVE</td>
<td>East Timor Women Against Violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FALINTIL</td>
<td>Forças Armadas da Libertação de Timor Leste</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FDTL</td>
<td>Forças da Defesa de Timor Leste</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FITUN</td>
<td>Frente Iha Timor Unidos Nafatin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FLECLETIL</td>
<td>Frente da Libertação Estudantil Clandestina de Timor Leste</td>
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<td>FOKUPERS</td>
<td>Forum Komunikasi Perempuan</td>
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<td>FRETILIN</td>
<td>Frente Revolucionária do Timor-Leste Independente</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GERTAK</td>
<td>Gerakan Anti kekerasan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GFFTL</td>
<td>Grupo Feto Foinsae Timor Lorosae</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMPETTU</td>
<td>Ikatan Mahasiswa dan Pelajar Timor Timur</td>
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<tr>
<td>INTERFET</td>
<td>International Forces for East Timor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IOM</td>
<td>International Organisation for Migration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KOTA</td>
<td>Klibur Oan Timor Ass’wain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MFL</td>
<td>Marxista Leninista FRETILIN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non Governmental Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OPJLATIL</td>
<td>Organização Popular Juventude Lorio Asswain Timor Leste</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OJETIL</td>
<td>Organização Juventude de Timor Leste</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OJECTIL</td>
<td>Organização da Juventude Católica de Timor Leste</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OPMT</td>
<td>Organização Popular Mulher Timor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARENTIL</td>
<td>Partido Republica Nacional Timor Leste</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDC</td>
<td>Partido Democrata Cristão</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PD</td>
<td>Partido Democrático</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PNT</td>
<td>Partido Nasionalista Timorense</td>
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</table>
PDM: Partai Democrática Maubere
PSD: Partido Social Democrata
PL: Partai Liberal
PST: Partido Socialista de Timor
PPT: Partido do Povo de Timor
PTT: Partido Trabalhista Timorense
RENETIL: Resistência Nacional dos Estudantes de Timor Leste
RDTL: República Democrática de Timor Leste
SAPT: Sociedade Agrícola Patrícia e Trabalho
SIL: Sahe Institute for Liberation
UDC/PDC: Partido Democrata-Cristão de Timor
UDT: União Democrática Timorense
UNAMET: United Nations Mission in East Timor
UNATIL: Universidade Nacional de Timor Leste
UNDP: United Nations Development Programme
UNTAET: United Nations Administration in East Timor
UNTIM: Universitas Timor Timur
Yayasan HAK: Yayasan Hukum hak Azasi dan Keadilan
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<td>Abut:</td>
<td>Roots or source.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ai-knanoik:</td>
<td>‘Tree and song’; a reference to folk stories and narratives about the origins of clan, lineage, and cult houses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahi-matan:</td>
<td>‘Fire and eye’; hearth or fire place, a reference to one’s place of origin.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ai-hun:</td>
<td>Tree or (tree) trunk.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ai-laran:</td>
<td>‘Tree-inside’ or among the trees, bush.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aman-boot:</td>
<td>‘Big-father’, a reference to father or the older male from male lineage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autokon:</td>
<td>Domain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baino (ano):</td>
<td>Reference to <em>dato</em> (aid to the <em>liurai</em>) and his children (socially regarded as the second rank of people after the family of <em>liurai</em>).</td>
</tr>
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<td>Bandu*:</td>
<td>To forbid, prevent people/animals from trespassing. In Tetum it is translated as Tara Horok (to hang prevention-symbol) or <em>Kahe Ai-tahan</em> (to hang leaves as sign to prevent trespassing).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beiala:</td>
<td>Ancestors, forbears of a clan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beik:</td>
<td>Illiterate, uneducated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dato/Chefe de suco*:</td>
<td>The head of a <em>suco</em>, who also holds a specific portfolio in the domain as an aid to the <em>liurai</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dikin:</td>
<td>Tip of a tree.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Estafeta*:</td>
<td>‘Courier’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firaku:</td>
<td>Reference to Eastern East Timorese.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Funu:</td>
<td>‘War’; conflict, fighting or violent encounter.</td>
</tr>
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<td>Funu-maluk:</td>
<td>Enemy in war.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hemu ran:</td>
<td>‘Drinking blood’, ‘Blood brothers’; according to ritual rites and initiated by the lord.</td>
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A GLOSSARY OF SELECTED TERMS
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<td>Hun</td>
<td>‘Source’, ‘origin’; often referred to as trunk (see Ai-hun above).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Katuas</td>
<td>Old or aged man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lia-tuan</td>
<td>‘Old words’; a reference to chants and recitations about the ancestors and the ‘path of life’ of a clan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liras-naruk</td>
<td>‘Long wing’; a reference to elite politicians who have money and can easily escape the country whenever there is trouble.</td>
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<td>Liurai</td>
<td>The head (king) of a domain.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Makair-Fukun</td>
<td>Head of Uma-Fukun who also assumes the role of a judge in the domain by virtue of inheritance or expertise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mata-Dalan</td>
<td>‘Eye path/way’; as to guide the struggle to the end.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matenek</td>
<td>Smart, clever, intelligent - those who possess knowledge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maun-Abut/bin-abut</td>
<td>‘Brother/sister of the roots’; a reference to those who are considered knowledgeable and involved directly in the struggle. A reference to guerrillas and senior political activists.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maun-boot</td>
<td>‘Big-brother’; a reference to an elder brother or the son of the most senior brother in the lineage. The Timorese refer to Xanana Gusmão as big-brother.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaladi</td>
<td>Reference of Western East Timorese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Koremetan</td>
<td>‘To untie the black sign’; a symbolic release of black cloth to mark the end of the mourning period of a dead relative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rai-lulik</td>
<td>Sacred land.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rate</td>
<td>‘Graveyard’; a site where ancestors or clan members are buried.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reino (s)*</td>
<td>A domain or territory.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regúlo*</td>
<td>Rank for liurai.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

xviii
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rohan:</td>
<td>End or tip (as in branch or leaf)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senhor*:</td>
<td>Mr, Sir.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suco*:</td>
<td>A territory within a domain or <em>autokon</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukun:</td>
<td>To rule or have authority over a territorial domain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uma-fukun:</td>
<td>Clusters of houses within a <em>suco</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uma-kain:</td>
<td>Household, family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uma-lisan:</td>
<td>‘Cult house’; also refers to people who belong to a cult house.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* of Portuguese derivation.
PART ONE

DEVELOPMENT OF THE ROOTS AND FORMATION OF THE TRUNK: INTERPRETING THE EVOLUTION OF NACIONALISMO
Chapter 1

Introduction

I. Opening Remarks: The Setting

This thesis is based on research carried out in East Timor primarily between 21 December 1999 and 8 December 2000. It focuses on political developments in that country during the period leading up to the first election of the local Constituent Assembly (CA) on 30 August 2001, and the handover of power from the United Nations (UN) to the elected government of East Timor on 20 May 2002. This was the period in which the East Timorese made the transition to independence, marking the end of the territory's long colonial history.

During this period, the UN established itself through the United Nations Mission in East Timor (UNTAET), with a mandate unprecedented in its fifty-three year history, to set up a nation. The UN was present to assist the country to independence after its people decided to separate from Indonesia in a referendum held on 30 August 1999. Thus, political developments during the period of this study were represented by the presence of various political entities. On one side, was the international United Nations administration led by UNTAET, and on the other, a number of local ‘political entities’ representing the East Timorese political community. This study concentrates on the political dynamics within the East Timorese political community.

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2 On 7 December 1975, the Indonesian military invaded East Timor and annexed the country six months later in what it described as ‘integration’. Nevertheless, internal resistance against the occupation and foreign pressure led Indonesia to propose a referendum which was held on 30 August 1999. After the referendum, dissatisfied pro-Indonesian militias destroyed almost all cities and towns and forcibly evacuated people from their homes throughout the territory.
By local political entities, I refer to a variety of institutions with interests, perspectives, ideologies and objectives that together characterise political development within the East Timorese political community. Included in this grouping are both political groups and individuals who lived in East Timor; not included are those who remained in West Timor as refugees during the period of my fieldwork, and those who favoured integration with Indonesia.

This study begins by acknowledging the fact that East Timorese political society appeared to possess a sense of communion and solidarity and, above all, appeared as a community bound by the spirit of unity or nacionalismo (lit., Portuguese for nationalism). The years of war against Indonesia and the results of the ballot on 30 August 1999 justified this sense of unity. However, the post 1999 referendum period posed many questions for the East Timorese. Would this sense of nacionalismo and unity that had bound them as a people during the years of war remain intact? How did the East Timorese perceive the changes they were going through? These are two of the main questions which are addressed throughout this thesis.

Anticipating the discussion in this thesis, it is worth mentioning that these questions arose during my fieldwork and are addressed on the basis of local people's perceptions about the changing patterns in the political landscape of East Timor. By locals, I mean politicians and political activists as well as ordinary people who were involved in the struggle for independence and continued to remain politically active during the time this study was conducted. This study is thus an articulation of people's perceptions about their political history and the situation in which they lived. While research for this study was carried out mainly in Dili, the capital of East Timor where most of the political activists reside, the population under study also included some outlying areas in which I had the chance to travel during fieldwork.
This thesis is divided into two parts. The first part examines East Timorese perceptions of nacionalismo and the second part examines changes in these perceptions and the forms of conflict and division within the East Timorese political community. The two parts are interconnected; they reflect the changing pattern of political behaviour which came about as a result of the transformation from colonialism to political independence and its aftermath. These two periods, (1) colonialism and (2) independence and its aftermath, are seen, in Timorese terms, as two ends – hun (lit., source, roots) and rohan (lit., end, tip) – of a single process.

II. Anxiety upon Arrival in the Field

On the afternoon of 20 December 1999, my wife Angela and myself, along with a number of Timorese refugees and politicians who had fled to Australia following the September 1999 violence, boarded the Australian Navy vessel HMAS Jervis Bay in Darwin harbour, with the next destination Dili, East Timor. It had been three months since the Australian led International Force (INTERFET) was sent to maintain peace in East Timor after the violence of September 1999. Travelling with us in a journey that would take 8 – 10 hours were fully equipped Australian army men and women heading for a tour of duty. As registered returning refugees, Angela and I were lucky to have free passage on the modern military vessel….Going back to Dili was a thrilling experience after spending two years at the Australian National University. Nevertheless, a sense of uncertainty came to mind as I wondered how Dili would appear to my eyes after the September 1999 violence that had wrecked the entire country. The fact that I had received only unclear news about the situation of my parents and the rest of my family, who had been displaced since the troubles, only added to this uncertainty. As the ship sailed into the open Timor Sea and towards a completely different political atmosphere –

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3 For further information on the ship visit JERVIS CLASS, L. S. <http://www.geocities.com/ph_amstrong/Ships/landingShips/AKR.htm>.
from the Indonesian ‘integration’ period to UN reign – I tried to contemplate what I would confront in that completely ‘new’ space, the would-be first nation of the millennium.

Thinking of the new mission I had embarked upon, I began to ponder where I would start my work since, while waiting to depart from Darwin, I was told that East Timor and Dili in particular had been reduced to ashes by the Indonesian army and its militias following their humiliating ‘defeat’ in the August 1999 referendum. I began to recall the uncertainties encountered by forbears in my discipline, some in much more difficult circumstances, when they arrived in completely unknown societies to do fieldwork. Among these were Malinowski among the Trobianders (1929), and, more recently, Lewis’ fascinating experiences before ‘discovering’ the little known population of Tana Wai Brama (1988). Caulfield’s acknowledgement of her “rather small failure” in conducting fieldwork (1979: 314), and Elisabeth Traube’s (1986) uncertainty among the Galole before settling with the Mambai in East Timor. Likewise, my recollection of stories from my anthropology friends in

Plate I.1: Graffiti welcoming INTERFET in East Timor (Photo: James J. Fox)

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Canberra about their pre-fieldwork experience, including Taylor’s (1998) preoccupation before arriving in Vietnam to study social change and people’s perceptions in post-war Southern Vietnam, provided a sense of relief. Being an East Timorese, I did not have to spend time thinking about familiarising myself with the people and worrying about my communication skills. Nevertheless, I had qualms, though these were overcome by my belief that these forbears had been successful in their endeavours to reveal previously unrecorded situations.

My involvement with this project started when I first knocked on the door of the Anthropology Department at the Australian National University. Travelling to Australia on an Indonesian passport in early 1998, my initial plan was to study the social organisation of a Tetum society in East Timor, a people whom I had known and familiarised myself with prior to my departure to Canberra. However, this initial dream was put on hold due to the ongoing political developments in East Timor at the time. I remember Prof James Fox, my supervisor, cautiously warning me in late 1998 of the risk involved should I insist on proceeding with my earlier plan, which would have meant leaving for East Timor in January 1999. The political crisis in Indonesia which led to the leadership change in the late 1990s allowed the new president, Bacharuddin Jusuf Habibie, to change the long-standing Indonesian policy on East Timor. Habibie, unlike Suharto, his predecessor, agreed on 27 January 1999 to allow the East Timorese to decide their own future through a referendum, which would be organised and supervised by the United Nations.5

5 For an overview of Indonesian policy on the East Timor referendum, see the PhD thesis by Kumiko Mizuno, Department of Social and Political Change, RSPAS, ANU, 2003. This dissertation is concerned with Indonesia's rule over East Timor, the process of self-determination in East Timor, and Indonesia's approach to the new nation thereafter. It examines how the Indonesian government responded to domestic and international concerns over its approach to East Timor. It also observes how a state behaves facing pressure over a contentious issue.
Between this decision in January 1999 and the period after the August 1999 referendum results were announced, violence broke out in many different parts of East Timor. This escalated after the referendum, in which the East Timorese voted to separate from Indonesia, and violence and arson enmeshed the country. Pro-Indonesian militias, guided and abetted by the Indonesian army, carried out a rampage throughout the territory, destroying almost all the country’s infrastructure (Dupont 2000). From my flat in Canberra, I could only glimpse through the lens of the television cameramen on the ground the sad developments I would have been caught up in had I persisted with my earlier plan of study. To add further doubt to this idea, the displacement of people inside East Timor and the forced movement of refugees into West Timor after the referendum made a proper ethnographic study of a particular social group essentially impossible. UN figures showed that in only two weeks (4-19 September 1999) as many as 250,000 people took refuge in West Timor, whereas most others left their homes for various periods of time and went to the mountains to escape the violence (Diario de Noticias, September 2000; see also Ahmad 2000).

After the international outrage and pressure exerted on the Indonesian government over the behaviour of its military and pro-Indonesian militias, the Australian led INTERFET arrived in the territory on 20 September 1999. This arrival saw the departure of the Indonesian army and its associate militias to West Timor. After INTERFET took control of East Timor, the population who had fled the previous onslaught began to return slowly to their villages; many deplored the outcome of the earlier political process in silence, their voices only to be heard through the efforts of activists and foreign journalists.

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6 For an overview on developments in the lead up to the consultation or referendum in 1999, see Babo Soares (2000).
As our vessel sailed northwards into the Timor Sea, I began to get a glimpse of the chaos left by the September 1999 mayhem. I heard a woman sitting right behind me, in the theatre-like seats of the military Catamaran, speaking to her friends about the arson and violence which had destroyed everything. More appallingly, she professed, it inflicted a deep psychological impact on the East Timorese.7

Three months after the arrival of INTERFET and the departure of the Indonesian army, there was little sign of social, economic and political recovery. The returning and demoralised refugees were left with nothing. Amid hunger and frustration, they would not hesitate to loot whatever they could find in order to eat and survive. In many instances, properties were also burned by these returnees. In some areas in Viqueque, an area which I had planned earlier to be the site of my field research, properties including some traditional houses (*uma lulik*), were burnt by returning refugees: cattle (*balada*) were taken away, rice and corn fields were burnt and there were a number of deaths.8 So widespread was this second wave of destruction that the East Timorese labelled this specific event as the time of *milisia kedua* (lit., the second militia period), equating this group and their looting to the previous paramilitary groups which, as argued by Dupont (2000), operated under the supervision of the Indonesian army. The majority of the population of Dili and East Timor, if asked who burnt their houses or looted their properties, would answer either the real militia or the second militia.

As dawn emerged on 21 December 1999, our vessel moved close to shore and subsequently laid anchor in Dili’s main port. With mixed feelings about meeting new people, experiencing a new political atmosphere and not

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7 A team of World Bank specialists who toured East Timor weeks after INTERFET landed in the country confirmed that almost 70% of East Timor towns were destroyed by the Indonesian militias (Pers. Comm. Prof. James J. Fox, 2000). See also <http://lnweb18.worldbank.org/eap/eap.nsf/Countries/East+Timor/57A3D6631A06C602825695B00628A9F7OpenDocument>.

8 I was not able to obtain the exact number of deaths during the September 1999 event for this area, or for East Timor as a whole. Unofficial figures provided by various media and activists estimated the number at around 500-1000 people.
knowing what to do, we disembarked in *Ponte Cais* (Portuguese for Port) of Dili, my former hometown and a place that became the base for this fieldwork.

III. The Unexpected Scene: Negotiating the Topic

We arrived to find Dili, the centre of political dynamics in the country, a destroyed and burnt city covered with the remnants of ash and dust. By then, East Timor had become a country on its own but under the care of UNTAET. A prevailing sense of euphoria about the recently attained freedom was evident in the faces of its residents. This did not mean, however, that the post freedom period was a smooth one. Unexpected events coloured that period. Illegal occupation of houses and of the property of those who had fled the September 1999 mayhem by people from outlying districts was common in Dili. After a few weeks the ill feeling became clear. One began to see discontentment and sadness among a people still trying to recover from war (*fumu*). I noted that it was the loss of property and lives that had inflicted further anguish on the East Timorese. Conflicts about land and property, together with the presence of street gangs and other crimes were common around East Timor.

In the absence of effective law and order, Dili was the centre of chaos and uncertainty. False claims over property and accusations among members of the society occurred everywhere in the capital. General suspicion amongst the population was routine. The psychological impact of Indonesian military policies during 24 years of occupation could still be felt at the time. Strangers in particular were treated with suspicion as if they were military ‘spies’, a

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9 I encountered people whom I had not known before. Indeed, many newcomers flooded into Dili soon after INTERFET arrived. These were the people who had hidden in the nearby forest during the September mayhem and came down as soon as INTERFET arrived. They occupied most of the houses abandoned by the Indonesians and East Timorese refugees in West Timor.
once common phenomenon. Clearly, locals were not easily receptive to outsiders, with feelings of distrust intense. As such, conversations with locals did not always reveal the truth, let alone reveal the *julic* (lit., sacred, forbidden) aspects of things associated with the 'sacred words' of the ancestors. This would have been a problem for me as an anthropologist had I persisted with my earlier intention, to explore the kinship relations in one local area.

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Beleaguered by events in September 1999, political developments during that period dominated conversations among family members, friends and people in the streets. Recounting personal stories about *funu* (war) was more appealing than discussing other topics. As a friend told me, "they would talk

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10 I conducted research in nine aldeias (hamlets) in twelve districts in East Timor during June-August 2000. In some areas, I was accepted because of my frequent visits during the time of my fieldwork. However, a significant feeling of suspicion was still evident in most of the people whom I talked to, a suspicion that in my opinion, resulted from their experience during the Indonesian occupation and the 1999 mayhem.  
11 I would like to thank Mr Mateus Soares, the *hurai* (lit., king, ruler) of Uma-Wain Kraik, an old Kingdom of Viqueque (see Hicks 1971) for his ideas about my intentions when I first arrived for my fieldwork in late 1999. I recall that while a study of this kind would normally be encouraged by this *hurai*, he advised me against it because, in his words, *ena ne'e sei terus hela* (lit., the people are still suffering) as a result of the recent mayhem.  
12 Most East Timorese refer to the September 1999 pandemonium as 'war'.

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Plate 1.2: Destruction of a house in Dili, caused by post-1999 Violence (Photo: B. Preston).
about nothing but politics in their daily conversations” (Pers. Comm. Aderito de Jesus Soares, 10 January 2000).

Amid chaos and uncertainty, local political groups that had existed prior to the arrival of the UN and operated clandestinely during the Indonesian occupation began to re-establish themselves. Initially, the principal resistance body, Conselho Nacional da Resistência Timorese, The National Council of Timorese Resistance (CNRT), was the only resistance organisation recognised as the legitimate body representing the East Timorese. The CNRT was a political organ set up in Peniche, Portugal, on 29 April 1998. It stood as the umbrella organisation for all factions resisting Indonesian ‘integration’ and was the body which represented East Timor in the referendum in 1999. However, as political developments unfolded, this coalition of forces proved to be unsustainable. Disagreement among factions within CNRT surfaced and the sharp exchange of words among its leaders began to colour the atmosphere of the political transition. Fragmentation seemed unavoidable, with each faction trying to claim political leverage and legitimacy in the political process. As a result, conflict and division came to the fore.

I began to develop tentative but acceptable relations with various political groups and individuals as well as with activists who claimed to have been involved with the resistance during the years of struggle. Indeed, I visited the headquarters of different political parties and talked to individuals of various political groups in order to grasp their understanding of freedom. I had no doubt that people were extremely happy in the first few months of freedom despite the devastating effect of the September 1999 destruction. I began to follow political developments and learn how Timorese understood these developments. It was in the course of this investigation that I began to comprehend the crisis that gripped the country and the impact it had on people’s lives.
Unlike the first few weeks after my arrival, where the sense of euphoria could be seen in the expression of every person I met, I began to sense a feeling of frustration among the population as early as February 2000. The sense of euphoria brought about by the newly obtained *ukun a'an* (lit., to rule one self) or independence began to change. My involvement with various political activists and regular contact with political actors as well as other individuals, some of whom would become my informants, provided me with an understanding of the transformations of perception about the existing political developments. What I found was widespread disappointment and disenchantment with the existing political situation. Political uncertainty, the increasing rate of crime and renewed political friction among previously cooperative associates were the factors contributing to this disillusionment.

In early December 1999, local political parties and groups quickly organised themselves and broke ranks with the resistance body (CNRT). Apart from the traditional political parties, new political groups also emerged and were advocating defiant policies compared to those of the coalition of forces which had led the resistance for years. Political differences stemming from individual frictions of the past, ideological differences, differences of interest, as well as culturally based divisions were widespread, reminding people of the early days of civil war in 1974-1975 and of the September 1999 turmoil. Political groups and parties that fought for independence and had initially pledged to remain united until the country declared its formal independence decided to go their own ways.

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13 While this term is vague, every East Timorese claims to have, directly or not, contributed to the struggle for independence. Following the protocol in this thesis, I continue to use words such as 'political actors, activists, passive activists and guerrillas' in order to maintain the visibility of my population.

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In June-August 2000, while undertaking my fieldwork, I toured 12 aldeias (hamlets) in nine different districts examining the situation and trying to compare conditions in these areas to the experience I encountered in Dili. I also visited some of these places thereafter and found, as expected, deep (psychological) frustration as a result of war and ensuing internal conflict. Claims over property and land further complicated the situation (see Fitzpatrick 2002: 6-17). While the incoming UNTAET promulgated its first law on administration on 25 October 1999, the absence of proper government institutions to maintain law and order during that period only worsened the situation.

The climax came soon after the first Congress of the CNRT in August 2000, in which the two traditional parties, Frente Revolutionaria de Timor Leste Independente or the Revolutionary Front for East Timor Independence (FRETILIN) and União Democrática Timorense or Democratic Union of Timor (UDT), distanced themselves from the body they had helped to found in 1998 (see Chapter 4). Having been firmly united in the pursuit of independence and the fight against Indonesia, was no guarantee of continuing political unity among these entities. Each group advanced its own political agenda and a few individuals became prominent players in such developments. Central to these political developments were political groups, including politicians, and their ‘non-political’ counterparts (activists and NGOs), who emotionally identified with these political parties. It was a complex development. For ordinary East Timorese, as will be explained in Chapter 5, all this was perceived as a process in which different interests, perspectives, ideologies and objectives were employed by opposing groups and individuals to compete for political recognition. While at the UNTAET level,

14 The clearest example of individual division and conflict was between the incumbent President Xanana Gusmão, then leader of CNRT, and the leader of FRETILIN, now Prime Minister, Mari Alkatiri. Their disagreements and conflicts naturally involved the institutions they represented. Other forms of conflict among political leaders, which then also implicated the political organisation they represented, will be detailed in Chapters 5, 6 and 7.
this political development was tolerated under the banner of democracy, it created disappointment and despair among the East Timorese. For one thing, the East Timorese did not seem to trust the *malae* (lit., foreigners)\(^{15}\) who were there to help build the country. The East Timorese believed that the *malae* came to their country only in times of peace. If there were a war, instead of helping the ordinary East Timorese, they would flee and leave them behind. This rather popular view is not without its basis. Memories of the trauma of Portuguese abandonment in 1974, which then led to a brief civil war among East Timor political factions and subsequent Indonesian invasion, were still fresh. Furthermore, when the United Nations (UNAMET) held the referendum for independence in August 1999, the same *malae* abandoned East Timor and left the East Timorese to become the prey of the militia and the Indonesian army. As such, the political developments within the East Timorese political community received wide attention since it was believed that if there was conflict or fighting among the factions, the *malae* would leave the country and no peace could be expected.

I began to understand the significance of these political developments among the East Timorese. Through conversations and discussions, I had no doubt that, while different, these political developments and people’s perceptions of them were interrelated and formed an integral part of the complexity that the East Timorese of the time had to confront. The ongoing local political dynamics were so significant for them that they shaped people’s perception of everyday life. In other words, the East Timorese perception of their country’s past and future was shaped very much by the political events of the time.

\(^{15}\) The word *malae* has its roots in the word ‘malay’, a reference to traders and merchants, including the outsiders who were believed to have come from the Malaya Peninsula. This word has been adapted and used in East Timor to refer to foreigners.
What was interesting about these developments was the quick spread of conflict, social tension and street battles. Fighting in the streets between gangs allegedly affiliated with certain political groups occurred regularly for months. One example was a wave of street battles in areia branca (lit, the White Sand area), Dili, which began on 31 December 1999 and went on for months. Interestingly, what began as street fighting resulted in a series of encounters which involved not only members of gangs but also some former guerrilla members who were divided over the issue of firaku and kaladi. Firaku is a stereotype commonly applied to people of the eastern part of East Timor and kaladi is applied to people who come from the west (see Chapter 8). The residents of Dili who had just begun to recover from the September 1999 mayhem complained about this instability (Pers. Comm. José Antonio Lorenço da Costa, 12 December 2000). This chaos in the streets added to the prominence of claims over property and personal accusations among individuals. Likewise, political conflict was also heightened, particularly between political groups and their leaders. This development – within the Timorese political community – continued for several months.
My interest in this pattern of change, particularly people’s perceptions of it, owed much to the situation I encountered on my arrival. My first days in Dili were an early exploration period. I visited the CNRT office almost daily to make contacts with potential informants. In the months leading up to the referendum in 1999, the office of the CNRT was in a house which belonged first to the former leader of ASDT, then of FRETILIN and then the president of the short lived Republica Democrática de Timor Leste (RDTL) in 1975 (see Map 1.2). It was located next to the old Indonesian Central Bank office (now the office of the World Bank) in Dili (2). After the referendum, an old-styled Chinese building (3) on the waterfront\textsuperscript{16} was designated as the office of CNRT. The office later shifted to the previous compound of the United Nations office in Vila Verde in Dili (4).

To my surprise, I was confronted with stories, questions and offers from my potential contacts. People would tell me ‘stories’, ranging from their personal experiences during the 24 years living under Indonesia and the period

\textsuperscript{16} Prior to 1975, it was the consulate of the Republic of China Taiwan (formerly Formosa) and in the period after that it was made the headquarters of the Indonesian navy (Kopasgat – Komando Pasukan Gerak Cepat and later Marinir) until 1999.
leading to the August 1999 ballot to their experience in the aftermath of the ballot. I would be addressed with ‘questions’, varying from international responses to the Indonesian ordeal in East Timor and the issue of an international tribunal to try Indonesian army generals implicated in the 1999 violence, to my own personal life in Australia as a student. Also, I was presented with ‘offers’, ranging from invitations to join political parties to taking a leadership post in political groups.\textsuperscript{17} Such offers presented me with a dilemma. Accepting a political position would place me in a difficult situation as an anthropologist. On the one hand, the nature of my work as a researcher prevented me from becoming directly involved or collaborating with any particular element of my ‘target population’. Leach (1992) made this clear when criticising native anthropologists for being too subjective when working in their original communities as researchers. I was aware of this situation and wanted to avoid what might have led me to commit a double mistake – being too subjective as Leach suggests, and further being directly involved as an actor in the game. While I was tempted to engage as an actor in this sense, I felt it could only compromise my work as an anthropological researcher. However, continuous refusal of such ‘offers’ led some to be suspicious of me, for my role as a researcher was little understood. Some people who I tried to approach refrained from talking openly to me because, as I found out later, I was thought to belong to rival political parties. Some of my old acquaintances did not even want to know whether I was still a student or not, since for these people, their political preferences had to come first. In such a situation, changing field sites might have been normal to earlier anthropologists, for example Lewis (1982) and Traube (1986) in their studies among the Tana Ata ‘Ai and the Mambai. Since this was not an option for me, I had to convince ‘my people’ to accept my anthropologist status during that period (1999-2000), which was not an easy task.\textsuperscript{18}

\textsuperscript{17} This is something that I experienced until the last days of my fieldwork in Dili.

\textsuperscript{18} This situation must be distinguished from that of ‘journalists’ who have always been accepted and seen as \textit{ema tatoli lia} (lit., courier of news) to the outside world.
Further obstacles existed that any researcher might have to deal with in such a situation. On the one hand, the painful years of political conflict might have been an obstacle to a comprehensive understanding of tolerance, unity and democracy despite East Timorese leaders often preaching the same words. On the other hand, there seemed to be very little room for different ideas within the political circles at the time. Pointing the finger at each other – as a means of avoiding capture and evading torture, which had been practiced by many East Timorese during the Indonesian period – was still evident. Becoming closer to certain individuals with affiliations to a particular group meant you were the enemy of the others. It would be seen as siding with one political party. In such circumstances, the decision to take a neutral stance was a wise one: a position that could be accepted by all sides of politics. Conscious of my forbears’ notes from their ‘early contact’, I wasted no time and seized any opportunity that presented itself as long as it did not jeopardise my status as a researcher. After all, it is, to borrow Fox’s words, “the ability to respond to and, indeed, to seize upon new opportunities [that] is thus basic to the whole process of doing fieldwork” (Fox in Foreword in Lewis, 1988: xi).

At the height of division and uncertainty, various workshops and seminars were held in Dili, all discussing issues of nationalism, national unity and political fragmentation. These changes in the political process can be summarised in a question often asked by local East Timorese. “Why has the sense of togetherness, solidarity and national unity – interpreted in this thesis as the sense of East Timorese nacionalismo – begun to disappear and be replaced by conflict and division?” Certainly, this question invited various

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19 For an interesting discussion on the pros and cons of Anthropological research in this sense see Caulfield (1979: 311-316)
20 For this specific issue of nationalism see editions of bulletins such as Lalenok and Talitakum between December 1999 and December 2001. Another recent seminar on Nationalism was held by the Sahe Institute of Liberation (SIL) and the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences of the University of East Timor; its proceedings have been published in Jurnal Libertasaun, Edition I, June 2001 by Sahe Institute for Liberation.

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interpretations of the kind of ‘sense of nation’ with which the East Timor nation is identified, and the importance this same sense of unity has in the lives of its diverse population. Likewise, it also invited questions as to the degree of impact this change has had on the East Timorese, as far as their sense of nationalism or national unity is concerned.

When I began this research, I spent the bulk of my time identifying what made up the context of the social and political developments in East Timor. I was aware of the fact that the population of my study was experiencing a social and political transformation, from colonialism to self-rule. Thus, not surprisingly, new dynamics and constant turbulence would colour the existing social and political discourse. It was on the basis of this consideration that I attempted, throughout the course of my fieldwork, to observe “what makes for an integration and equilibrium...” of the subject under study (Evans-Pritchard 1969: 41).

Certainly, such an exercise is not alien to the literature of social and political change. Descriptions of societies undergoing social and political change have been the subject of various studies in the field of anthropology and other related disciplines (see Geertz 1963; Warry 1987). Countless writers, including Warry (1987) on Chuava politics, Rhyne (1943) on social change and Dutch politics in Java, White and Munger (1976) on social change in Japan’s urban politics, and Likhit Dhiravegin (1984) on social change in Thai politics, confirm just how prominent social and political transformations have been in the interest of anthropologists, sociologists and historians. For example, the anthropologist Warry (1987) specifically examined the changing patterns of politics in the Papua New Guinea highlands in the context of different historical regimes and how the latter influenced local leadership roles during his fieldwork. His attention to the role of leadership in particular is similar and comparable to the experience of East Timor. His constant interaction with the people and observation of events, both through historiography and
contemporary events, provided him with resources to see how changes shaped the popular view of local social and political development among the Chuava. Most importantly, his observation about the changing role of local *bigmen* (leaders) which came as a result of social and political change over different periods, presented a more or less similar approach to that of this study. This study is an extension of an existing tradition of this kind. Although it may differ in some aspects from its predecessors due to the uniqueness of the situation and the context of my fieldwork, it should be seen in the context of the foundations laid down by forerunners of the discipline.

IV. Nationalism and Division in the Local Context

- Local Definitions of *Nacionalismo* and *Unidade Nacional*

Recalling the doubts about the ‘strength of nationalism or national unity’, allow me first of all to clarify various points. It is not my intention to present a debate on the definition of East Timorese *nacionalismo*. Nor is it my intention to examine the European origins of nationalism, which date back at least to the sixteenth century. My aim is merely to document the anxieties and confusion that characterised a people who had long been united and bound by the inspirit of *nacionalismo*, and how these perceptions changed along with the political landscape of the post 1999 referendum period.

The word, *nacionalismo* was adapted from the Portuguese and used by young nationalists in the late 1960s and early 1970s, on the eve of the ‘revolution’ in the former Portuguese colonies in Africa, notably Mozambique and Angola. The term was then popularised in East Timor during resistance to Indonesia to mean, in a generic sense, unity. Not surprisingly, East Timorese perceive nationalism in a way their history and their perceptions of history account for it. The most common and simplest argument is that East Timorese nationalism involves a sense of self-reliance and togetherness in order to chase invaders out of their land.
Listening to political actors and activists, it is clear that the word *nacionalismo* is used interchangeably in both public and private spheres to mean nationalism, national unity, identity, solidarity and togetherness. It is generally thought of as the fundamental sense of strength that allowed the East Timorese, unlike before, to maintain unity; to join forces as one people. This conceptual form of argument seemed to be equally prevalent among political activists and politicians alike.

There are two points of reference that people draw attention to when making observations about nationalism. The first is the history of resistance against the colonial governments. In this sense, although lacking information as to the pre-1912 colonial history in East Timor, political actors and activists’ references to their ancestors’ glorious victories in ‘wars’ against both the crown and the colonial administration were often cited as a ‘foundation’. Citing the great wars, without mentioning specifically ‘which war’, was common. The second common reference is to notions of ethnicity, myth and destiny, a topic addressed already by Smith (1986). Often such references are expressed in the form of *ai-knanoik* (*ai*, ‘tree’ and *knanoik*, from *knananuk* ‘stories’, ‘folk song’), oral narratives or personal stories. There is a belief that the East Timorese were once warriors. Indeed, the notion of internal – inter-tribal – political rivalry, as argued by Fox (1996), is a characteristic of both the pre-colonial and colonial periods of East Timor societies. *Funu* (war) against the colonial governments was part of the rich culture of East Timorese myths and folk stories passed on from generation to generation. This can be seen in various myths which recount the heroism of the ancestors. Relying on their interpretations of myth, oral narratives and experience in history, the East Timorese endeavoured to construct ideas of sovereignty and national identity.

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21 This was a key year for consolidation of Portuguese colonialism in East Timor. See Chapters 2 and 3 for further discussion (see also Gunn 1999).
There is a widely held belief that all East Timorese adhere to one *hun* (lit., source, origin, trunk, derivation). Interpretations, however, vary from one ethnic group to another. The Mambai ethnic group, for example, refers to the highest mountain *Tatamailau* (lit., *tata*, 'grand father' 'ancestor'; *mai*, 'big' 'great' and *lau*, 'highest' 'summit' 'top') as their great ancestor (see also Traube, 1986). It is believed that he (Ego=male) stands high and can communicate with the ancestors. Geographically, the Mambai believe that the mountain of *Tatamailau* is a dwelling place of ancestors' spirits. The Tetum refer to the earth as the mother of the East Timorese (Hicks 1978). Reference to myths and folk stories can also be seen in accounts of the Cailaco war, which lasted for 50 years (1719-1769). The resistance in Cailaco relied on its people's veneration of *Pedras Negras* or *Fatuk Metan* (lit., Black Rock), which was considered *lulic* (lit., sacred, forbidden) (Gunn 1999), the domain of their ancestors. Any outside control of their territory would be deemed an infringement on the perceived realm of the ancestors. The war occurred because the *reino* (lit., people or kingdom) of that area refused to allow outsiders (Portuguese and Dutch) to be present around their sacred sites. The belief that the mountain *Kablaki* was a place where the Mambai of Manufahi used to venerate the spirits of their ancestors is another example of adherence to myths. The Manufahi people courageously confronted the Portuguese in the late 1890s and early 1900s and used the mountain as their last resort in a war (Gunn 1999) that, in contemporary historiography, marked the end of the second nationalist war against outsiders. This understanding of the past, which is based largely on belief, stories and narratives, constitutes both a sense of pride and the sense of belonging (see Chapter 3).

Conclusions are often drawn on the basis of people's feelings which, in turn, incite reactions that correspond to the given situation. This provides room for the injection of nationalistic feeling, especially, as implied in Smith (1986), when myths and stories of colonial oppression surface in public debate. The East Timorese perceive their history as one of oppression and subordination.
For example, current East Timorese believe that collective wars against the
crown and colonial governments (see Chapters 2 and 3) were the hun (lit.,
origins) of Timorese nacionalismo. Notions such as that of having the ‘same
fate’ therefore remain central to the construction of national identity and
indeed their definition of nacionalismo.

- Early Literature

Little has been written about the East Timorese sense of nation. Only after
1975 did writers become attracted to the topic. Among these are Jollife
(1995) and Dunn (1996), most of whose interest was awakened by the stiff
resistance of the East Timorese against Indonesia. Nevertheless, among these
writers, the definition of nationalism was presented vaguely as the sense of
‘resistance to foreign power’, ‘local political survival’ or ‘inspiration for
independence’. Not even the latest books have specifically addressed East
Timorese ideas of nation, let alone the division and differences that exist
within that society. Accounts of differences among political parties in 1974
are almost non-existent, with only a small number of articles highlighting the
difference and conflicts during that period (for example, Niner 2000). Most of
these writings, however, have focused their discussion on the historical
evolution of the East Timorese struggle rather than on nationalism per se, let
alone the sense of nation.

22 To mention some of them: Michael Salla, "East Timor’s Clandestine Resistance to
Indonesian Integration," Social Alternatives 13 (1994) 44-47; Damien Kingsbury, (ed), Guns
and Ballot Boxes: East Timor’s Vote for Independence (Melbourne: Monash Asia Institute,
2000); John G. Taylor, Indonesia’s Forgotten War: The Hidden History of East Timor
(Leichhardt, NSW, Australia: Pluto Press Australia, 1991); George J. Aditjondro, In the
Shadow of Mount Ramelau: The Impact of the Occupation of East Timor (Leiden, The
Netherlands: Indonesian Documentation and Information Center, 1994).

23 The writings of Jollife (1978a); Hill (2000); Cox & Carey (1995); Aditjondro (2000), have
hinted – only reluctantly endorsing –the notion that East Timorese nationalism was based
largely on resistance or local reaction to colonialism. Little is mentioned about the differences
– ethnicity, language and the concepts of origin – that characterise the society known as East
Timor today.
Another perspective on East Timorese identity is explained in the works of East Timorese writers such as Gusmão (1997) and Martins [Undated] who cite myth, religion and cultural experience as the seeds of the idea of East Timorese identity. Some recent writers on East Timorese nationalism, such as Noam Chomsky, an American linguist, and Anderson, an American political scientist, have focused on East Timorese political developments subsequent to the 1991 Santa Cruz massacre. Anderson acknowledges in his paper, 'Imagining East Timor' (1993), that although most of his writings about nationalism have concentrated on the importance of the spread of mechanical printing and its relationship to capitalism, in East Timor “there has been very little print capitalism, and illiteracy [is] widespread” (Anderson 1993: 2). Thus, his focus on East Timor has for the most part relied on the Indonesian ‘ mishandling’ of East Timor as the source of Timorese (youth) nationalism.

In general therefore, Anderson (1993) believes that the rise of nationalism during the 24 years of Indonesian occupation of East Timor was a result of three aspects of political behaviour by the Indonesian government. The first was its overwhelming political repression, the second was its lack of tolerance towards local languages, and the third was the repression of traditional forms of thinking of the people during the occupation. These factors, he has argued, led to the radicalisation of the Church, the emergence of new groups during Indonesia’s occupation and popular insurrections around the territory (see Jolliffe 1978a; Lutz 1991). These arguments have some validity. For example, since 1985, many East Timorese have furthered their studies in Indonesian universities. This has led to a growing intellectual group who through higher education, learned about the Indonesian nationalist struggle against the Dutch, and had the ability to judge their own struggle against Indonesia. Most of this generation of East Timorese was either not born or were in their childhood years in 1975. They grew up experiencing the occupation and oppression in their country, and naturally became involved in the political resistance. Not surprisingly, by 1987 East Timorese students helped establish
the clandestine movement throughout Indonesia and in East Timor, and played a very important role in its activities in later years. Anthropologists' accounts of local identity have varied. Traube (1986; 1995) has concentrated on ritual and cosmology, whereas other writers such as Hicks (1976) and Renard-Clamagirand (1982) have concentrated on local social organisations, and Boxer (1985) has paid more attention to colonial history in Timor.

A recent honours thesis, *The Lorikeet Warriors*, has attempted to see the sense of nationalism from the perspective of East Timorese youth, with an emphasis on their role as clandestine activists and their experience in the months leading to the referendum (see Nicholson 2001). However, while acknowledging the factors contributing to this formation of the idea of nation among the East Timorese youth, this thesis, as other writings on East Timor, has ignored how the East Timorese perceive the idea of nation and the political dynamics within their country.

The similarity between all these writers is that the East Timorese ideal of nation was built through an evolutionary process in which a combination of myth, cultural belief and resistance to colonialism was employed. It is agreed, even among local mainstream politicians, that East Timorese nationalism finds its basis in the myths, history and past experiences of their people (Pers. Comm. Juvêncio Martins, 22 September 2000). Thus, extracting memories and knowledge about the past reveals their perceptions of nationalism. In a way, the sense of a common fate, the struggle to be free and the reaction to colonialism were the causes that gave rise to the formation of East Timorese national identity.

- Post-Referendum Division

Doubts about the strength of this East Timorese sense of unity began to emerge in the changing political landscape of the post-1999 period. This
resulted in a new atmosphere of political division, a manifestation of public discontent toward leaders, competition for political recognition, the exchange of verbal insults among political leaders and political opponents, and an apparent breakdown of unidade nacional. The social chaos that resulted from the September 1999 violence added to this social disequilibrium.

In regard to this type of mood change, Shafer warned in his book, *Faces of Nationalism* (1972), that the main problem with nationalism occurs when loyalty to the state ceases or when sentiment towards the nation changes (Shafer 1972: 7-8). Nationalism, in this instance, may be used as a pretext to justify a certain group’s vision of the nation, claims of rights to political office, or acquisition of land and other social positions. This eventually turns into a destructive force (Shafer 1972).

Post-1999 East Timor is a case in point. After a brief euphoria of independence, conflict among and between politicians and activists began to make daily headlines. Accusations that individuals or groups had sided with the Indonesian military in the past were often made. Claims that one group of people had fought more than another during the war caused deep disquiet. Generational confrontation and differences on the basis of geographical origin, as well as conflicts between returnees from the diaspora and those who felt that only home-stayers had continued to fight colonial occupation were common in those days. Whenever differences occurred, each individual or group would always refer to the sacrifices they had made in the past for justification, and maintain that those who had contributed most to the struggle should be rewarded accordingly, including, among other things, with the right to occupy political positions in the new government.24

24 Even after the official hand over of power from UNTAET to the East Timor government, the incumbent Prime Minister argued on local radio that “only FRETILIN can govern East Timor”, prompting criticism from opposition groups such as the Social Democratic Party and the Democratic Party, (Radio UNTAET, News Bulletin 25 May 2002).
Popular rumours circulated in Dili that preference should be given to veterans of the resistance when it came to positions and jobs with the government. While the parameters for being included in the 'veteran' classification were unclear, it should not be a surprise that everyone claimed to have contributed to the war in their own way. Classification of war veterans was divided into three levels. The armed combatants occupied the first level, followed by former clandestine members (couriers), and then members of the diplomatic front. Often members of the diplomatic front received little recognition, indicating a lack of acceptance. There were also groups of students and others who organised protests in cities throughout Indonesia, and other individuals who claimed to have contributed in their own ways to the struggle who now felt alienated due to their exclusion from posting in the new government.

Politically motivated social conflict was another example of post-referendum divisions. For example, the exploitation of existing geographical stereotypes such as *firaku* (easterners) and *kaladi* (westerners) for political purposes was so evident that street fighting between people associated with the two groups was unavoidable. Claims that “only this or that group were involved in the fighting for independence” were also common phenomena in the streets of Dili. Political and social divisions emerged because of the dissatisfaction and disappointment of those who felt marginalized. Divisions between elite and non-elite, older generation versus new generation also described as conservative elders versus new-mind youth, and home-stayers and returnees were characteristics of the existing political fragmentation. Indeed, this is a symptom in post-conflict societies: when new preoccupations begin to develop, loyalties to the nation change and the pursuit of political interest predominates (Shafer, 1972). New conflicts tend to surface and generate divergence in that community, especially when individuals or groups begin

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25 See Xanana's Speech, quoted in *Suara Timor Lorosae*, 20 August 2002.
to pursue their own interests (Gailey 1985; Gailey and Patterson 1985: 78-80; Gailey 1987). Having presented the general overview of the situation on the ground, I will now discuss the conceptual framework under which this thesis is organised.

V. Reconstructing Ideas in Metaphors: Conceptual Framework

Throughout my fieldwork, I had the chance to have discussions with various politicians and political activists. Although the names of some of these actors are not mentioned in this thesis, their expressions of euphoria and later frustration about the events, as well as their appreciation of the situation and the political dynamics during that period, are reflected and examined in this thesis.26

In interpreting the unfolding political developments in East Timor, this thesis will rely on the way the East Timorese portray events. One of the common characteristics in this respect is the application of metaphor in dualistic form. Anthropologists often refer to this method of portraying social phenomena as part of an East Timorese ‘way’ of thinking.27 This is a form of reflection that is represented through metaphors, often in dual or binary categories, a notion common already to the field of anthropology and the anthropology of Timor in particular.

26 While acknowledging that it is difficult to distinguish between who is highly politicised and who is not, it is certain that almost every East Timorese is aware of their political circumstances. Every East Timorese claims to have, directly or not, contributed to the struggle for Independence. Nevertheless, following protocol in this thesis, I continue to use words such as ‘political actors, activists, women activists and guerrillas’ in order to maintain the visibility of ‘my population’. This does not mean that the whole population of East Timor is politically conscious. The core of what I term the ‘politicised community’ are the political parties, and central to political parties are groups and individuals.

27 Apart from my own observations, I am indebted to various academics who have written extensively on metaphorical representation of social phenomena in Timor for discussion on the issue. Among these include Prof. James J. Fox, Assoc. Prof. Elisabeth Traube and Dr Andrew McWilliam.
The East Timorese portray national unity or nationalism as the ‘trunk’ of a tree. The tree represents the nation. If the ‘trunk’ of the tree collapses, then the nation will also collapse. Being the ‘trunk’, nationalism is the main pillar of the ‘tree’ of the nation. In this sense, for the trunk to come into being and mature, it should have gone through a series of biological and ecological changes that make it, both vulnerable and resistant. Likewise, East Timorese nationalism is built through years of, and resistance against, colonial oppression and has experienced many changes during the process. Locals believe that resistance against Portuguese colonialism by their ancestors only ‘found its shape’ (culminated) at the time of the struggle against Indonesia, the time when all East Timorese united to fight for a common cause, the liberation of their country as a whole. Indeed, the East Timorese construct their history as beginning from one point (hun) and ending at another (rohan), establishing parallel binaries, which make up the continuity from ‘origin’/’roots’ to ‘end’/’tip’.

Independence can be seen as the ‘fruit’ of this nationalism ‘trunk’, the latter being a commitment that grows through years of struggle, adapting to the changes in the political scene until the nation is formed. However, independence is not the end of the process of nation building. Independence is seen as an avenue where interests, perspectives, ideologies and objectives come into play, allowing groups and individuals within the nation to exercise their political goals. The new divisions that begin to emerge and the resulting political confrontations are nevertheless precarious and can threaten the country’s stability. In a botanical metaphor, this is compared with the sprouting of new branches of a tree, which grow uncontrollably, stretching their own ways, and constantly shaken by the passing winds. The continuity from colonialism to independence and from nationalism or national unity to fragmentation constitutes – in a botanical idiom – the process from roots to tips. To understand this in more detail, the following
sections underline the way the East Timorese interpret and polarise national unity and its divisions as two connected events.

- Reconstructing Events through Remembering the Past and Present

Symbols and metaphors are significant for the East Timorese when reconstructing events, including the development of their nationalist history (see also Hicks 1971; Traube 1986). It is common for the East Timorese to use symbols such as the house, botanical idioms, or journeys to portray their views of the world, including their appreciation of the existing situation. The following view provides an example:

In a house, there are bedrooms, guestrooms, kitchen and other rooms. The house itself resembles a country and the people inside the house resemble its citizens. Both father and mother are the leaders of the house; the children resemble the ordinary people. Children or siblings should obey their parents. Similarly, in a country, the people should listen to their leaders (Pers. Comm. António Aitahan Matak, Dili 29 December 1999).

This line of thinking, not surprisingly, influences the way national unity and its subsequent divisions are portrayed. People find it more convenient to explain things by using ai-knanoik (lit., tree-song) ‘folk stories’ or traditional expressions, ‘metaphors and symbols’ (see Fox 1973) rather that spending time recounting something that, in their words, requires a long narrative. 28

In reconstructing East Timorese perceptions of national unity and its subsequent division through metaphor, I am mindful of two general points. First, one must take account of the situation in which those feelings are recounted. I am conscious that at least two – for example my parents’ and my – generations of East Timorese have experienced two different political

28 The use of botanical metaphor to interpret perceptions of nationalism and division parallels the way people use metaphors and other configurations to symbolise social phenomena in Eastern Indonesia (Fox 1973; Therik 1995; McWilliam 1989) and in East Timorese societies (Traube 1986; Hicks 1976 and 1978).
uprisings, one in 1974-1975 and another in 1999, in which thousands of lives were lost, as well as material assets. Since my fieldwork took place at a time when political chaos was widespread within the East Timorese political community, perceptions of political events were shaped and interpreted in the way members of this generation perceive events—be they in the past or in the contemporary context. In other words, in interpreting political developments, East Timorese relied both on memories of what they have been told about the past, and their own experiences.

Second, I observed that the East Timorese prefer to deal with what they believe to be part of their struggle and their own experience, and then use these as a basis to present their feelings in metaphorical terms. For instance, expressions of frustration and disillusionment over political friction in the post-1999 period were presented in the following terms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ema-Boot sira</th>
<th>The leaders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baku malu</td>
<td>Fighting one another</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hirus malu, talin la kotu</td>
<td>Upsetting each other, never ending</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hadau deit boot</td>
<td>Competing to be great</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ka hadau deit fatin</td>
<td>or fighting for a position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maromak mak hatene</td>
<td>Only God knows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sira hanesan ai-sanak</td>
<td>They behave like branches of a tree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanak sira fahe malu</td>
<td>The branches separate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haketak mos dakin</td>
<td>(They) also isolate the tips</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haketak povu nafatin</td>
<td>The people continue to be divided</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With this in mind, I begin this section with the story of Paulino Monteiro, a young clandestine activist in Ermera who, like many others, enthusiastically presented his views about the past. He remembered that during the Indonesian occupation, since the Indonesian army allowed no talk or action

29 Pereira was a young activist with the Legal NGO, Yayasan HAK during the Indonesian period. He completed his University Degree in Salatiga, Indonesia and after 1999 he was sworn in as a judge with the Dili District Court on 22 April 2000. António Aitahan Matak, Juvénio Martins, Victória dos Santos and Oscar da Silva of Yayasan Hak also echoed similar arguments.
about political independence, activists in the clandestine movement would use any forum they could find to discuss issues and draw up plans about political strategies (Pers. Comm. Paulino Monteiro, Ermera 23 October 2000). During those years, discussions were conducted carefully and activists would avoid anyone who was unknown to them or suspected of working with the army. One never discussed such issues publicly during the Indonesian period. Indeed, stories like Monteiro’s were common at the height of post-1999 independence euphoria. Individual stories about each person’s role in the past were proudly recounted in conversations – be they in the streets, at private parties or at public venues. Monteiro remembered that, as a clandestine activist, he would meet regularly with his friends to discuss and plan their activities, including ‘recruiting’ new people into their group. After discussions, people made their own assessments, drew their own conclusions and transmitted the results of such conclusions to those with the same interests. I was told that it was these discussions that – particularly during the Indonesian period – generated ‘sentiment’ and slowly shaped communal opinion, popularising the sense of unity and of resistance to the enemy (Pers. Comm. Cirilo José Cristovão, 12 May 2000). Deutch’s argument about the means of communication or transmission of the ‘sentiment’ of what a society is imagining in order to strengthen solidarity among members of a group (cited in Snyder 1982) fits well in this context. In East Timor, personal stories during the funu were often used as the source of such interpretations. After independence, connecting the past and the future – in this context – was essential to situate and highlight the role each individual played in the struggle.

Juvêncio, a young activist, was fourteen years of age at the time of the Indonesian invasion. He was imprisoned for more than six years in Semarang, Central Java, following the Santa Cruz Massacre on 12 November 30

Monteiro was a young activist who was imprisoned several times for his political activities during the integration years with Indonesia.

30

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1991. Juvêncio was one of the new generation who helped set up clandestine activities in Dili which culminated in the Santa Cruz demonstration and subsequent massacre. He offered this narrative of his experience:

In the late 1970s, after we surrendered, the Indonesian army detained us. Then, we were taken to Dili. We lived in the suburb of Fatuhada. We had to find jobs to survive. We worked in a garden during the day and went fishing in the evening. We sold the fish at the local market for cash ... In the early 1980s we heard from friends that the maun-alin [lit., older/younger siblings] the ‘brothers’ in the bush were still waging the war ... This information woke us up from the long sleep and we started talking to people whom we knew and trusted about this new development. All our conversations were very informal ... We transmitted the topic to other people. We used all means to pass on our messages. Well, the beginning is always like that, right? ... We then sought support from other friends ... In 1991, in Marabia there was an attack by the FALINTIL ... I met Marito Reis and Eurico whose nom de guerre is Laloran [lit., sea wave] and a former commander in Centro Sul [lit., Central South]. The three of us, together with Mr Duarte [who was captured, taken to Kupang -West Timor and later killed by the Indonesians], started activities. We did small things such as sending and receiving letters to and from the bush [communication with the guerrillas], issuing identification cards, drawing the flag of Republica Democratica de Timor Leste. Then we lao tun-lao sae [lit., walked down and up] ‘went everywhere’ to meet people whom we trusted and told each of them that “we must support those guys in the bush”. We sent our moral support to the guerrillas signalling that we were ready to support them. At the time, our support was given on the basis of [the guerillas’] necessity ... The Indonesian intelligence was very active ... It started as a casual activity. The spirit of nationalism and the willingness to help our [Timorese] brothers in the bush helped us to regain our courage and reorganize the struggle from the city. Then we came to know people like Constancio Pinto, Zé Manuel, and Adano who had also started some activities before (Translation from discussion with Juvêncio Martins, September, 2000).

Building on this initial explanation, Juvêncio explained that each of their actions could be considered to have different significance and objectives. Recounting the history of struggle to other people in those days was difficult given the strong military pressure. However, it was worth recalling memories and reminding each other of the sacrifices made by their countrymen and
women. Such stories present tangible evidence of the vivid narratives that people were afraid to hear for fear of being detained by the army.

Likewise, Juvêncio and his friends printed identity cards and handed them out to friends whom they could trust to work together, in his words, ‘to help identify our friends’. This was understandable because in those times activists such as Juvêncio, if found to be involved in actions against the state, would be detained and faced possible torture or worse at the hands of their captors. To Juvêncio, printing identity cards and giving them to those whom his group could count on for solidarity and comradeship served as a means to communicate their feelings and gave support to each other. He also recalled that when drawing the flag of resistance, he and his friends aimed to strengthen the sense of belonging and identity as East Timorese. Indeed in those days, Juvêncio recalled, most East Timorese were demoralised and preferred to remain passive about the struggle, fearing repercussions from the Indonesian army. So one of Juvêncio’s aims was to help people to recall past heroism in order to revive their courage and commitment towards the struggle.

In Juvêncio’s account, his narrative projected a process which started simply by building contacts with friends, until they were able to form a much wider group which would then serve as the pillar of their underground organisation. Nevertheless, to him and other activists with whom I had the chance to talk, their efforts constituted only a small element of the much broader political process of national resistance, which represented the main pillar of the struggle for freedom. Drawing together experiences in the past and then presenting them through symbolic representations is indeed one of the common characteristics of what the Timorese call cultura (culture) and

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31 I am indebted to young political activists at the Yayasan Hak, SIL and other former activists such as Cirilo José Cristovão, Rui Perreira, Jenito Carmo (Dili) and José Aparicio (Darwin) for our frequent and valuable discussions during my fieldwork.

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tradisaun (tradition). In this context, 'words' and 'terminologies' are essential tools in the social reconstruction of context.

Recognising the past (uluk) and connecting it to the present (ohin), apart from acknowledging the influence of the notion of 'continuity' and 'dual binaries', is also essential in reconstructing the idea of nation. Combining the action of remembering and presenting messages about the past through symbols and signs helps convey the sense of nationhood among the people. It is through this way of thinking that the reconstruction of national unity in East Timor was achieved.

- The Influence of Dual Thinking

When starting to compile my data, I recalled that East Timor, like other eastern Indonesian societies, has been characterised by what anthropologists might call a “society whose thought is commonly expressed in the form of dualistic mode”.32 'Dualistic mode' refers to the custom of either categorising or simplifying different forms of social and cultural icons into dyadic expressions. The 'dual category' is commonly found in forms of poetry or simple narratives. Writers on dual categories (Needham 1973; Traube 1986; Fox 1989) also refer to the concept as 'dualism', 'dyadic concept', and 'expression in pairs' or as Hertz (1960) mentioned earlier, 'polarisation' of the structure of social institution. Fox, in his work in Eastern Indonesian societies, including West Timor, recognises such expressions as attempts to codify living social phenomena in dualistic forms (Fox 1989).

In the anthropology of eastern Indonesia, the notion of dual categories has, so far, focused on the analysis of kinship and oral tradition. Fox points to a

32 For further reading see Fox’s (1989) ‘Category and Complement: Binary Ideologies and The Organisation of Dualism in Eastern Indonesia’. In this article, Fox analysed the concept of dual categories studied earlier in Timor by himself and a number of students namely, McWilliam (1989), Traube (1977) and Therik (1995).
number of social and 'cultural icons' which have been the object of the analysis of dual classification (Fox in Lewis 1988: xii). These include: personal and social identity, categories of gender, symbolic space and relative relation, identification of life processes, the composition of blood and flesh (see also Lévi-Strauss and Needham 1969), delegation or usurpation of authority, social organisation of house, marriage alliance and the cyclical translation of life in ritual ceremonies (see van Wouden 1968). While implying that the analysis of 'cultural categories' is applicable only to certain cultural characteristics, Fox acknowledges that such a formula varies from one society to another (see Fox in Lewis 1988: xii-xiii). Implied in this argument too, is that political expression might also be expressed in 'dual forms'. Indeed, in societies identified as 'thinking in the dual mode', social or political jargon expressed in pairs is used widely to identify events which affect people's everyday life (see Durkheim 1976). Likewise, it is a common phenomenon for people to use dual expressions to categorise living things. Durkheim's The Elementary Forms of Religious Life (1976) implied broadly that 'dual concepts', apart from being basic to society's thought and life are, indeed, universal in character; they do not necessarily represent cultural – and political – categories but find expression in these terms. In East Timor, one might argue that traditional thinking regarding dual cultural categories might have some influence on the way the political forms of expression and explanation of life processes among the East Timorese are formulated.

Thus, the forms of expression analysed in this thesis take the forms used in the analysis of dualism and should be seen as part of a broader study of social and political categories studied by earlier anthropologists both outside and in the region (Fox and Adams 1980: 330; see also Therik 1995). By dual political categories in the context of this thesis, I mean the forms of everyday expressions which were coined to identify and distinguish different political groups and people, including events of a political history, depending on the side of politics with which they are identified.
One example of this is the way the interpretation of either an individual’s or a group’s experience is presented. There is a strong preference for a dual representation – past and present/future – when portraying the history of struggle. Both constitute an opposing and complementary concept of dual thinking. Indeed, East Timorese political activists and politicians find it hard to resist the influence of such a concept when constructing their views of events. For example, colonialists like the Indonesians and the Portuguese were categorised as outsiders, wanderers, invaders, *ema a’at* (lit., bad people), destroyers or *funu-maluk* (lit., war-partner) ‘enemy’. These terms were used in contrast to the Timorese who were categorised as insiders, landowners, home-stayers, *ema diak* (good people), peacemakers, countrymen/women and so on. Likewise, in terms of time and space, the term *rai funu* (lit., land of war) refers to the Indonesian period, whereas the time before that (pre-1975) was categorised as *rai diak* (lit., good soil) or good times. This separation makes no distinction between Portugal and Indonesia as colonialists. The difference is, however, emphasised in the symbolic perception that pre-1975 was a time of peace because there was no war, although East Timor was colonised by the Portuguese, or in the words of Abílio Araújo, the *Guerra pacífica*, a reference to ‘silent resistance’ during the Portuguese period. By contrast, post-1975 was referred to as the time of war by virtue of Timorese armed resistance against Indonesia. 

In conversations among East Timorese, dual categories were used, often unconsciously, to represent categories such as, ‘insider’ against ‘outsider’, ‘land-owner’ versus ‘adventurer’ and ‘we’ versus ‘they’. These kinds of political expression provide a mode of communication of nationalist ideals not only for the ‘illiterate’ (*beik*) ‘maubere’ but also for the educated (*matenek*)

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33 The dual categories, it can be argued, encompass both symbolic space (time) and relative relation (different but linked) since these distinctions emphasise periods and their relevance, although not absolutely, to each other in the context of our discussion.

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to understand with whom they should side in political terms. People often used dual categories when retelling the Indonesian invasion and the proud resistance put up by their countrymen and women. As the following quotation shows:

When the military invasion unfolded on Sunday, 7 December 1975 with subsequent stiff resistance from the East Timorese, many people questioned whether it was possible for a ‘small’, ‘weak’ and ‘inferior’ eastern half of an island such as East Timor to overcome the ‘mighty’, ‘strong’ and ‘superior’ Indonesian army (Pers. Comm. Cirilo José Cristovão, 12 March 2000).

To ordinary East Timorese, the fact that their country was perceived as ‘small’, ‘weak’ and ‘inferior’ compared to the ‘mighty’, ‘strong’ and ‘superior’ Indonesian army might not have been a matter of concern back in the 1970s since most East Timorese were preoccupied with how to save their own lives. At the outset of the Indonesian invasion, dichotomous expressions such as ‘small/mighty’ ‘weak/strong’ and ‘inferior/superior’ were uttered merely to mark the beginning of a much broader concept, ‘coloniser and colonised’. However, anthropologists such as Fox (1989), Traube (1986) and Therik, (1995) have sensed that the reflection of society’s expressions goes beyond the semantic meaning of the words themselves. By this, I mean that such expressions are categories which are encoded in a specific formation, functioning as symbolic operators (Fox 1989) and carrying various interpretations about life in that society. In the case of East Timor, the use of hun and rohan to categorise and reconstruct perceptions about unity and division might be taken as an example.

34 Although some anthropologists have, consciously or not, agreed that ‘dual categories’ are expressions of everyday life and can only be found in the way local people express themselves, they do not claim that any classification of this kind is applicable only in the analysis of cultural studies (see, Fox 1980; Traube 1986; Therik 1995).
- Origins and End - Hun and Rohan?

In interpreting nacionalismo the East Timorese always refer to the past. This heroic stance can be traced back to a generation of ‘long ago’ who were believed to have helped initiate a sense of nationhood. Relying on the past was indeed part of the grand inspiration during the resistance against Indonesia.

For the East Timorese, history is seen as a ‘source’ and is used to predict or classify events of today and possibly future events. The present is seen as a continuation of the past, as having some roots in the past. The future might ‘not happen as it is supposed to (la la'o tuir lolos) should one disregard the past. The sequence of events in life is part of tradition. A society without hun ‘roots’, ‘origins’ ‘past’ ‘history’, and without rohan, ‘future’, ‘end’, ‘tips’, does not have an identity and therefore, may be said to “live an animal life” (mouris hanesan balada-fuik). It is considered to be fuik, ‘wild’ ‘foreign’, and is not the subject of discussion and carries no weight in social life. Thus, the Timorese say:

We, human beings should know our house and our siblings. Those who do not know these do not know their roots. If people do not know their roots, they do not know their future; people of this kind live as an animal, no origins – no future. 35

Similarly, a society without rohan, possesses no hun (see Figure 1.1). There is a balance and equivalent quality between hun and rohan, without which one cannot exist. 36

35 Field notes from a discussion with Moises, a lia nain (lit., owner of words) a customary law expert in the Village of Makadiki, Watolari, June 2000.
36 For this point, I am indebted to discussion with João Nunes and António Aitahan Matak (a member of CPD-RDTL). See also Martins (Undated), Kunci Pembangunan Manusia Timorese.
Traditionally, both sides represent origins and ends, showing society's life-span. A society, an individual, or a community is required to recognise its hun, – 'roots' (norms/tradition/culture), its ancestors, its lineage and its clan’s origin – because these elements represent the 'source', the origins of life. Only by recognising 'origins' does an individual or a community know its rohan ‘end’. It is a concept that embraces maun-alin (lit., brothers), lineage, clan, kin; rai, the land one stands on; uma, the house one lives in; mouris (lit., life), the future one seeks to achieve; and rate, the graveyard of one's kin. Timorese exegeses depict the sequence of events in life in a configuration of a ai-hun (lit., tree-trunk), which, in their minds, can only be called ai ‘tree' if it has abut, 'roots' (origin) and tutun, 'tip' (end), all of which serve as the conditions for the tree’s existence. Hun is linked to its abut (lit., roots) and rohan as dikin (lit., tip) (see Figure 1.2).

In sequential configuration, life is seen as a conception of a whole based on origins and ends. Life is seen as a sequence of events that span from the days of the abon, ‘forbears’ (hun) and finish when someone is dead (buried in a graveyard) (rohan). So someone’s life does not start when one is born, but before one’s birth – from the days of the ancestors37 – and ends in the graveyard. The Timorese say, “if it were not for the forbears, one would not exist or have even be born”. It is traditionally believed that because of the existence of the past, the future can be established.

37 The Timorese say ‘ran ida be mai housi hun’ (lit., the blood inherited from the source), a reference to someone’s origin; that someone is identified with a certain clan due to the blood he/she inherited from his/her lineage.
In his unpublished paper ‘Kunci Pembangunan Manusia Timorence’ (Key to the Development of the East Timorese) Joao Martins, a member of the royal family in Turiscai, wrote that East Timorese share the idea of ‘origins and ends’. The fact that the East Timorese tend to explain their experience in the context of two different ends – starting from one point and ending in another – shows how significant the notion of hun and rohan is in shaping people’s lives (Pers. Comm. Domingos Maia, 22 March 2000). As argued by Martins ([Undated]: ii), Nai Maromak (lit, the shining one) ‘the great ancestor’ (i.e. God) reveals knowledge to His (Ego=male) people (the East Timorese) in order for these people to understand the meaning of life. Martins ([Undated]: ii) states that:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Maromak natun</th>
<th>God reveals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neon badaen</td>
<td>Mind (and) Cleverness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suku siduk be tada</td>
<td>Provides knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baban be tada</td>
<td>Body and knowledge</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

God bestows (maromak natun) His blessings on the human mind and gives his children knowledge and cleverness (and skills) (neon badaen). Blessings come in various ways with knowledge. One needs to struggle to understand (suku siduk be tada), for this is the real knowledge, the knowledge of body (baban be tada). This elucidates the intellectual capacity, the clever mind provided by the great ancestor (Maromak) to his people (the East Timorese) in order to overcome challenges during their lifetime (Martins [Undated]:ii). This intellectual capacity allows the East Timorese to trace their past and plan for their future. The ability to trace and plan during the lifetime of an individual

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38 Martins was educated in the Dili seminary and was a primary school teacher during the Portuguese colonial period. He was a founder of APODETI, a political party that favoured integration with Indonesia and was the head of the Education and Culture Department and then the Social Department during the Indonesian occupation. He wrote this paper when appointed Head of Education and Culture of the province of East Timor. He was also known for his critical views towards Indonesian policy in East Timor. He died mysteriously in the late 1980s.

39 Maia is originally from Letefoho, Ermera, and worked as a teacher during the Indonesian period, a job he continues to this day. His knowledge of local culture is so well known that conversation with this personality helped to clarify how local people portray their culture and tradition (Pers. Comm. Domingos Maia, 22 February 2000).
or a community rests on the belief that life is regulated by culture, consisting of rules and norms.\textsuperscript{40} Martins argues that, since it is the great ancestor (Nai Maromak= the Shining One) who creates culture or tradition, it does not change with time. Culture thus transcends time and knowledge because it is given or exists as it is. As contended by Martins:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Slogan</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Buat hotu muda an</td>
<td>Everything changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukun la muda</td>
<td>Law (culture) does not change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukun adat lei adat</td>
<td>Authority adat is law adat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muda lae bele</td>
<td>Cannot change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lei ema halo</td>
<td>Law made by men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bele sei muda</td>
<td>May be changed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lei adat Maromak</td>
<td>Law adat (installed by) God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No rai otas</td>
<td>Is as old as the Earth.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In a way, stories and past experiences are preconceived because they derive from the predecessors of that society. Attempts to change tradition or adat/lei or lisan, could lead to turmoil, for life without tradition (the past) is considered meaningless. Lisan in Tetum stands for tradition.\textsuperscript{41} If one attempts to replace or destroy lisan and forget the past, it is said, one is trying to 'reverse the flow of the river' (halo mota suli sae fali).

Based on this same way of thinking, East Timorese describe their view of the course of their political history. The sequence of events that began with the days of colonialism – resistance – independence – and later internal division was seen as a process – continuity – that runs from one end to another. In this view, the sentiment, which started to take shape in the time of the ancestors (resistance, oppressed people), matured over time and eventuated in political independence. Seen from this point of view, the whole period of the


\textsuperscript{41} This is slightly different from Traube’s explanation of fada-lisa (cult house) among the Mambai of Aileu. Fada-lisa in Traube’s account is a reference to a place, which emphasises not only the centre but the origins from which the whole clan originated (Traube, 1986: 66-80).
development of the sense of nationhood, which eventuated in political division, can be explained through two aspects. First, the construction of *nacionalismo* is conceived as a process which involves the transformation of sentiment, *hun*, into the sense of nation which then gives rise to nationhood, *rohan*. This sentiment is built on the understanding that the society’s forbears were divided into small groups (linguistically). This sentiment grew and became strong during a colonial history when the ancestors were suppressed. They were therefore believed to have shared the same experience of oppression and suffering. Not surprisingly, common resistance as illustrated by the Manufahi war (see Chapters 2 and 3) in which various *reinos* (people, domains) came together and fought both the crown and the colonial powers with a common aim, as the East Timorese believe, finally materialised.

Second, the sense of *nacionalismo*, which finally brought East Timorese to the threshold of independence developed as later generations came onto the scene. The struggle, being part of the process from *hun* to *rohan*, was coloured by turbulence, much of which was highlighted in renewed division in the post-1999 period. Division is thus not at all an inconceivable element as far as the process is concerned. It is seen as part of a process which must take place because it categorically belongs to *rohan* (end).

The East Timorese also refer to the past (*hun*) as *uluk* (lit., once, ahead) ‘once upon a time’ ‘time of long ago’ and pair it with *ikus* (lit., later, to follow) ‘tail’ ‘end’. *Uluk* was a time when all things were set according to the will of the ancestors. Since all things were already set, it was expected that life would be much easier for future generations (*oan sira ikus ne’e*). As Joao Nunes said, “in the past, our ancestors set the rules, they established the foundation; the children today should just follow what has been set in the past”. In other words, the past determines the present/future.
This symmetrical sequence of thinking is illustrated well in the connection of life phenomenon. Thus, past events (ulu) are seen as preceding – and indeed interconnected with – future (ikus) events. One example of this is the reliance on natural signs for interpretation. In this sense, coincidental natural phenomena with similar signs provide the basis for interpreting incidental events as interconnected. The interpretations are then translated into specific configurations through, for example, a network of related events, all centred on the specific objects or signals.

An illustration of this is the reaction of a friend to an astronomical phenomenon. One evening, during the course of my fieldwork, I was standing with Jenito, a friend from my school years, in front of my parents’ house. People were walking from one end of the road to the other while both of us were standing and chatting. I noticed a flash in the air and looked up to see what was going on. To my surprise, I saw a yellow ring-like circle around the moon. It was indeed an unusual experience to see something of that kind. Lacking astronomical terms for this specific event, I turned to Jenito who was still talking about his experiences working in a nearby harbour. Suddenly, Jenito stopped our conversation, stared up at the moon and with a pale face said, that is scary. Anxious to know his strange reaction, I asked why he was afraid. He went on:

The ring-like thing which circles the moon is not a good sign; in 1975 it preceded the civil war. Recently, before the referendum, the same thing appeared again, again another war, today it appears again. What is going to happen next? Only God knows. Probably, things will get worse than in the past.42

This was a spontaneous reaction which took Jenito to the past (ulu) and prompted him to predict what would happen in the future (ikus). In his view, that event paralleled a similar occurrence in the past which indicated that he

42 This was uttered to me by José Celestino (Jenito) da Graça do Carmo in early March 2000, when political uncertainty was at its height.
could see the future from the same perspective. Jenito’s reference to the ring-like circle told me of what had happened in the past and the ensuing reaction. The same phenomenon had taken place sometime earlier and, in his experience, preceded the 1975 civil war and the September 1999 mayhem. While Jenito did not know what might happen in the future he was sure that – given past experience – something similar or worse would happen. Regardless of what would happen, Jenito’s account draws attention to the sequence of events and portrays them as stages of unavoidable events in life. The timing of the occurrence of natural phenomena presents, in Jenito’s observation, a logical sequence of events that are interconnected, thus underlining the essence of uluk (past) and ohin/ikus (present/future). Uluk (past) and ikus (end, future) are two common binaries which are opposed but complementary and constitute continuity from one end to another.

Certainly, a careful observation of how events are interpreted shows that this categorisation of past and future is clearly influenced by the dualistic thinking that is common to Timorese society (see also Needham 1973; Fox 1989; McWilliam 1989). The origins of the sense of nacionalismo and its later divisions are also perceived, unconsciously or not, within the framework of this thinking. The most vivid representation of dual thinking in this symmetrical sequence of time (hun/uluk – rohan/ikus) can be depicted as a tree metaphor.

- *Hun/Uluk/Abut and Rohan/Ikus/Dikin: Framing Nacionalismo in Botanical Metaphor*

The past not only serves as an impetus to predict the future, but also provides an understanding of how events in life explain what may unfold in the future. In a way, it is a process that is recounted and re-interpreted. Through such a medium, the East Timorese draw conclusions and make known their perceptions in the form of symbols and expressions. Most often, such
configurations come in schematic forms and are arranged symbolically to represent social and political phenomena.

Realising the complex nature of local interpretations of nationalism, during my fieldwork I spent time with various political groups discussing such issues. Conversations with political actors substantiated my understanding about this nationalism. I realised that the time of my fieldwork was considered critical. It was a time when people had just recovered or were recovering from the September 1999 mayhem in which the Indonesian military and its sponsored militia had devastated the country (Babo Soares 2000a: 56-62). While the euphoria of freedom might be one thing, the ensuing political conflict and social division, both in Dili and in other districts during that period, disillusioned the East Timorese.

Witnessing political uncertainty, people reverted to the past for comparison, if not consolation. Reference to the past was made to highlight how valiant and united the ancestors were, how they had united to fight the colonial governments, and how a sense of cohesiveness had once prevailed. However, such a sense of nationhood – represented by the Cailaco and Manufahi wars, and the commonly perceived nationalist war against Indonesia – was perceived to have reached a turning point after independence. Ikus, the present/future is therefore associated with friction and division evidenced by the events in the post-September 1999 period. It was not surprising that during my fieldwork, discussions were held by NGOs, student groups and former political activists discussing the peculiar idiosyncrasies of national unity and how this nacionalismo was being shaped by the present circumstances. In a discussion held by a local NGO in January 2000, a participant said:

Nationalism exists but now you see, it is collapsing. It is like a tree, you plant it, it grows, it produces fruit, but as it reaches maturity, the branches spread out, some decay and the new ones sprout forth. It can also be a house, you design, you build, you live under it, but in the...
end, the wood decays and the house needs to be repaired. After all, it is a journey – you start from one end and hope for the best at the other end. However, what is happening at the moment is completely different, it is worse (Comment by Aniceto Neves, Dili 27 May 2000).

Thus, perceptions of this current situation were closely linked to, or positioned in the context of, the notion of ‘continuity’, a process from one end to another. In local dialectical discourse, the notion of continuity is closely linked to the concept of ‘origin and end’. Using botanical images and metaphors of houses or journeys, people try to depict the existing state of political development as departing from one end and arrive at another. In a botanical idiom, for example, the evolution of the ‘sense of nationhood’ is paralleled with the development of a tree, from its roots, to trunk and its widespread branches.

Indeed, the use of botanical metaphor to describe both social and natural phenomena, memories of the past and religious traits is not new to the literature of social sciences. Bosch (1960) notes that in Hinduism, the Veda depicts the cosmic notion of plant or tree as bearing enigmatical verses of continuity in the religion (Bosch 1960: 65-67). Through tree symbolism, relations between the Gods, humans and environment are described as linked and inseparable elements of life. The same characteristics are fully inherent in ancient Hindu-Javanese and similar belief system in Bali, which describes the relationship between celestial and worldly beings as indissoluble. Anthropological understanding of tree symbolism recognises the importance of the tree as symbol of ‘transgenerational continuity’, implying the conceptualisation of both natural and social categories in human lives as emerging and ending in two different points (Rival 1998). This concept of thinking is closely related to the concept of dualism, as previous studies of tree symbolism (‘roots’ and ‘tips’) in Eastern Indonesian and Timor have demonstrated (Hicks 1978; Fox 1989; Howel 1998). The desire to “translate things into matter” (Rival 1998) is also a characteristic of East Timorese
society today. Asked why tree is important to illustrate the evolution of *nacionalismo* in East Timor, Domingos Maia offers the following exegeses:

Our ancestors use rock and wood [tree] as symbols to narrate everything about life. Big Rocks or Trees personify altars where prayers [offering] to the forbears were held. Likewise, in life, the ancestors used stones to establish hearths [fireplace] where food is cooked. Also, it is from trees [plants] that we obtain food and because of trees that we have wood to cook ... In our culture, a tree is a sign which we use to explain life – this is an old tradition, and now we also use tree as a shadow [metaphor] to explain things about life and our country’s history (Pers. Comm. March 2000).

Recounting the evolution of history from the perspective of a tree, the East Timorese argue that while nationalism is perceived as a unifying force that holds a nation together (tree) at a time of nationalist struggle, it is unable to control the spread of the branches (political parties, groups, ideologies) when the tree grows to maturity (independent). As a result, the branches spread and stretch out uncontrollably, crisscrossing, preventing each other from growing, and eventually dry out. Thus, the point here is that while the three grows and mature, in Timorese interpretation, later branches are not necessarily uniform, and thus continue to maintain their differences and peculiarities. It is in this context that division is illustrated. Thus, national unity flourishes only when a nation is resisting a common enemy. Once the main purpose of nationalism has been attained, as the common enemy has gone, the sense of nationalism may be disregarded and political groups will pursue their own interests. Forces within the once strong nationalist alliance may renew old fights and feuds, and this can serve to fracture a society that has long been united resisting colonial rule.

The divisions in the post-1999 period are explained as new branches (new differences) sprouting out of the ‘trunk’ (a national sense of unity). Instead of strengthening unity, these new branches (new political groups and new differences) stretch their own tips (opinions, ideology) far away from the
trunk’.\(^{43}\) While this process is inevitable and seen by some as part of the new democracy, it is the translation of these differences into action that really matters.\(^{44}\)

![Diagram of tree with labels: Abut (roots) and Dikin (tips).](image)

Figure 1.2: *Abut* (roots) and *Dikin* (tips). The whole tree is perceived as the nation.

A detailed examination of the tree metaphor will better illustrate how East Timorese portray their political history in both the context of *hun/rohan* – *uluk/ikus* and the context of the symmetrical sequence, from ‘roots’ to ‘tips’. The following verses reveal this metaphor.

> Our history resembles a tree, the roots represent our origins, together we build the country. The trunk represents unity, the branches represent differences, the leaves represent the people. The branches may scatter, but they continue to be attached to the trunk. You may go

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\(^{43}\) The image of a tree to depict Timorese perception of their history is not a coincidence. In local exegeses, the botanical idiom has been used widely to explicate kinship relations, clan and lineage genealogy and so on.

\(^{44}\) Verbal insults and fights among groups, exchange of harsh words among politicians, street battles and killings between eastern and western East Timorese have come to characterise the post referendum period. All these added to the trauma that the people had lived with for years as a consequence of previous ‘wars’; these include the 1974-1975 civil war, the Indonesian military occupation (1975-1999) and the 1999 terror of the same army and its created militia.
far, could behave differently [from others], yet, if you do not have the roots, you might have no end as well.  

The importance of roots is emphasised in this passage. The phrase “you might go far” denotes the fact that despite the differences, everyone should recognise their roots, lest they have no end or no future. While differences emerged following the vote for freedom and when the Indonesian army had gone, all remained conscious of their common sentiment and the sense of national unity. Should the common sentiment of being Ena Timor (Timorese) and the sense of Timorese nationalism be ignored, the country might fall apart.

VI. Unity and Division: Closing Remarks

After delving into the conceptual framework, I will now describe the structure of the thesis. Initially, I will focus on nationalist sentiment, in which the ancestors’ role, myths and stories of past resistance constitute the foundation. The time of these predecessors goes back far beyond European colonisation, although the preconditions for nationalism to emerge in East Timor might be dated to the colonial administration when the once independent, but rival domains (see Fox 1996) became entangled in the common enterprise of colonisation, resisting subordination to a common, more powerful enemy. This is to say that sentiment about unity may have begun to develop as far back as the 1600s, but has only began to take shape recently in the aftermath of World War II (Jolliffe 1978a; Ramos-Horta 1987; Hill 2000), and became entrenched during the 24-year struggle against Indonesia (Gusmão 2000a).

45 Conversation with Oscar da Silva, an activist with the Yayasan Hak, 27 August 2000 on the eve of the CNRT Congress which saw much friction and division among erstwhile nationalist forces.

46 Independent but isolated rebellions against the Portuguese colonial government began taking place around that period (Rocha 1994).
Reference to the past also points to the fact that the East Timorese believe what they call the myth of the past, which Martins claims is a common feature of *Manusia Timorense* (Indonesian for ‘East Timorese’). The reliance on the traditional belief that East Timorese come from one great ancestor, that East Timor was once a free society, and that *Timoreses* were the sons of fighting warriors is a state of mind that produces the sense of nationalism (Martins [Undated]: i-iii; also, Babo Soares 2004)). Indeed, one of the preconditions of a nation and the belief in nationalism is that people share the same myth (Smith 1986: 192). Such beliefs, arguably, constitute what Shafer (1972), Gelner (1983), Anderson (1991), and others see as part of the evolution of the sense of nationalism or the sense of imagining. They represent – as the Timorese put it – *abut*, ‘roots’ or ‘source’ from which nationalism (trunk) is constructed. They form the consciousness or sentiment that ferments the rise of Timorese identity; that ‘we’, ‘insiders’ are different from ‘they’, ‘outsiders’. It is also a feeling that gives rise to the notion of social cohesion, resulting in the unification of the ethnically diverse East Timorese societies, *Timor-oan* (Sons of Timor).

The second part of the thesis discusses the divisions that took place later in the post-1999 period and perceptions about this change in the political landscape. While the UN in East Timor (UNTAET) and some local political leaders played down the frictions and divisions as part of the democratic process, this view was not shared at all by local East Timorese. This section also highlights the differences between several prominent figures, and confrontation among, and the rebirth of other, political organisations that had been previously forgotten. To substantiate this discussion further, this section also underlines the forms of social conflict which have been politicised for

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47 East Timorese share myths of origin and space: that the *East Timorese affiliate to one country* (raí-Timor). They share the myth of common ancestry: that the *East Timorese derive from only one ancestor* (*Avó [abon]Ida*); the myth of the Golden Age: that *Houri Otas Houri Wain, Oan Timor Ass’wain* (Once we were warriors); and we might add: the myth of preconceived fate: that the *East Timorese were destined to live together, to suffer together and eventually, to liberate themselves together* (Pers. Comm. João Nunes, September 2000).

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certain interest. Confrontation among political actors has been used to embrace the division on the basis of generational difference. These differences have led to the creation of other forms of sub-divisions, which include diasporic East Timorese, geographically based divisions and conflict over the choice of language, which influence the East Timorese perception towards the previously much venerated notion, national unity and nacionalismo.

To understand these developments – from unity to division – one needs to follow how the East Timorese conceptualise the development of nacionalismo in the context of their political history.
The detection of early agriculture dating back 3,000 years ago enabled historians, anthropologists and linguists to identify groups on the basis of language characteristics. The seafaring Austronesians came from the north; originating in Taiwan, and spread as far west as Madagascar. The non-Austronesians came from the northeast. Their language belongs to the Trans-New Guinea group (see Fox, Tyron et al. 1995). Although the Austronesians are thought to have arrived first on the island, communication between the two ethno-linguistic groups over a long period of time, allowed for an assimilation of different populations to take place in that half-island country.

- Language Variations

These characteristics are reflected in the languages that exist in East Timor. In the 1930s, Portuguese writers found approximately 31 different languages with a number of dialects evident. Among these were:


It should be noted that Almeida (1994) failed to acknowledge that some of the languages mentioned above are dialects of much larger groups. For example, Maráí and Becáis are possibly dialects of Quêmaque or Kemak. Questions remain as to other languages which have not been identified to date. In general, anthropologists and linguists categorise the languages in East Timor into two broad language groups, Austronesian and non-Austronesian.

The Austronesian language group consists of: Tetun, which is spoken in Dili, Suá, Viqueque, Soibada and on the border with western Timor; (2) Galoli, spoken east of Dili, in Manatuto, Vemasse and Laleia; (3) Mambai, spoken south of Dili and in Aileu, Ermera, Ainaro, and Same; (4) Tokodede, spoken in Liquica; (5) Kemak, spoken in the western regions, particularly Bobonaro; (6) Idate, spoken in the central hinterlands; (7) Kairui, spoken in Kairui; (8) Mediki, spoken in the south central lands; and (9) Baikenu or Dawan, spoken in Ambenu.
Chapter 2
Perspectives on Political History

I. Introduction

This chapter outlines the ethnography of East Timorese history, particularly its people's resistance to outsiders. The overview of past colonial history is important for an understanding of the country and its people's history, as well as comprehending the contemporary East Timorese perception of nacionalismo or the sense of nationhood, a notion which will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3. Most of the description in this chapter is drawn from Timorese historiography, from both Portuguese and English sources. ¹

I will begin by briefly describing the situation in Timor in general. Then outline the Portuguese and Dutch arrival on the island and the political dynamics thereafter. I will then discuss a number of major local funu (lit., wars) raised by the East Timorese against both the Portuguese and the Dutch up until the first half of the 20th century.

II. The Setting: Nationalism in Historical Perspective

- Introduction

East Timorese nationalism cannot be understood without tracing perceptions of the struggle against colonialism. To provide a comprehensive – although not detailed – account of how the East Timorese value their past, this chapter explores resistance history from, as the East Timorese call it, the days of the

¹ It is not my intention to write a detailed historiography of Timor Leste in this chapter, for this has been dealt with by historians and former colonial writers in different academic texts. My intention is only to highlight the historical events which shape the history of this nation, to support the arguments presented in this thesis.

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ancestors (lit., *beiala sira nia tempo*) or the days of long ago (lit., *tempo uluk*). It is in this context that nationalism is defined, and later conflict and division can be understood.

- Pre European Account

Little has been recorded about the first inhabitants of what is currently East Timor. The latest archaeological findings reveal that human occupation of East Timor began approximately 35,000 years ago, although a large invasion of migrants to the island may have begun around 11,500 BC (Glover 1971).

The evidence of early farming cultivation can be dated back to 3,000 years ago (Glover 1971). This evidence serves, “as an indication of the initial arrival of early seafaring Austronesian populations into the region” (Fox, Tyron et al. 1995; Fox 2000: 3), who then inhabited and settled the island permanently.

Map 2.1: Migration to East Timor (Courtesy of Prof. James J. Fox).

2 A team of ANU scholars excavated a site located in the cave of Lene Hara in Lospalos, at the eastern end of Timor Island in 2001 and found that the first humans occupied this place about 35,000 years ago. See *ANU-Reporter* (2000).
The non-Austronesian category is composed of: (10) Bunak, spoken in Bobonaro and on the border with western Timor; (11) Makassae, spoken in Baucau and east Viqueque; (12) Naueti, spoken in Watolari and (13) Dagada and Macalero, both spoken in Lautem (Lutz 1991; Fox 1997; Hull 2000).

Prior to the arrival of the Europeans, the number of languages was no doubt larger than the number presented by Almeida (1994). There is still a great diversity of languages in East Timor and linguists are still studying whether some of these have all but disappeared or have been assimilated and integrated into bigger languages. The truth is the absence of some languages in Lutz’s (1991) and Hull’s (1999) research suggests that the population of these unidentified languages has simply declined in later years.

This language diversity and ethnic complexity points to the existence of ethnic variation in East Timor. The question is what was the mechanism used to administer those local linguistic groups or, in other words, what was the system used to define local structures in the past?

Although writings ranging from early Chinese accounts to the most recent research have been unable to account for how local entities came to be formed and whether a form of unitary state in the political sense, as mentioned by Chapter Two
Nordholt, ever existed in East Timor, the truth is that well organised ideas of social and political organisation existed prior to the arrival of Europeans (Nordholt 1971).3

One study which provides an account, without specification, of the number of major reinos (lit., people) or kingdoms is Helio A. E. Felgas’s monograph (1956), Timor Português (Monografia dos Territorios No Ultramar). In this book, Felgas identifies 47 regulôs (lit., kingdoms) in East Timor but provides no further details about them. Likewise, no studies of physical anthropology or history have suggested that there had ever been domination by one or two groups over independent kingdoms or reinos in East Timor, in the past. The exclusiveness of each ethnic reino – or, to borrow Fox’s words ‘petty kingdoms’ (cited in Gunn 1999:34) or ‘petty domains’ (Pers. Comm. 22 November 2002) – as independent political entities continued until the third century of Portuguese hegemony.

- Social and Political Organisation

In terms of socio-political organisation, East Timor was divided into territories referred to by the Portuguese as reino. João Martins argued that generally the territory of each reino was limited by the boundaries of other neighbouring reino (Martins [Undated]). Each reino was directed by a strictly autonomous traditional administration or autokon, structured on the basis of each group’s necessities and headed by a leader called liurai. Thus, each reino was divided into sucos and the latter was bifurcated further into uma-fukun. A suco was headed by dato which during the Portuguese period was known as chefe do suco (lit., leader of suco). Uma-fukun was controlled by a makair-fukun (lit., holder of law). This individual, who was an aid to the liurai, also acted as a judge whenever conflict occurred among members of his group. The Uma-

3 For an account on the literature of Timor see Kevin Sherlock (1980) and Geoffrey Gunn (1999).
fukun consisted of a number of uma-kain (lit., households), a reference to houses or a cluster of houses of a lineage group which were headed by the most senior male in the lineage or aman-boot (lit., great father). He controlled a cluster of houses comprising his sons, brothers and their descendants. Table 2.1 shows a generic Tetum structure as outlined in Martins (undated) paper.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Structure</th>
<th>Ruler</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Autocon (Reino) Suco</td>
<td>Liurai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uma-Fukun</td>
<td>Dato</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uma-Kain</td>
<td>Makair-Fukun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aman Boot</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.1: The Ideal Traditional Tetum Political Organisation (Source: Martins [Undated]).

In other words, liurai was the overall leader of a kingdom or reino. The Portuguese also called him regulo. Dato(s) were aids to the liurai. They controlled each suco (a number of villages) and retained specific responsibilities in their camps. Different datos were in charge of different tasks. One might be in charge of agriculture, another in charge of the umali-san (lit., cult house) and others in charge of ritual celebrations and so on, depending on the division of work. Most functions were given or performed by each dato on the basis of the legacy from their predecessors. Makair-fukun (lit., holder of law), together with the datos, were very influential when, for example, electing a liurai.

While historians argue that in the past, the kingdoms in the east were aligned to Wehale Wewico, the kingdom of Belo in West Timor, anthropologists' reference to Wehale Wewico has been understood in a ritual, not political sense (Therik 1995: 45-63). Thus, internal political dynamics and relations remained unaccounted for as far as domination and subordination is concerned (see, for example Nordholt 1971; Therik 1995: 45-63; Gunn 1999: 33-37).
Early Relations With the Outside World

Prior to the European arrival, East Timorese kingdoms traded regularly with both traditional Javanese kingdoms and some Chinese dynasties. Chinese accounts reported that trade involving sandalwood (*Santalum album* L.) had taken place before the arrival of Europeans. This also suggests that structured political systems were evident in Timor at the time. In the Chinese manuscript *Shun Feng Hsiang Sung* or 'Fair Winds for Escort' circa 1430 and 1571, Timor (*Ch‘ih-Wên*) was identified as located at the end of the 100 islands that connected it back to the South China Sea (Gunn 1999: 52). By the 14th century, for example, Chinese and Javanese referred to Timor as follows:

The island has no other rare product but sandalwood which is abundant and which is bartered for with silver, iron, cups [of porcelain], *his-yang ssu pu* [a kind of cloth], and coloured taffetas (Rockhill 1915: 257-258).

While contact between Timorese kingdoms and outsiders has been documented to a certain extent by historians and anthropologists (Rockhill 1915; Therik 1995), internal social and political relations in Timor have not been studied. The lack of accounts of internal political dynamics among the traditional *reinos* in Timor, even by the early contacts, leaves the topic open to interpretation. Likewise, although some anthropologists (van Wouden 1968; Traube 1986; Therik 1995) have tried to reconstruct the structure of traditional organisation on the basis of the customary practices and local narratives, the question of internal political dynamics – inter and intra-kingdom wars and political relations – in the pre-European period have yet to be documented. Very few written records about the pre-European period are available. Likewise, although the history of Portuguese colonisation is documented, such documentation was written in colonial government terms and presented differently from the viewpoints of later East Timorese.
III. The Portuguese Period: 1500s – 1912

- Early Accounts

While the exact time of the arrival of the Portuguese in Timor is debateable, the name ‘Timor' first appeared in Portuguese documentation dated 6 January 1514 sent by Rui de Brito Patalim – who toured the Maluka islands, Timor and Solor during that period – to King Manuel in Portugal (see Matos 1974; Gunn 1999: 54-55). This suggests that the first Portuguese acquaintance with the island could have been much earlier than 1514 or between the time the same vessel set out from Malacca in mid November 1511 and the time it arrived at Solor, one or two years later. The 3 vessels were The Santa Catarina and nau Sabaia both under the command of Francisco Serrão, and a caravel (Caravella Latina) commanded by Simão Afonso Bisagudo (Matos 1974). Tomé Pires, in his article in Suma Oriental in 1515 noted that all ships en route to the Lesser Sunda Islands at the time harboured in Timor for Sandalwood. Duarte Barbosa supported this statement in his book Livro em que da relar;iio do que viu e ouviu no Oriente in which he associated Timor with the place of sandalwood (Gunn 1999: 55) where,

... axes, hatches, knives, swords, Cambaya and Paleacate cloths, porcelain, coloured beads, tin quick-silver and other wares are exchanged for saders-wood, honey, wax, slaves and also a certain amount of silver (Dames 1921: 195-196).

Nevertheless, it took almost 50 years for the Portuguese to begin asserting effective control over this trade. The Dominicans who also arrived in Timor at that time, became known only after their first palisade of lontar palms on Solor was burnt down by Buginese Muslim raiders in around 1561-1562 (Boxer 1985). Four years later, in 1566, the Dominicans re-constructed another church on that island. The Portuguese also built a fort. The establishment of forts characterised the initial relationship between the Portuguese and the locals, although they were confined largely to Solor and Flores. Citing Boxer
(1947), Fox wrote that 20 years after the erection of the new fort in Solor, “there developed a mixed, part-Portuguese population of local Christians, many of whom were themselves involved in the sandalwood trade with Timor” (Fox 2000: 7).

One century later, another European power – the Dutch East India Company (VOC) – which had established itself on Java, sent vessels eastwards towards Solor and Timor. Dutch involvement in Timor came about when the vessels of the Company took over the Portuguese fort on Solor in 1613. The company sought to control the lucrative sandalwood (*Santalum album* L.) trade in that part of the archipelago (Gunn 1999: 60). This involvement triggered the first open confrontation between the Portuguese and the Dutch and added further to the already tense situation between the Portuguese and the locals. When the Portuguese lost their Solor fort to the Dutch in 1613, most of the population around the fort was transferred to Larantuka and then to Lifau on the Northwest coast of Timor, now the enclave of Oe-cussi. It was in Lifau that the first Portuguese settlement and first capital was established on mainland Timor.

- The rise of the Topasse or Mestiço

In the early 1600s, this mixed-blood population from Larantuka who had established itself in the sandalwood trade posed the main threat to both the Portuguese and the Dutch. As recorded in most Dutch documents, these Swarte Portuguezezen (lit., Black Portuguese) from Larantuka who regarded themselves as Gente de Chapeo (lit., People with Hat) and whom were also known as the topasse revolted against the Dutch and the Portuguese (Boxer 1947). Between 1630 and 1636, the Dutch commander, Jan de Hornay deserted his battalion and settled in Larantuka. He married a local girl and converted to Catholicism. Two of his sons, Antonio and Francisco later “gave rise to [one of the] the dynasties that provided leadership to the Black Portuguese
community on Timor” (Fox 2000: 9). Another founder of a mestiço dynasty was Mateus da Costa, a Portuguese who married a princess of Timor and whose son, Domingos da Costa and his offspring provided further leadership among the black Portuguese in Central Timor. In 1642, responding to pressure by the Dutch and the Portuguese in the sandalwood trade, the topasse captain Francisco Fernandes led his men to crush the kingdom of Sonba’i in the interior of Timor and then the kingdom of Wehali on the South coast of Timor. This success left the topasse the only group in control of the sandalwood production and trade in both the hinterland and on the South Coast of Timor.

Portuguese and Dutch rivalry over the control of the sandalwood trade, especially in coastal areas, continued at least until 1660. On 6 August 1661, the Portuguese and Dutch governments signed a Treaty of Peace at the Hague. Although the Treaty did not necessarily mention both countries’ expansion in the Netherland Indies, it affected cooperation between the two. Nevertheless, although the Dutch and Portuguese cooperated against the topasse, rivalry between them continued until a century later, when the Portuguese decided to shift their capital to Dili in 1769.

The power of the topasse became apparent when the first Portuguese governor who set foot on Timor in Lifau, António de Mesquita, was deposed in 1697 by the topasse leader, Domingos da Costa, the son of Mateus da Costa. His successor, André Coelho Vieira was sent back to Goa by the same person (Gunn 1999: 79) which strengthened topasse power as the sole controller, both politically and economically, in the central part of Timor, save the Dutch in the far west. Facing less attention from Macau and increasing challenge from the topasse who had formed alliances with several indigenous kingdoms, the representative of the Portuguese crown had no option but to leave Lifau.
In general, throughout that period (1630-1769) the mixed-blood topasse played a very important role in the politics of Timor. At times, they served as both intermediaries and power brokers between the indigenous people and the two European countries. There were times when they joined the Portuguese in war against the indigenous kingdoms, but there were also times when they would join the indigenous kingdoms to fight against the Portuguese when their interests were threatened (Gunn 1999: 86-87).

- Indigenous Rebellions

Competition between the colonial powers and the topasse for sandalwood also brought about changes in the political context. Indigenous kingdoms often had no other choice but to defend their interests. From a nationalistic perspective, the significance of indigenous rebellion is encapsulated in epic stories of the 'glorious past' which are still narrated from generation to generation in the form of ai-knanoik (folk stories) and lia tuan (lit., old words). The existence of these narratives – as will be detailed in Chapter 3 – is important because they influence the way current East Timorese perceive their history. They also served as an inspiration during the years of resistance against Indonesia (Pers. Comm. Juvêncio Martins, 22 September 2000).

The first and major rebellion –funu– ever recorded was the Cailaco revolt in 1719 which ended effectively in 1769. The 50-year 'stand off' between Cailaco and its allies, on the one side and both the Dutch and the Portuguese on the other, inspired resistance throughout the island. This war saw the assassination of two missionaries, P. P. Manuel Roiz and Manuel Vieira, and the destruction of churches in that area. Bound by a hemu ran (lit., the drinking of blood) or 'Blood Pact' brotherhood according to ritual rites and initiated by the lord (lit., Portuguese for régulo) of Cailaco, a dozen reinos

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4 Prior to that, as argued already, records of indigenous rebellion and resistance took place mostly in Western Timor. See for example Nordholt (1971) and Gunn (1999).
joined the war against the Portuguese (Matos 1974). This war was the first major challenge against the Portuguese by indigenous kingdoms that currently form part of East Timor. At that time, the major Portuguese port was still in Lifau (see Figure 2.1).

In 1725, the ruler of Comnace (often pronounced Camanasse) also revolted and this was followed by similar revolts in the central and western part of Timor. The ruler of Comnace successfully convinced the reinos of Lemac Huto, Cailaco, Leo-Huto, Sanir, Atsabe, Lei-Mear, Ai-Funaro, Diribate, Hermera and a number of other reinos to attack the Portuguese in Lifau. A number of leading rígulos from Servião and Belo in western Timor also joined the revolt against the Portuguese (Gunn 1999).

Four years later, another rebellion took place when the reinos of Dili and Manatuto openly challenged the advance of Governor Pedro de Mello who aimed to pacify the coastal littoral in 1729. De Mello's exploration made him the first high-ranking Portuguese official to ever come to Dili and Manatuto.
and paved the way for future relations between his successors and these reinos. Nevertheless, resistance against the Portuguese continued.

At the end of 1703, Governor Coelho Guerreiro, introduced to the vice-rei (vice-king) in Índia the following list:

Reinos allied with the government include: Sarao, Matarrufa, Hum, Lavai, Laga, Sama, Faturo, Fatuleti-luli, Viqueque, Samoro, Claco, Manatuto, Luca, Boilo, Vimasse, Mauta, Tutuluru, Lacluta, Alas, Camanassa, Matanião, Amanato, Amanesse, Amarrasse e Bibiluto.

Reinos which were rebels: Servião, Amabeno, Amanubão, Boro, Ação, Mena, Maubara, Mutael, Liquisá and other names which could not be identified.

In 1777, according to the report of Conde de Sarzedas, to the vice-Rei in Índia, the reinos were divided into.


In the province of Servião, there were: Drima, Ainana, Ascambiloca, Vaale (Wehali), Amanato, Mena, Amaneci, Vaibico (Wewiko), Ocani, Servião Mossique, Amabeno – where the ‘praça de Lifau’ located - Viome, Sacanava, Amanobão, Amarassa and Amassiao.

Afonso de Castro, who was the governor of Timor from 1859 to 1863, argued that in Portuguese territory there existed the following reinos:


In Servião - Ambeno and Oecussi.

Table 2.2: Different versions of reinos in Timor from 1703 to 1863 compiled from various sources. For further information see Matos’ account of East Timor between 1515 and 1769 (Matos 1974).

In 1732, a topasse rebel, Francisco Fernandes Vaerella, assisted by the reino of Vemasse, confronted another group of Portuguese who were on their littoral exploration towards the east. However, Varella was captured and forced to swear loyalty to the crown in a public display witnessed by church clerics on
16 March 1732 (Matos 1974). This joint effort between the topasse and indigenous domains suggest that alliances between the two were on the rise and provided a serious challenge to the colonial governors.

In Lifau, now the enclave of Oecussi, after pacifying the only Portuguese fort there, the topasse took control of the then capital of Timor. The control of the topasse along with some indigenous rulers weakened the Portuguese position in that region of Timor and made the former the only group with power, in both politics and trade. Evidently, with the help of several indigenous rulers, Francisco d’Hornay, António da Costa, de Quintiliano da Conceição and Lourenço de Mello, all topasse leaders, fatally poisoned the serving Governor (1760-1766) Dionísio Galvão Rebello in 1766 (Gunn 1999: 100) indicating that non-Portuguese forces were increasingly in control of the situation. This also compelled the incoming governor, who was to succeed Rebello, to return to Portugal.

Overall, the Cailaco rebellion, which began in 1719, inspired indigenous rebellions throughout the island and became the precursor of a long and continuous resistance against the Portuguese, not only politically but also against the latter’s attempt to impose a system of tax or fintas (tax in kind) on the indigenous rulers. Contemporary nationalists see the Cailaco war as the pedigree for later wars against the Portuguese.

- Colonial Establishment in the East and Later Implications

The Portuguese, following the arrival of the new Governor, de Mello, and in the face of total loss of control of the port of Lifau, decided to move to Dili on the night of 11 August 1769. Dom Alexandre of Motael, a former enemy, provided the plains area of Dili for the Portuguese to establish their administration and fort. His Christianised name suggests the role of the Church in linking this ruler with the Portuguese. After their arrival in Dili,
while fortifying their defences, the Portuguese sought to strengthen the existing relations and also to establish new alliances with local liurais or régulos. With the help of the Christianised liurais of Motael, Dom Alexandre, and Dom Filipe de Freitas Soares of Vemasse, the Portuguese formed alliances with around 42 other reis (liurai). The influence of these two Christianised rulers and other rulers was so significant to the Portuguese that Gunn argues:

The survival of the Portuguese in this distant part of the archipelago rested at least as much upon their ability to strike alliances with the local tributaries, the liurais or régulos in (East) Timor, as upon their military prowess (Gunn 1999: 108).

In later years, after the foundation of Dili, the Portuguese were able to secure key allies such as Motael, Dailor, Atsabe, Maubisse, Ermera, Liquisa, Laemean, Hera, Vemasse, Covailima, Balibo, Samoro Lacluta and Viqueque. The role of the Church became increasingly important in these years and was seen as an inseparable part of Portuguese expansion. The role of the Dominicans in baptising some of the liurais should not be underestimated, as without this practice the Portuguese would have found it hard to establish security. Despite opposition from some indigenous rulers, the Portuguese established additional Churches in East Timor. The missionaries built churches in Lifau and Manatuto, in Animata (Cailaco), Tullicao (Serviao), Vemasse, Laleia and Cagguium, Laclo and Lalora before the arrival of the colonial government (Gunn 1999: 108). 5

Nevertheless, this new alliance between the Portuguese and the indigenous kingdoms was unsustainable. During the term of Governor António Joaquim Garcia in 1869, from 44 sucos which were supposed to contribute taxes, only 23 sucos did so (Rocha 1994: 213). Whether this was a show of opposition to the imposed taxes or the inability of the Portuguese to compel them to pay

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5 See also Pastoral do Bispo de Malacca D. Fr. Geraldo de São Joseph, 24 Julho 1752, BGEI, No 25, 31 Marão, 1865 (cited in Gunn, 1999)
tax, it is almost certain that opposition to colonial policies remained significant, despite their formal allegiance. Although the Church had been asked to help and despite assurance from secured allies, successive rebellions took place in different parts of East Timor between 1769 and the early 1780s. Between 1782 and 1785, the reino of Luca revolted for the second time and successfully halted the advance of the Portuguese.\(^6\) In 1778 the reino of Belo (now in West Timor) and Manatuto also revolted and two years later, in 1790, Maubara and Sonba’i in West Timor also revolted against the Portuguese. In 1811, the reino of Motael rejected its allegiance with the Crown and decided to run its own affairs. In Freycinet’s account, quoted by Gunn (1999: 110), between 1769 and 1818, the Portuguese relied upon only 23 reinos. Around 42 of them failed to comply with the taxation system despite continuing to honour the king of Portugal (Freycinet 1827).

Other notable wars occurred between 1848 and 1852. In 1848, the reino of Ermera drove the Portuguese out of their territory. It was not until three years later, and only with reinforcements from Dili and Manatuto, that the Portuguese were able to reduce Ermera to ashes. This action included the killing of Ermera’s liurai by the then Governor, Olavio Monteiro Torres (1848-1851). Between 1851 and 1852, Dom Mateus, liurai of Sarau conspired with the Bugis and revolted against the Portuguese in an attempt at opposition, which was crushed. In later years (1852-1859), two rebellions occurred, first by the reino of Lamaquito and later by the reino of Manumera. In 1859, the liurai of Vemasse, Dom Domingos de Freitas Soares, son of a former key ally of the Portuguese, Dom Filipe de Freitas, revolted, but he was captured and deported to Lisbon. From 1859 onwards, District Military commands were established in each of the existing eleven districts (Gunn 1999: 160-161). From then on, isolated rebellions occurred throughout East Timor but these rebels

\(^6\) The war lasted for several months and prevented the Portuguese from marching towards the East Coast. The stiff resistance put up by the local reino led the Portuguese to dub it guerra de loucas or doidas (war of the crazy people) (Gunn 1999).
were unable to resist the Portuguese as key indigenous allies continued to support the colonial army in attacking its opponents.

After a period of internal ‘peace’, rivalries between the Dutch and Portuguese over the jurisdiction of trade territories continued. Under pressure from the Dutch and in an attempt to ease tension, the Portuguese governor Lopes de Lima agreed to discuss the division of their areas of control on Timor with his rival in 1848. Two years later in 1850, he agreed to cede the eastern part of Flores to the Dutch for 200 000 florin (80 000 florin payable immediately and 120 000 florin to be made later) (Boxer 1947; Fox 2000: 15). Governor Lopes de Lima was later recalled in disgrace to Portugal for his unrestrained action (Stapel 1955). Unable to rescind the Treaty, the Portuguese colonial government ratified it on 20 April 1859. This treaty drew up a geographical demarcation of respective sovereignties, dividing the island of Timor into two. The treaty was ratified by the Portuguese Chamber of Deputies in 1869 and executed in 1861. The ratification signalled the end of almost 200 years of rivalry between the two colonial governments over ‘their’ possessions in Timor.

Now concentrated on the eastern part of the island, the Portuguese continued to try to pacify the territory and interfered regularly in the internal affairs of key allies. In a number of cases, they also pitted indigenous reinos against each other. In 1863, the Portuguese government in Portugal, after a number of delays and changes, declared East Timor an Overseas Province with affiliation to Macau (Acto de 17 Setembro or Decree of 17 September). A seat was granted to East Timor in the Portuguese parliament in Macau on 18 March 1869, six years later.

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7 For an account on doubts on the agreement see Fox (2000: 12-18).
The overwhelming interference in indigenous kingdoms' internal affairs and the renewed imposition of tax had put a heavy burden on the reinos. Consequently, a number of major rebellions occurred again in 1861, during the time of Governor de Castro. Using a system similar to the cultur-stelsel implemented in Java by a VOC Governor Van Den Bosch, Governor Affonso de Castro tried to force the cultivation of coffee in the central and the western part of East Timor. It was expected that this cultivation would yield 20 per cent of total production to the Portuguese authorities between 1867 and 1894. This forced cultivation was characterised by a dozen revolts and the assassination of a governor, Alfredo de Lacerda e Maia (1885-1887) by the local moradores (recruits) on 3 March 1887 in Dili (Gunn 1999: 160-168). The small kingdoms of Laclo and Ulmera continued to resist but were crushed. In 1861 coffee was introduced into East Timor by de Castro (Gunn 1999: 163), and reinos in Liquisa, Ermera and Maubisse were forced to plant this new crop. As a result of the imposition of fintas, in 1867 another rebellion took place, this time by the kingdoms of Vemasse and Laga against Laleia, a key Portuguese ally. The Portuguese were able to quell the rebellion only after key indigenous allies such as Motael, Hera, Laculo and Manatuto provided assistance. Still, in 1867 another anti-tax rebellion took place in Lermean, which was still part of Maubara, but was also crushed.

A year later, in 1868, the kingdom of Covalima (now Suai), was joined by its neighbouring kingdoms which were loyal to the Dutch, and struck a blow against the Portuguese. The rebellion lasted a month before it was put down by the Crown with reinforcements from other indigenous allies in the east. The assassination of Governor Lacerda e Maia by the moradores on 3 March 1887 in Dili also highlighted renewed rebellion against the Portuguese. In 1893, Lacerda de Maia's successor, apart from trying to assert his command through tough military measures, sought to introduce more effective tax collection. However, as a result of this action, he had to face the revolt of the reino of Maubara in 1893. In this war, Maubara even seized Dare (on the
outskirts of Dili) and Fatuboro before reinforcements were channelled from Macau to quell the rebellion. Another revolt by the régulo of Atabai in the same year was also crushed.

While colonial literature portrays this resistance as ‘rebellions’, local East Timorese see them as the fighting for survival. Local narratives about these ‘wars’ can still be found among contemporary East Timorese in the form of ai-knanoik (lit., folk stories) or lia tuan (lit., old words). Although not detailing comprehensive stories about the past, such narratives certainly infuse ideas of a heroic struggle by their ancestors on contemporary East Timorese. It is important to note that political leaders, notably Xanana Gusmão, have since the 1980s, emphasised the heroism of the past, using phrases such as “in the past our ancestors fought wars” (uluk ita nia abon sira funu) in their speeches (see Gusmão 1998; Ojetil 2000; Ruak 2000; Gusmão 2000a; Gusmão 2000b).

The East Timorese associate and interpret their history vis-à-vis the colonial experience as the basis of their nationalism although the widely recognised history of local nationalism only began with the war of 1912.

IV. Portuguese period: 1912 – 1975

- First Nationalist Rebellion and Its Impact

The first well organised rebellion that, in the eyes of nationalists today, represents modern anti-colonial sentiment and saw the involvement of almost all reinos in East Timor against the Portuguese, occurred at the time of Governor Celestino da Silva (1894-1908). This war was organised and

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8 From my various conversations and discussions with East Timorese, both political activists and ordinary, the Guerra de Manufahi (The Manufahi War, the name refers to the place where it was organised) is seen as the most vivid example for today’s East Timorese in their fight for independence. It was seen as a nationwide revolt and as if carried out under the banner, and indeed the spirit of, East Timorese nationalism (field notes, 2000).
commanded by Dom Duarte, régulo of Manufahi and a former key ally of the Portuguese in 1894. A number of other kingdoms were also involved in the rebellion under the direct command of Dom Duarte, Lamaquitos, Agassa, Volguno, Luro-Bote, Fatumane, Fohorem, Lalaba, Cassabau, Cailaco, Obulo, Marobo and others. This ‘national’ rebellion proved to be costly to the Portuguese and until 1896, more than 20,000 patacas, the then currency of Macau and Timor, was used to buy ammunition, food and other equipment for the army. In 1900, facing the defection of allies, a lack of medicine on the eve of a cholera endemic, and imminent massacre from the Portuguese forces, the kingdom of Manufahi surrendered (Gunn 1999: 171).

In 1902, the kingdoms of Aileu and Letefoho renewed their rebellion and provided the impetus for other kingdoms to revolt, namely Quelicai in 1904 and Manufahi in 1907. What is important is that the post-1894 wars did not aim to crush the Portuguese colonial government, the malae-mutin (lit., foreign-white) alone, but with the help of the malae-metan (lit., foreign-black), a reference to the colonial subjects, the men from Africa, India and the moradores, a group of indigenous recruits who were often used as paramilitaries and tax collectors by the Portuguese.

In 1911 Dom Boaventura, the son of Dom Duarte led another rebellion continuing his father’s six-year legacy. A number of reinos and kingdoms including Cailaco, Atsabe, Balibo, Raimean, Bibisusso, Alas and Turiscai were involved. Inso (1939), as quoted in Gunn (1991: 181), states:

Eventually, on the 27 May, the rebels mounted an heroic stand in the mountains of Cablac [known locally as Cablaki – 2362 m.], a place of plunging ravines and high rocky crags or pedras. Here, the rebels constructed a tranqueira of wood and stonework as a way of reinforcing their “natural fortress”, all in all suggesting sophisticated organisation and military skills (Inso 1939: 49).

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9 The name “Dom Duarte” implies that he had been baptised as Catholic, hence his previous allegiance to the Portuguese Crown.
But several weeks later, after receiving reinforcements from Macau – with two ships including Pátria, and from Mozambican troops, the Portuguese were able to march on Cablaki, massacring more than 3,000 and capturing around 4,000 people. Dom Boaventura, despite escaping unharmed, later surrendered to the malae. Gunn notes:

Where the Timorese rebels were effective was undoubtedly as a running guerrilla force. The siege on 11 June-21 July 1912 of Cablac, the sacred mountain redoubt of the Manufaistas, conjures up the battle of Camenasse hundreds of years earlier; a doomed but mythically heroic stand (Gunn 1999: 182).

Following this success, throughout 1912, under the incoming Governor Filomeno de Câmarra, the colonial authorities moved to crush other rebellions that, although operating independently, were still seen as a ‘thread’ of the Manufahi war. These were the reino of Betano and the kingdom of Oecussi, Baucau and Quelicai. The revolts of the 1894-1912 period devastated the regions of Timor and cost approximately 90,000 lives.

Thus, in a conversation I had with Vasco da Gama, the leader of OPJLATIL (Organização Popular Juventude Lorico Asswain Timor Leste) he said:

I only respect Dom Boaventura. He was the one who brought all Timorese – from east to west – to fight colonialism. After him, I also show my respect to Nicolau Lobato, Xanana Gusmão, Konis Santana and David Alex who fought on behalf of East Timor, not on their respective groups (Pers. Comm 27 August 2002).10

East Timor politicians who I conversed with during my fieldwork, saw the Manufahi War as the revival of the East Timorese nationalist movement in modern times. Indeed, during the resistance against Indonesia, the heroic saga of the Manufahi wars – and others – was often cited in letters from

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10 Vasco recognised the fact that despite their different ethno-linguistic background; people like Boaventura (Manufahi, Mambai), Nicolau Lobato (Bazartete, Mambai), Xanana (Laleia, Galole), Konis Santana (Lospalos, Fataluku) and David Alex (Baucau, Makassae) fought with the spirit of Timor nationalism and had not only defended their respective groups’ interests.
guerrillas to students in the cities to set the spirit of struggle in motion for the new generation.

In my own assessment, the fall of Boaventura marked the initial period of the decline of moral power for the liurai, prior to the devastating effect of the Portuguese in post-1912 and the effect of the Indonesian administration between 1975 and 1999. In those periods, the Portuguese replaced a number of liurai but recognised the ranking system within an existing political organisation, whereas Indonesia dismantled the existing traditional system and replaced it with a completely new administrative system. The decline of the power of the liuraí coincided with establishment of education for their children, a phenomenon which then provided room for some of those ought-to-be elite to assume new roles when anti-colonial sentiment came to the fore in the 1960s and 1970s.
The Impact of Change in Portugal on Education and Nationalism

The revolutionary change of government in Portugal in 1910 where the republicans ousted the monarchy, moved the Portuguese government to discourage former 'coercive' policies in its colonies, including East Timor. However, in 1926, another military coup successfully overthrew the republican government and in 1928, a former economics professor and finance minister, António de Oliveira Salazar, was appointed President of Portugal. His regime, which remained in power until 1974, was known as *Estado Novo* or the New Order government. Throughout the *Estado Novo* period, in which Salazar acted like a dictator, the pacification of Portuguese colonies continued and a high level military presence in the colonies was maintained.

This pacification also saw the restoration of Catholic missions throughout the territory. The work of these missionaries had been put on hold due to the impact of the political turmoil between 1894 and 1912 (The Manufahi war). Among these were the mission in Lahane in Dili which was responsible for the north of East Timor, and another in Soibada on the south coast, run by the Jesuits. Catholic schools that were opened as far back as 1877 and closed due to various rebellions, reopened (Matos 1974). One school that was opened for the sons of *régulos* in 1864 but later closed due to war, was also reopened.

On 19 February 1942, the Japanese Royal army attacked and occupied Dili in the pursuit of its Great Asian war. Around 400 Australian commandos with the help of the East Timorese fought against the Japanese. In only thirteen months of occupation, the Japanese lost around 1,500 personnel and some 40,000 East Timorese perished. Portugal, which opted to remain neutral during WW II, suffered economically (Singh 1995: 7). With this neutral stance, the Portuguese government was able to carry on its work uninterrupted until...
the end of the war. After WW II, Portugal tried unsuccessfully to recover its territories lost in the 1898 Treaty (Matos 1974).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
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<th>Year</th>
<th>Founder</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Recipients</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
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<td>Seminary</td>
<td>1738</td>
<td>Dominicans</td>
<td>Oecússi</td>
<td>Priesthood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Seminary</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Dominicans</td>
<td>Manatuto</td>
<td>Priesthood</td>
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<td>Government</td>
<td>Dili-Manatuto</td>
<td>Son of Regúlos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
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<td>Diocese</td>
<td>Bidau-Hera</td>
<td>Catechists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Community School</td>
<td>1877-79</td>
<td>Church</td>
<td>Dili</td>
<td>Catechists for Chinese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Community School</td>
<td>1877-79</td>
<td>Church</td>
<td>Luca, Alas &amp; Southcoast</td>
<td>Children/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Jesuit College</td>
<td>1877-79</td>
<td>Church</td>
<td>Luana, Dili</td>
<td>Sons of regúlos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Colegio Lahane</td>
<td>1879</td>
<td>B. Medeiros</td>
<td>Lahane-Dili</td>
<td>Sons of regúlos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Colegio Instituto Canossiana</td>
<td>1879</td>
<td>B. Medeiros</td>
<td>Balide-Dili</td>
<td>Boys School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Escola Canossiana</td>
<td>1877-79</td>
<td>Church</td>
<td>Bidau</td>
<td>Girls School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Escola de Motael</td>
<td>1890-91</td>
<td>Church</td>
<td>Motael</td>
<td>Boys and Girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Escola de Baucau</td>
<td>1890</td>
<td>Church</td>
<td>Baucau</td>
<td>Boys and Girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Escola de Manatuto</td>
<td>1890</td>
<td>Church</td>
<td>Manatuto</td>
<td>Boys and Girls</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.3: Primary and Community schools before 1900s in East Timor (Compiled by the author from various sources).

Interestingly, the educated elite, apart from beginning to be involved in the administration, also initiated covert anti-colonial activities. Some of them began to openly challenge the colonial power and question its policies. This resulted in widespread crackdowns and tight security control by Policía Internacional de Defesa do Estado (International Police for the Defense of the State: PIDE), in those years (Hill 2000). One of the outcomes of this challenge was the 1959 revolt in Watolari, a sub-district of Viqueque.

- The 1959 Rebellion and Post-Modern Nationalism

In 1959, a rebellion broke out in Watolari, a sub-district of Viqueque. The rebellion began on 7 June 1959. Some writers claim that the rebellion was allegedly influenced by the Indonesian communists who crossed over to East Timor several years before, after being chased out by the Soekarno government (Hill 2000: 62). Other versions see the rebellion as one aimed at...
protesting against the colonial government's policy which did little to improve the living standards of the East Timorese, such as providing access to education, jobs and equal rights before the law (Pers. Comm. Julio Alfaro, March 2000). However, the crux of this rebellion is that it took a different form. Unlike the previous ethnically mobilised revolts, this rebellion embraced the notion of a nationalist war because the participants included young intellectuals, some civil servants and traditional rulers, suggesting a combination of a much broader concept for those involved. In the words of the last Portuguese governor in East Timor, Lemos Pires, it was a combination of 'anti-colonial, anti Portuguese and tribal elements' (Gunn 1999: 260). After successfully crushing this revolt, in which more that 200 people were reportedly shot dead (Pers. Comm. Julio Alfaro, March 2000), many East Timorese were sent into exile in the former Portuguese colonies such as Mozambique, Angola and Guinea Bissau. The revolt served, however, as the basis for new nationalist groups to emerge in East Timor particularly in the 1960s and the 1970s.

In 1961, an isolated and almost unknown movement was declared in Batugade on the north coast of Timor. A Timorese, known only as Mao Klau, a common indigenous Mambai name, led the movement. On 9 April 1961, Mau Klau hoisted a national flag in Batugade and declared Timor a republic. While the details and background of this event are little known, Mau Klau made no reference to either east or west Timor. The uprising was defeated by the Portuguese, leaving Mau Klau and his supporters in tatters, and he fled to West Timor. In 1963, Mau Klau declared his government in West Timor, a government which became known as the United Republic of Timor. As a consequence, Mau Klau faced expulsion by the Indonesian government and disappeared from the political scene (Martins 2002).

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11 Julio Alfaro's father, who was also involved in the 'rebellion', was captured, sent into exile, and died in Angola.
Plate 2.2: Mau Klau hoisted this flag when declaring Republic of Timor in 1961. Note that the flag bears similar characteristics to the flag adopted by FRETILIN which became the flag of East Timor (Photo: see Martins 2002).

Mau Klau’s movement went almost unnoticed in the modern historiography of Timor. Given the unclear circumstances surrounding the birth of this ‘nationalist’ movement, many Timorese remained unaware as to whether it had really been his intention to free East Timor. Nevertheless, the movement shows that resistance against the colonial government with a nationalist perspective was on the rise during that period.

In the wake of Revolução das Flores or the ‘Carnation Revolution’ on 25 April 1974 in Portugal a new military junta overthrew the dictatorship of António de Spinola (1968-1974), the successor to Dr António de Oliveira Salazar who ruled Portugal for forty years (1928-1968). A policy of decolonization was initiated through the Portuguese Governor in East Timor at the time, Mário Lemos Pires. In early April 1974, a centre right party União Democrática Timorense (UDT) emerged and advocated a period of autonomy with Portugal before independence. Only on 5 May 1974, did the Portuguese governor formally announce a new political platform allowing for the establishment of political parties, thus initiating the first stage of the decolonization process in Chapter Two 77
East Timor. Subsequently, on 20 May the same year, a number of underground nationalists – most of whom were from the educated elite and were children of liurais (local rulers) – formed a more radical movement, \textit{Associação Social Democrástical Timorense} (ASDT). ASDT opposed any kind of autonomy and called for outright independence.\textsuperscript{13} ASDT changed its name to \textit{Frente Revolucionaria de Timor Leste Independente} (FRETILIN) on 11 September 1974. In July 1974, another smaller political party (\textit{Associação Popular Democrática Timorense e Indonésia}, APODETI) which called for an association with Indonesia for a period of ten years or so before deciding on a self-rule direction, was also created. By November 1974, three other political parties had emerged: \textit{Trabalhista} (the Labour party), KOTA (\textit{Klibur Oan Timor Ass’wain}) and ADITA (\textit{Associação Democrática Integração Timor-Leste a Australia}). Few political parties' activities were well known to the public (Babo Soares 2000a: 58) during these pre-1975 events. One of the founders of APODETI, said in Dili on 14 August 2000 that APODETI had not had a chance to start its political activities due to the Indonesian invasion and subsequent annexation (Pers. Comm. Frederico de Almeida, 2000).\textsuperscript{14} ADITA, which was headed by Henrique Perreira, aimed to integrate East Timor into Australia. However, the party received very little support from the public, never carried forward its platform, and thus, disappeared soon after its establishment. Interestingly, among these political parties, FRETILIN was able to attract the support of most of the East Timorese military cadets within the Portuguese army. In 1974, although FRETILIN and UDT formed a coalition, it was short-lived. Fearing further outbreak and control by FRETILIN, UDT, under the command of João Carrascalão and Francisco

\textsuperscript{13} Among these were Francisco Xavier do Amaral (a prince from Turiscai), the Lobato brothers (son of liurais of Bazartete), Mari Alkatiri, José Ramos Horta and others. Visit also \textit{Radio Netherlands} \url{http://www.rsi.com.sg/en/programmes/wire%20stories/South%20East%20Asia/2002/05/05_20_01.htm}

\textsuperscript{14} On 14 August 2000, some former Apodeti members also added the term ‘pro-referendum’ to APODETI making it APODETI Pro-Referendum. In his speech, the leader, Frederico de Almeida stated that APODETI strongly advocated integration with Indonesia only after the self-determination process has been carried out. However, the process was interrupted by the invasion by Indonesia in 1975. Now that the people had voted for independence, APODETI called for the recognition of the wishes of the people.

\textbf{Chapter Two} 78
Lopes da Cruz (Subroto 1997: 10-79), who later became Indonesian ambassador at large and then ambassador to Greece, launched a coup on 11 August 1975 aimed at taking control from FRETILIN (Dunn 1996: 151). With army reinforcements from East Timorese sympathisers in the Portuguese army FRETILIN regained control from UDT without any major confrontation. The leaders of UDT, including Francisco Lopes da Cruz, the Carrascalão brothers (Manuel, Mário and João) fled to Indonesian West Timor. Likewise, the leaders of KOTA and Trabalhista also fled to West Timor raising allegations that both groups were the liman ho aín (lit., hands and feet) of UDT. Subroto (1997) argues that these two small parties also part of the anti-FRETILIN coalition who in subsequent months declared allegiance to Indonesia. Around 40,000 people accompanied them and later remained as refugees. Francisco Lopes da Cruz then involved heavily in the negotiations, which led to the Indonesian invasion of East Timor on 7 December 1975. After overthrowing UDT, FRETILIN remained in sole control of East Timor. It was able to mobilise the population and with armed personnel on its side, the party was able to carry out its ‘grassroots’ development program between August and December 1975.

Other political groups, which were then defeated by this political party including UDT, APODETI, KOTA and Trabalhista, fled to West Timor. On 28 November 1975 FRETILIN unilaterally declared the Independence of East Timor.

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15 There is a dispute as to who was the ‘war commander’ of UDT in 1974 and 1975. Writers including James Dunn (1996: 147-146) argued that João Carrascalão was the man in charge of UDT army during 1974-1975 civil war, whereas Subroto (1997), a key witness and journalist, argued that Francisco Lopes da Cruz, was also involved directly as UDT commander in the field during that period. He went further to say that when retreating to West Timor after being cornered by Fretilin in Dili, da Cruz headed the forces in Ermera, Maliana and Balibo including Batugade 1 and João commanded another group, which covered Liquiçá and Maubara (1997: 38).

16 With the exception of myself, all my parents, brothers and a sister took refuge in West Timor for eleven months. They came back to East Timor after Indonesia invaded and took control of East Timor.

17 In a televised debate (TVTL) just days before the election on 30 August 2001, UDT defended its action stating that as an Anti-Communist movement it had a moral duty to fight the rogue Communist elements that had penetrated FRETILIN at the time. The speaker pointed to two names, Major Jonatas and Major Mota, both of whom were members of Portuguese Communist political party (Fieldnotes, August, 2001).
Timor. It then set up a government with a cabinet of eleven ministers with seven secretaries of state. Although the appointment of the head of the government and the ministers was done entirely by the Comite Central da FRETILIN or FRETILIN Central Committee (CCF), the government had a semi-presidential system (see Table 2.4).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Name/Person</th>
<th>Portfolio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Francisco Xavier do Amaral</td>
<td>President of RDTL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>Nicolau dos Reis Lobato</td>
<td>Prime Minister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>Ministers/Name</td>
<td>Portfolio</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Abilio de Araújo</td>
<td>Economic and Social Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>José Gonçalves</td>
<td>Economic Co-ordination and Statistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Rogério Tiago Lobato</td>
<td>Defence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Alarico Fernandes</td>
<td>Home Affairs and Security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>José Ramos Horta</td>
<td>Foreign Affairs and External Information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Hamis Bassarewan</td>
<td>Education and Culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Juvenal Inácio</td>
<td>Finance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Mau-Lear (António Carvarino)</td>
<td>Justice</td>
</tr>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Sa'he (Vicente Reis)</td>
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<td>Eduardo Carlos dos Anjos</td>
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<td>IV</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Mau-Kruma</td>
<td>National Defence (First vice-secretary)</td>
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<td>National Defence (Second vice-secretary)</td>
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<td>Domingos Ribeiro</td>
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</tr>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Fernando Carmo</td>
<td>Security</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.4: Composition of the cabinet of RDTL proclaimed on 28 November 1975 (Source: Compiled by the Author).

Facing the imminent invasion of Indonesia, three days after independence was declared, the CCF sent a number of ministers abroad to lobby the international community for recognition of the new country. Among these were José Ramos Horta (Foreign Affairs), Rogerio Lobato (Defence Minister), and Mari Alkatiri (State and Political Affairs). Abilio Araújo (Economic and Social Affairs) was in Portugal at the time (Ramos-Horta 1987: 100). On 7 December 1975, the Indonesian army invaded East Timor.
FRETILIN led the war against Indonesia for the next 12 years (1975-1988). The war was carried on by an expanded nationalist group from 1987 onwards (CNRM and CNRT, see Chapters 4 & 6), a war which contemporary East Timorese refer to as the last stage of their nationalist struggle, the funu for national Independence.

These 24 years constitute the war for liberation (Guerra da libertação) and this is proudly referred to as the culmination of previous wars against colonialism. The two previous wars – Cailaco and Manufahi – served as the stages in which the sense of nationalism evolved.

V. Local Understanding of History: Closing Remarks

Throughout this chapter, the historical stages which served as the foundation of Timorese nacionalismo are characterised both by outsiders’ intervention in the territory and internal political dynamics. While internal dynamics were seen as a normal process, the intervention of foreign forces is understood, as will be detailed in Chapter 3, to have contributed to the formation of the sense of nationhood. Starting with the war or rebellion led by the liurai or régulo of Cailaco and a number of other indigenous kingdoms or reinos, the history of the East Timorese struggle reached a turning point with the rebellion of Manufahi in 1910-1912. Apart from compelling the Portuguese to soften its ‘coercive approach’, the Manufahi revolt and death of more than 3,000 people have been a source of inspiration for later nationalist movements.

While between 1769 and 1912, indigenous domains remained largely divided and independent from the one another, their continuing resistance to the colonial government and its apparatus was perceived as part of the ‘building up’ of later nationalism. A sense of understanding and good relations was evident, mostly in eastern Timor when Portugal moved its capital from Lifau...
to Dili. Local resistance and revolts were commonplace throughout the history of the colonial period. There were times when local rulers (liurai) opted to become allies of the Portuguese but there are also times when they jointly rejected political domination or the imposition of tax. The best example of this is the Manufahi war, which contemporary East Timorese refer to as the precursor of modern East Timorese nationalism in particular because it was led by a ruler with ‘national vision’.

Between 1912 and 1970, Portugal pacified the whole country. However, from a nationalist perspective, this control did not prevent the East Timorese from fighting for their rights. Indeed, unlike the previous open challenges to the Portuguese, this period saw the emergence of a pacified (non-violent) resistance with a more nationalist character than the previously ethnically oriented rebellions. In 1970, for example, a small-educated elite with nationalist ideas including people like Xavier do Amaral, Nicolau Lobato, Jose Ramos Horta and Mari Alkatiri established an independence underground group in Dili (see Radio Singapore International 2002). They began to openly challenge the Portuguese government by demonstrating in the streets of Dili. After the political change in Portugal in 1974, these nationalist activists came to prominence and for a short time realised their dreams.

These developments have contributed a great deal to the accumulation of the sense of belonging, as well as shaping the views about past heroism among later generation East Timorese. While most of the history of the nation, known today as East Timor, was shaped very much by colonial hegemony, local resistance in the past continued to be told verbally from one generation to another. Folk stories (ai-knanoik) and local narratives continue to emphasise

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18 Beginning with the failed protest and rebellion of 1959, later nationalist activists – most of whom belonged to the educated elite – were able to develop much better co-ordinated underground activities, although little known uprisings such as the failed attempt by Mau Klau in 1961 continued.
the history of societies' forbears as successful experiences. Not surprisingly, reference to the Cailaco and Manufahi wars create a sense of pride among contemporary East Timorese. The next chapter details East Timorese interpretation of their history and their perception of the proud past.
Chapter 3

Recovering the Time of Long Ago: Perceiving Nationalism through the Past

I. Introduction

History, including perceptions of the past, occupies a central position in debates about nationalism (Gellner 1983; Smith 1983; Anderson 1991). Thus, the East Timorese refer to history, and in particular the history of resistance against outsiders, as the roots of their *nacionalismo*. By resistance history, I mean the struggle against colonialism in the past by the *beiala* (lit., ancestors, forbears, predecessor), or as the East Timorese also put it, the *asswain* (lit., the warriors). In a way, when referring to nationalism, one is taking the East Timorese back to the achievements in *tempo uluk* (lit., the time of long ago), the 'glorious past', and endeavouring to understand its relevance to the present. This is because the current sense of nation is perceived to emanate from, and to have been stimulated by, the achievements of the past. By 'glorious past', I mean all ideas about the history of resistance, a history that is proudly recited from one generation to another. Understandings of the glorious past can also be gained from the historiography detailing the resistance against the Portuguese.¹

Building on the history presented in Chapter 2, this chapter discusses East Timorese interpretations of the past and their role in the shaping of the idea of nation. Like Anderson's (1991) elaboration of the evolution of nationalism, which highlights the role of history in the *imagining* of the nation, the discussion in this chapter encompasses the East Timorese view of nationalism in the context of their history.

¹ The word resistance used here is opposed to the word rebellion as found widely in Portuguese literature about the history of East Timor.
Today's East Timorese see their struggle against Indonesia as the zenith of the evolution of the idea of nation, which began with the early wars against the colonial government in the 1700s and was accentuated further by the war of Manufahi in the 1900s. In this context, traditional oral histories and local historiographies are taken as the crux of their interpretation. Timorese political leaders have often invoked such histories in their speeches, and Xanana Gusmão, the leader of Timorese liberation struggle, is the most vivid example.

The patriotic engagement of thousands of freedom fighters and anonymous citizens in this glorious struggle for the independence of our country is the expression of our ancestors' fighting spirit over centuries. The blood of the Timorese Nation is made of heroic deeds and the abnegation of all those who have given their lives in the name of Freedom. It has been a difficult process, a source of mourning, destruction of families that marked generations (Gusmão 1999).

Thus, the intention of this chapter is to describe the way East Timorese politicians and other political actors perceive the past and how nationalism is constructed through phases of the past. Both oral and written histories are used as the bases for their interpretations, and are regarded as important in the creation of contemporary East Timor nationalism, the notion that underlies the concept of East Timor unity. Most of these political actors live in Dili, the capital, but unlike their village compatriots they do not possess a rich knowledge of the ai-knanoik or oral history of the past. Rather their perception and interpretation of the past is based on the limited knowledge they have gained from partial histories and narratives.

II. The Setting: Perceptions of the Past

In preference to the previous Chapters, both political actors and activists perceive nacionalismo as a process inspired by, and developed along, the course of history.2

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2It developed into maturity through the struggle for freedom. To these groups, nationalism is the trunk (unification) of various reinos (lit., people, princedoms, kingdoms) or ethnic groups or scattered roots, the latter also representing differences within society. The resistance against colonialism is believed to
Most of these political actors and activists were of my age and older (25-40), but all referred proudly to past resistance struggles particularly during the Portuguese colonial period as inspiration for later struggles against Indonesia. Nationalism was thus interpreted as a process which evolved through different phases of resistance against outsiders.³

From another perspective, the past, uluk, or beiala nia tempo (lit., time of the ancestors) is distinguished from the time of struggle. For a much older generation, beiala nia tempo refers to the period before the arrival of the Europeans. Interpretation of the European period varies from one place to another in East Timor since the occupation and settlement began gradually at different periods in different places. The assumption among the older generation of East Timorese is directed to the presence and influence of Europeans in the period when their forbears had lived. It was a time when traditional social and political structures were intact and untouched by outside influences.⁴ In September 2000, I had the chance to discuss this issue at length with one of my informants, the late João Nunes, who was also known in Dili as mestre (lit., professor) for his broad knowledge about local culture and, as locals put it, ‘the East Timorese way of thinking’.⁵ At the time, East Timor was still recovering from the September 1999 violence and conflict, stealing and street gangs were prevalent, despite the presence have successfully unified these roots and given shape to the imagining of the nation (trunk), the basis of a much later concept of unity.

³ In a botanical idiom, it starts from the roots, sprouts to become a trunk and eventually branches out to present the image of a tree (nation). I will deal with this issue in the latter part of this chapter.

⁴ This thesis is popularly known as uluk beiala sira nia tempo (lit., at the time of ancestors). Proponents of this view – most of whom derived their interpretation from narratives and myths – dismiss the historical influence of the Chinese, Islam and others. Perhaps, the presence of the latter left little impact on the lives of the locals thus, unlike in Belo, West Timor (Therik, 1995), no narratives or local folk-stories ever mentioned the presence, let alone influence, of these groups in the pre-Portuguese period. See for example the works of David Hicks (1971; 1976) and Elizabeth Traube (1986), neither of which made any specific reference to Chinese or Islamic influence although acknowledging that in the cosmology of the East Timorese, the latter trace their origins to outsiders from other parts of the island.

⁵ João Nunes passed away in Dili, November 2002, when I was writing this chapter. He was the son of a liurai or radja of Manutasi in Ainaro, and was a teacher during both the Portuguese and Indonesian administrations. His opinion reflected the fact that he spent much of his childhood and youth in his village, Manutasi, a kingdom in what is now part of the district of Ainaro.
of International Civilian Police. João Nunes, then in his 70s, was disgusted by the situation the country faced and blamed it on the Indonesian government, which had destroyed almost 70 per cent of the country. In reflecting on this life, he paused again and again to complain that his country was experiencing a kind of life unlike any it had experienced in the past, the time of the ancestors. It is from this point in the conversation that the story of the past begins, a story about the experience of life in the past, which, João Nunes explained, is absent in present life.

João Nunes began his narrative with life during the Portuguese colonial period and made reference to stories he had heard from his paternal grandfather when he was only a child. Emphasising only the positive side of the past, these stories covered not only the chronological stories of past life, but also the rules of social behaviour and certain compulsory social arrangements designed to ensure stability of society. While these references are located in the Portuguese colonial period, state influence remained remote to most reinos in East Timor, at least until 1970s. Also, such references were made in comparison with the post-independence period and attributed the disappointment to the ‘outsiders intervention’.

In the literature, João Nunes’ account is not foreign to societies in this region. In many Southeast Asian societies, perceptions of the past are used to reconstruct societies’ histories, their social structures, and their relations with the past.6 While perceptions are the result of thought and reflection, they are also the result of an interpretation of both oral and written history.7 Recalling the past can also serve as a tool to revive memories and to remind people, not only of the life of the ancestors but also of the facts of social life in the past. Undeniably, such perceptions reconstruct society’s consciousness of the past and help it to understand the past’s relevance to the present (Fox 1979). Both historiography and oral history present a

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6 Antony Reid and David Marr discuss a great range of issues related to perceptions of the past in their book entitled Perceptions of the Past in Southeast Asia (Reid and Marr (eds), 1979).

7 ibid.
moral validation for contemporary institutions and political interests and can serve as a basis for the creation of new values (Marr and Reid 1979).

For a community like East Timor, plagued by so many destructive historical events, the perception of history is an important element in the search for identity. The struggle against Indonesia is commonly said to have revived this identity and is viewed widely as the culmination of the idea of nation. The process of imagining the nation commenced in the time of beiala, developed over the course of history and continues to mark its relevance to present circumstances. The East Timorese used to say:

Houri uluk, houri wa’in
Oan Timor Ass’ wain

From long ago, from time immemorial
The children of Timor were warriors/heroes.8

This often-quoted verse explains the importance of history in East Timorese life. Remembering the ‘glorious past’, the East Timorese believe, can strengthen the spirit of nationalism and patriotism. The time of my fieldwork coincided with the time referred to as the culmination of East Timorese nationalism, the end of war and the end of fighting against colonialism. One could not ignore the period’s general sense of euphoria. Conversations regarding the situation were characterised by references to the past. It is not surprising that even one and a half years after my fieldwork, the independence leader Xanana Gusmão still refers to the past as the foundation of his nation’s future (Gusmão 2002). References to the past remind people about and also accentuate society’s current condition. Juvêncio Martins uttered the following:

In the ‘past’, our ancestors were true warriors. But, we must not forget that our forbears were ‘ignorant’ and it was because of this that the colonialists defeated our ancestors. ‘Now’, we ‘know’ who we are and we are ‘aware’ of our importance as human beings, we should find our way to govern ourselves. We are still warriors ourselves (Pers. Comm. Juvencio Martins, September 2000).

8 This verse is often used in chants, war dances and symbols representing East Timor. During Indonesian occupation of East Timor (1975-1999), it featured in the emblem of the province.
Among political activists and actors, recounting the past is a way to reclaim history. Local exegeses explain that history is worth remembering in order to establish a future. Contemporary East Timorese usually seek to compare today’s phenomena with what happened in the past, regardless of the kind of evidence the past presents. Thus, the East Timorese say, if our ancestors were warriors (asswain), so are we. Recounting and interpreting the past and also determining its relevance to the present is common in conversation, discussion and public speeches by politicians. Juvêncio explains:

Understanding tempo-uluk [history] is a must in order to understand the present. Understanding history provides an impetus to understand history and to defend it. Through history, we find our identity and how our nationalism came into being (Pers. Comm. Juvêncio Martins, September 2000).

Contemporary East Timorese see the history of resistance as the most important element in the formation of Timorese nationalism, for it is the root of their identity, their liberation and the foundation of their country. To explain in detail, let me now delve into the classification of history and the identification of nationalism in history.

III. Interpretation of Past Political History: The Foundations of Nacionalismo

- The Beiala Outlook

In preference to literary accounts of East Timorese nationalism (Jolliffe 1978a; Lutz 1978a; Anderson 1993), contemporary East Timorese embrace a different way of looking at history. While they are conscious of the sequence of events in history, their classification is made to correspond with and distinguish between those people present in the territory. By people, I refer to both East Timorese and foreigners. Thus, when referring to the past, contemporary East Timorese point to two different periods. The first is the pre-European period and the second is, as referred to by Ramos-Horta, funu, or the colonial period (Ramos-Horta 1987).
In local exegeses, life in the beiala period is portrayed as peaceful, calm and governed by the ukun (lit., rule, regulate) and banđu (lit., forbidden) or customary law (Martins [Undated]). Emphasis is placed on the point in the time of the ancestors' life that was peaceful and bountiful. There was no shortage of food and the people lived a good life. This is the kind of life later interrupted by the invasion of outsiders (Pers. Comm. João Nunes, September 2000). In public conversations, people refer back to the period of beiala as the time of rai diak (lit., earth/soil good) or peaceful times without making a reference to the opposite period, rai a'at (lit., bad earth/soil) or bad times. The colonial period is generally referred to as the time of war, famine and so on (see also Babo Soares 2004).

Plate 3.1: Uma lulik of Lautem, tangible evidence of the past times  
(Photo: James J. Fox).

The past is remembered through the power of tia lulik (lit., sacred words) in the form of ritual chants, narratives or ai-knanoik (lit., ai tree, wood and knanoik, songs), and through tangible evidence such as local political organisation, traditional authority and structure in general, all of which offer glimpses of the 'glorious past'. In other
words, the past is understood through the power of words, such as those used in poetry, and tangible evidence provided by the existing traditional social structure.

The structure of an uma-lulik (lit., sacred house), for example, symbolises not only a dwelling place of the past but also a place that provides various explanations about the past. An uma-lulik could have been a ritual place, such as a meeting place where lia moris-lia mate (words life-words dead) or the matters of life and death were discussed. An uma-lulik thus recalls the life in the past time of the ancestors.

Such perceptions are also reflected in the way political actors interpret their cause. Their readings of political phenomena are made in such a way that they correspond to the ‘power’ of the past, as recited in narratives and folk-stories. They argue that there were times during the struggle when they thought the struggle against Indonesia was in vain, especially when the international community gave no help to them between 1975 and the 1990s. The fact that East Timor was sealed off by Indonesia from the rest of the world, and the fact that most leaders were killed during that period exacerbated this frustration. In such moments, relying on vision, experience and history was the only way to sustain one’s courage and determination.9 The commander of FALINTIL, now Brigadier General Taur Matan Ruak of FDTL, was shown on Portuguese television after his platoon mounted an assault on an Indonesian military convoy saying that ‘Timor nia lulik maka’as duni’ (lit., the lulik of the East Timorese is stronger than the enemies’).10 In other words, by relying on lulik the East Timorese guerrillas would be ‘safe’ from any hazard in their endeavour since, according to Taur Matan Ruak, the East Timorese are

9 Falur Rate Laek, a commander of FALINTIL uttered this comment in a discussion held by Yayasan HAK in March 2000.
10 When Taur Matan Ruak and the late David Alex led an attack on an Indonesia convoy in 20 August 1991, the attack was captured in the footage of western cameramen. Taur Matan Ruak used this very phrase, a phrase interpreted locally as the Ghosts and Ancestors of the East Timorese will never allow the enemy to rest until their children have achieved independence. This footage was shown by Portuguese television, RTP International on the day Bishop Belo and Jose Ramos-Horta were awarded the 1996 Nobel Prize.
protected by their ancestors’ spirits. References to the souls of ancestors do not only help construct the worldly/cosmos relationship but are an acknowledgment of the past, the ancestors, who are believed to guard their children even today, and particularly in times of need.

Likewise, city-based political actors and politicians are inclined to relate the past to current political developments. To them, had there not been wars against the colonialists, contemporary East Timorese would not have the mata-dalan (lit., eye path/way), ‘guidance’ to carry on the struggle to the end. The interesting point here is that these political actors – and the subjects of this thesis – live mostly in Dili. However, this does not mean that their links with the traditional ways of life have been severed. Nor does it mean that they have failed to respect kinship ties, their uma-lulik, rate (lit., graveyard) of their ancestors and their clans’ ritual ceremonies. In spite of their ‘modern’ lives in the capital, political actors and activists continue to observe customary practices, a fact evident from their regular visits to uma-lulik, and their attendance at koremetan (lit., kore untie and metan black), a symbolic release of black cloth to mark the end of the mourning period of a dead relative within the clan. Likewise, reverence to the rate of the ancestors and observance of the rules of marriage (fetosá-umane) are part of the relationship between individuals and their ahi-matan (lit., ahi fire and matan eye), hearth or fire place, a reference to one’s place of origin.

It is not surprising that such relics vividly bring to mind the histories of the ancestors. Yearly visits, for example, show respect towards ahi-matan and uma-lulik. Regular trips allow city politicians to communicate with the elders in the village and

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11 Releasing the black cloth usually takes place after a one-year period of mourning. While it is not clear whether this is a result of Portuguese or Chinese influence, the practice of ending the mourning period is found commonly among the East Timorese societies.

12 This reference is made to East Timorese political actors who live mostly in Dili collectively. There are political actors with little connection to local customary ways of life but their recognition of adat is what matters here. Political leaders with ‘foreign ancestry’ often marry locals and conform with their spouses’ custom such as paying visit to the graveyards of the ancestors and so on.

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hear recitation of folk stories and local narratives detailing the histories of their respective ancestors. Oral histories often, João Nunes explained, call to mind the kind of life in the past, the time of peace and the time of ‘good life’. Indeed, the time of *beiala* continues to feature in narratives and other oral histories. João Nunes (Pers. Comm. September 2000) referred to the past and its relation to the future, as he narrated to me verbally, in the following passage:

I
Ita nia abon  
Our ancestors  
Ita nia beiala sira  
Our forbears  
Moris diak tiha ona  
Lived a good life  
Ukun a’an tiha ona  
(They) were independent

II
Sira moris dame  
They lived a peaceful life  
Moris tuir sira nia lisan  
Lived according to their laws  
Moris tuir sira nia bele  
Lived on their own capacity  
Malae mak halo a’at  
(It was) the foreigners who destroyed (that life)

When referring to the days of the ancestors, locals proudly portray *uluk*, the past, as ‘heavenly’ times, for then there was supposed to be no war, no stealing and no wrongdoing. What was evident were peace, tranquillity and obedience.

III
Iha rai ka tasi  
Either on land or in the sea  
Ita tama ka sai  
(We would) Come in or depart  
Ida la bandu  
No one would forbid (us)  
Ida la tau halo tauk  
No one would frighten (us)

IV
Ita ba, ba ona  
(If) we were to go, we could do so  
Ita mai, mai ona  
(If) we were to come, we could do so  
Kalan e loron  
(During) Night or day  
Bailoron e Rai-udan  
(During) dry or wet seasons

V
Beiala sira moris diak  
Our forbears lived a good life  
Saida mak laiha  
Everything was available  
Ai-han iha  
Food was plentiful  
Balada maús mos barak  
Cattle were abundant

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VI
Ai-han la susar  
Hemu la susar  
Moris ho ukun  
Moris tuir bandu  

VII
Hafoin, malae mai tiha  
Ikus, Indonesia mai tan  
Ita susar  
Ita terus  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sentence</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food was plentiful</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drinks were profuse</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governed by Ukun (law)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governed by Bandu (rules)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Then, the foreigners came</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Later, Indonesia followed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We suffered</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We endured suffering</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When making references to the uluk, the past, these would usually end with wishes and hopes. Responsibility for the future is often surrendered to the future generations, it thus become their duty to restore to social life the peace that was lost in the time of beiala. João Nunes then pointed to me and recited the last part of his passage:

VIII
Oan sira  
Klosan sira  
Moris ne fo ba imi  
Moris ne’e imi mak hatutan  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sentence</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You, the children</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You, the youth</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This life is yours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This life is up to you to carry forward (Pers Comm. João Nunes September 2000).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These verses (III-VII) describe the beauty and bounty of life in the past, the next (VIII) describes the passion for and expectation of future life. It also serves as a reminder that the interrupted peace should be brought back and reinstated, emphasising the belief that the past is relevant to present circumstances. Central to this perception is that in the past, the ancestors (domains and dynasties) had developed ‘our’ tradition in an officially sanctioned and relatively stable way leaving no room for any sort of conflict. Local exegeses explain that *uluk ne’e ita moris dame* – in the past we lived peacefully – but *ikus ne’e it moris susar* – now we live in poor conditions. Such phrases can often be heard in daily conversations. The
East Timorese believe that colonialism or foreign occupation interrupted the beiala period and that they should be allowed to live the way their ancestors lived. Consequently, it is not surprising that colonialism is seen as a devastating force which interrupted and destroyed the peaceful life of Timorese society. Narratives often encourage youths to fight and get rid of this devastating force. Then, when it has been eliminated, foin-sae (lit., just rise), the ‘youth’, and labarik aban-nian, the ‘children of tomorrow’, are expected to improve society’s life, for the future is theirs or they are the future (refer to passage above). It is in this context that current nationalism becomes our focus. Thus, contemporary nationalism is not only an achievement of the past, but also a ‘turning point’, from which the current generation is expected to keep going forward, dealing with all time’s changes. Political activists and political actors argue – from a nationalist perspective – that it is important to duni sai (lit., pursue) or get rid of the enemy from the territory, for ‘outsiders’ (often referred to as malae ‘foreigners’) are the cause of internal troubles.13

If the outsiders [colonisers] had not come to destroy our lives, we could have lived peacefully and perhaps we would have become an independent nation for some time. The Portuguese came, then the Japanese came, the Australians and later the Javanese [Indonesia]. What have they brought unto us? Nothing but destruction. We should allow no more outsiders to come and interfere in our lives again.14

Reference to colonial masters, in particular, both the Portuguese and the Indonesians, was made to highlight their roles in the ‘destruction’ of peace and harmony in Timorese society. A sense of pride is also a characteristic of this interpretation. The East Timorese believe that they should be allowed to live in peace, for peace and tranquillity are essential elements in their tradition. Demands that the state of the past be reinstated or recovered are common, particularly among the older generation. Even contemporary political parties and leaders insist that

13 Note that this perception is an interpretation of life in the past and its relation to colonialism. At the time of my fieldwork, people tended to have different ideas about the United Nations, which came to help and not destroy.

14 This view was uttered to me by Luis Soares, a farmer in Gurtei – Punilala, Ermera, August 26, 2001, several days before the first Constituent Assembly election.
history should be remembered and retold to the younger generations so that they too know about and understand about the past. Political leaders, in their speeches, refer insistently to both the seventeenth and eighteenth century wars against the Portuguese (Gusmão 2000a) and the struggle against Indonesia from 1975 to 1999 (Alkatiri 2000) as inspiration for the current striving towards freedom. A deeper understanding about references to the historiography of East Timor, which consists mainly of colonial-period textbooks, can be gained by delving into East Timorese resistance historiography.

- Classification of Nationalist War

In the literature, it is widely depicted that East Timorese ‘nationalist wars’ evolved through three periods, the third being the culmination of the previous two. First, as pointed out by Abílio Araújo, during the period between 1512 and 1912 indigenous kingdoms fought independent and isolated wars against the colonial government. It was during this period that the war of Cailaco was waged, from 1719 until 1769 (Gunn 1999), a war that was conducted at the height of the sandalwood trade and is revered today as the first nationalist war. This period concluded with the end of the Manufahi War in 1912, in which a number of indigenous kingdoms united to fight in protest against the colonial government’s occupation of their land and imposition of taxes.

Whereas there were attempts to forge links among these kingdoms in the past to fight together, the situation was not permissible given that rajás or reinos are often found to fight the Dutch and Portuguese, but at the same time, others remained loyal and continued to help the Crown forces with men and provisions (Gunn 1991: 101. Since, between 1512 and 1912, each kingdom fought individually to protect its own interests, Araújo calls this period the guerra independentistas (independent/isolated wars).
During the second period, between 1912 and 1975, the Portuguese pacified the territory completely. This period was broken up by the Japanese occupation in WW II, an occupation that created the conditions for the emergence in the early 1950s of urban-based clandestine nationalist movements, which continued to flourish until the early 1970s. Araújo calls this period the *guerra pacifica*, a period of passive denunciation of colonialism through non-violent means (Gunn 1999). It was a time when the nationalist consciousness came into being, a time coloured by frequent protests, including the local revolt in Watolari in 1959, and the unsuccessful push for Portuguese decolonisation in 1974.

![Plate 3.2: Replica of the Alliance of Timorese Kingdoms in the 1700s (Reprinted from Kota Manual Handbook).](image)

The third period is what Xanana Gusmão calls the *guerra da libertação* (the liberation war/struggle). It is characterised, uniquely, by a war for independence in which most East Timorese fought for a common cause, liberation. This period (1975-1999), recalling Chapter 2, saw the invasion by Indonesia and the subsequent 24-year-long popular resistance struggle, which culminated in a referendum on 30 August 1999 in which the majority of the East Timorese decided to become independent from...
Indonesia. Present generations interpret the guerra da libertação as the culmination of a process that had begun in the early days of colonial domination and was strengthened by centuries of continuous resistance. In a way, the idea of nacionalismo that helped liberate East Timor from Indonesia is based on common knowledge or shared perceptions of the past, as it was suggested to have been experienced in the days of the abon, the ancestors. Indeed, it was the two previous nationalist wars and the passive resistance in the second period that inspired many East Timorese to resist Indonesia (Pers. Comm. Juvêncio Martins, September 2000). Underlining all of this, reference to the past, close observance of tradition and attention to cultural artefacts are common means of showing respect to the ancestors.

IV. Understanding Indigenous Rebellions

In accordance with this intense awareness of the past, the fighting against Indonesia was also seen as a legacy of the past. Among politicians it is understood that as long as East Timor is not free, this legacy continues and will never cease (Gusmão 2000a). Being interlinked with the past, the East Timorese are called to complete the chain of struggle that will eventually bring back the memories, if not the peace and bountifulness of the past. In other words, peace can be recovered once the coloniser has been defeated.

- Interpretation of the Cailaco War

The first major indigenous rebellion (funu) recorded was the Cailaco revolt of 1719-1769, which saw the assassination of two missionaries and the destruction of Churches in that area. It was the first major challenge to the Portuguese by the

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16 In his book, Timor Lorosae 500 Years, Geoffrey Gunn (1999) lists almost all major rebellions carried out by the indigenous kingdoms in East Timor against the Portuguese.
indigenous kingdoms of what is now East Timor and part of West Timor. The war coincided with another major war against the Portuguese, waged by the reino of Luca on the central south coast of Timor. Began in protest against Governor António d'Albuquerque’s imposition of fintas, a kind of tax (Gunn 1999), this rebellion proved quite successful. At one point the march of locally recruited militia (moradores) led by Captain-Major Joaquim de Matos, on its way to Cailaco to collect fintas, was halted.17

Plate 3.3: An old Warrior in the 1900s (Photo: Unknown).

17 This tax system, which included sandalwood and all other exportable commodities (Gunn 1999:76), was imposed under the governorship of António d'Albuquerque Coelho.
However, it was the ruler of Cailaco who gained most momentum. Having continuously rejected Portuguese domination and fought his own war alone from 1719 he finally convinced the reinos of Lemac Huto, Comnace, Leo-Huto, Sanir, Atsabe, Lei-Mean, Ai-Funaro, Diribate, Hermera and a number of other reinos in West Timor to attack the Portuguese in 1752. A number of leading régulos from Serviã and Belo also joined the revolt against the Portuguese. This rebellion concluded only after the Portuguese sought the help of the topasse from Larantuka, 4000 loyal tribe people, and additional reinforcements from Macau.

While conducting fieldwork, I met a guerrilla commander, known by his nom de guerre, comandante (commander) Rocke Kolir (nom de guerre) or Jacinto Viegas Vicente. Being from Cailaco, he claimed to have defeated the Indonesian army in various encounters that they had in the past. This reference was made to explain that it was in Cailaco that the real war against the Portuguese started and being from the area, he wanted to uphold that reputation. In his own words, “the war against the malae (foreigners), a reference to the Portuguese began originally in the western part of East Timor (Loromonu) and it was from there that it spread to the east (Lorosae)” (Pers. Comm. Palapaso, March 2000). While commander Rocke’s intention was directed to the war against the European forces, both the Dutch and Portuguese, his accounts also implied that the first war started from that area before the other wars in East Timor. In other words, while in the historiography of East Timor the Cailaco war was remembered only as another ordinary rebellion against the foreigners, Commander Rocke thought the source, the initiation and the roots (hun) of all wars against outsiders in East Timor, as he said, mai housi neba (lit., originated from there), a reference to Cailaco. Indeed the Cailaco rebellion inspired indigenous rebellions throughout the island and led the way for a long and

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18 According to Portuguese historian and ethnographer Basílio Sá, the rebellion of Cailaco persisted for two main reasons. First, the belief that other neighbouring reinos would continue to provide support; second, ‘the myth of the impregnable Pedras de Cailaco (lit., rocks of Cailaco) or the natural rock fortress ... [of] Cailaco rising to 2000 metres altitude’ (Gunn 1999:97), as provider of protection for Cailaco.
continuous resistance against the Portuguese in following years (Gunn 1999). Later revolts against the colonial government were not only politically driven but also economically motivated, by rejection of the attempt to impose the *fintas* 'tax' on indigenous rulers. Thus, the war of Cailaco was driven by the need to defend the related kingdoms' interests and material and cultural property, an important point to make in a discussion about the evolution of East Timorese nationalism.

While little known by today’s generation, local narratives provide vivid representations of the Cailaco war. First is the reference to *Pedras Negras* (lit., The Black Rock). While seeming to have a limited understanding of the past, Commander Rocke proudly recited the determination of the ancestors as the foundation of and motivation for his own struggle (Pers. Comm Comandante Rocke, March 2000).

That place is *lulik*. Since in the past the ancestors were also buried there. It was the rock that provides shelter [protection] hence the foreigners could not come. When they [foreigners] went in [to the reino] they did not see our ancestors because the rock hid them. They are all dead, but they continued to give their protection to their children. Therefore we shouldn’t be afraid. We have to protect our ancestors’ *lisan* [tradition] everyone have to give our blood, in exchange.¹⁹

Quoting Portuguese archives, Gunn explains that ancient East Timorese in the area saw the rock as a symbol of *lulik* (lit., sacred) and a place of the ancestors (Gunn 1999). Commander Rocke’s interpretation of the *Pedras Negras* was that it provided protection and sanctuary for his ancestors to resist, for it was known as the burial place of many previous ancestors. Secondly, given the fact that the war was conducted to protect the site, locals believe that it would, in exchange, reciprocate by providing protection to the children of its protectors. Local exegeses and narratives highlight the bravery of the old warriors as symbols of determination and

¹⁹ Like many new generation East Timorese who have little knowledge of their past, Commander Rocke believed that the site of his guerrilla home base was secure from external threat. He mentioned that the elders had told him not to be afraid; as long as he could look after himself, the ancestors would continue to support his cause (Pers. Comm. Rocke, Palapaso, March 2000).
commitment. Folk stories underline the importance of defending what is ‘ours’ even if it has to be ‘bought’ with blood.

During the resistance against Indonesia, Cailaco continued to symbolise the defiance of the people in this part of the island, and the presence of the guerrillas in the area is well known. A companhia of FALINTIL (the resistance army) mainly comprising local fighters was stationed there. Cailaco is located in the district of Bobonaro, which shares a border with Indonesian West Timor. The reason behind this cantonment, as explained by Commander Rocke (nom de guerre), is:

Ne’e ami hanoi tamba  We thought that
Hori uluk kedas    Since the time of long ago
Hori ita nia beiala  Since our ancestors
Funu fatin iha neba  The place of battle there

Reinu seluk mos mai  Other reinos came
Hamutuk iha neba    Joined together there
Hamutuk ho liurai Cailaco    Alongside the liurai of Cailaco
Hamutuk ‘hemu ran’  Together in ‘Oath of Blood’
Halo maun-alin     Turning (themselves into) brothers
Hodi hasouru colonialista  To face the colonialists.20

The heroic name Cailaco suggests the reason for the choice of the location for a resistance headquarters in the area. In local belief, the place is the abut (lit., root,) and hun of an ancestral kingdom, since an oath of blood was taken there, the war was conducted from the area and many lives were forfeited there. It is considered rai-lulik or sacred land. The souls of the ancestors are believed to be present there at all times and provide sanctuary to those who seek protection, particularly children who have decided to follow the path of the ancestors, that is, in fighting the outsiders (Pers. Comm. Comandante Rocke, March 2000).

20 This poetic-like narrative was recited to me by Comandante (Commander) Rocke when discussing his life as a jungle fighter in Palapaso, Dili, March 2000.
Interpretation of the Manufahi War

Another well-known resistance struggle, recognised by many of today’s East Timorese as the second nationalist war, was that led by the king of Manufahi, Dom Boaventura. The king’s father, Dom Duarte, formerly a key ally régulo of the Portuguese, had led an uprising in 1894 during the time of Governor Celestino da Silva (1894-1908). A number of other kingdoms also joined the fight alongside Dom Duarte. This ‘national’ rebellion proved very costly to the Portuguese. In 1900, facing the defection of allies, a lack of medicine on the eve of a cholera endemic and an imminent massacre by the Portuguese, Dom Duarte surrendered to the Portuguese and his son, Dom Boaventura, renewed his dreams some years later (Gusmão 1999).21

21 In my discussion with some students from Manufahi, I was told that ‘he was not killed by the Portuguese but evaded enemy capture and went underground to continue the resistance’ (Pers. Comm. Napoleão da Silva, September 2000).
When Boaventura took over the war against the Portuguese, continuing his father's six-year legacy, he obtained allies from various reinos in East Timor. In 1911, a number of reinos, including Cailaco, Atsabe, Balibo, Raimean, Bibisusso, Alas and Turiscai, joined in. This war was so successful; it prompted the Portuguese to call for help from their allies because of their inability to put a stop to the resistance for three years. For one thing, sophisticated military skill, something most East Timorese today refer to with pride, contributed heavily to the success of the resistance in its early phase.

After receiving reinforcements from two ships from Macau and Mozambican troops, the Portuguese staged a siege around Mount Cablaki for several months. The colonial army and its allies successfully prevented the population from acquiring, food, water and proper sanitation. Several months later, the colonial army captured

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Plate 3.5: Some old Warriors proudly displaying the Head of their enemies (Source: Unknown).

22 From my various discussions with different East Timorese, both political activists and ordinary citizens, the Guerra de Manufahi (or the Manufahi War – the name refers to the place where it was organised) is generally seen as the most vivid example for today's East Timorese in their fight for independence. It is held to have been a nationwide revolt, as if carried out under the banner and indeed in the spirit of East Timorese nationalism (field notes, 2000).
Cablaki and killed thousands of its enemies (Gunn 1999). Dom Boaventura, despite escaping unharmed, later surrendered to the malaes (lit., foreigners). Following Manufahi’s defeat and the Portuguese pacification of almost all territories, Governor Celestino da Silva and his successor Governor Filomeno de Câmara undertook policy reform. This included the replacement of former rebel liurais with ‘hand picked’ liurais or régulos. The new liurais were rewarded with new rank and were structurally placed under the colonial Governor. The first rank was major, the second lieutenant colonel, and the third captain for new and loyal liurai and their dato (aids to the liurai). As a result of the 1911-1912 revolt, many liurais were replaced by related or unrelated kin of the former liurais, so long as they pledged loyalty to the Crown. In many areas the kingdoms were dismantled and power was placed in the hands of datos. As a result, the power of new liurais was contestable. Many datos distanced themselves from the hand picked liurais and proclaimed themselves liurais in their respective communities.

The second ‘nationalist war’ (1910-1912), apart from aiming to get rid of the Portuguese from the Central Coast, was also a continuation of the Cailaco legacy of one and a half centuries before. “For good reason, the name of Boaventura invokes awe and pride among Timorese” (Gunn 1999), and he is seen as the hero of modern nationalist resistance against the colonialists. East Timorese politicians see the Manufahi War as the revival of the nationalist movement in modern times.23 During the Indonesian occupation, the area remained the location of a headquarters of the resistance. Companhia Number 3 (the third company) of FALINTIL was established in the area. Among the best-known attacks on the Indonesian forces was one carried out in 1998, one year prior to the 30 August 1999 referendum. Guerrillas seized the sub-district of Alas from the Indonesians, killing several soldiers and seizing...

23 In my own assessment, the fall of Boaventura marked the initial period of the decline of the moral power of the liurai, apart from the devastating effects of Portuguese rule post-1912 and Indonesian administration from 1975 to 1999. In the former period the Portuguese replaced a number of liurais, whereas in the latter Indonesia dismantled the existing system and replaced it with a new one. The anti-Portuguese groups that began to emerge went underground and the liurais became powerless.
weapons (Conflict Studies 2000). *Guerra de Manufahi* remains a source and symbol of pride to later East Timorese generations. Imbaraj wrote that, for the local people, Mount Cablaki has a special meaning:

Dom Boaventura, who managed to unite the island's tribes against the Portuguese in a bloody 16-year campaign, had his base in Mount Kabulaki. He was finally subdued by Mozambique troops drafted into the Portuguese army in August 1912. In the ensuing battle, thousands died and 3,000 rebel troops taken prisoner. "The spirit of Dom Boaventura is still very much alive. He will protect our people in Kabulaki," said Lorenzo da Costa, who is in his early seventies. He had seen the Japanese land in East Timor during World War II and helped Australian troops sent to fight them (Inbaraj 1999).

The educated elite of both the 1950s-1970s and later generations under Indonesian occupation cite this war as symbol of modern nationalism. The leader of OPJLATIL (*Ogranização Popular Juventude Lourico Asswain Timor Lorosae*), a clandestine group comprising much of my generation, told me that he sees Dom Boaventura as the inspiration for contemporary nationalism, and he has great respect for this Timorese hero. It was Dom Boaventura who dared to fight the Portuguese and called upon many *reinos* who had fought alone previously to unite and fight together (Pers. Comm. Vasco da Gama, Dili 26 August 2002).24 The pride derives from the perception that the war successfully united the ethnically diverse *reinos* in spite of the Portuguese colonialists' policy of divide and rule (*devide et impera*).

This perception, and indeed great respect, for the ancestors and the previous warriors has been expressed in various linguistic forms, including the revolutionary poems of struggle of the 1960s. Good examples of such poems are to be found in the work of Francisco Borja da Costa, who was often cited during the Indonesian occupation and still is today. Da Costa's poems emphasised paying tribute to the

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24 Vasco da Gama himself is originally from Baucau, a *Makassae* ethno-linguist group and spent most of his time during the Indonesian period working for the clandestine of the Resistance. I knew him personally as a student at the Universitas Timor Timur (UNTIM) while doing his agriculture degree. He spoke highly of Dom Boaventura who is of Mambai ethno-linguistic group as a hero who had dared to start the war to get rid of the outsiders and listed Xanana Gusmão (*a Galolim* speaker belong to Dadi Language group) in the list of names, he said, who deserved to be remembered in the history as the true warriors of East Timor.
country's predecessors in a national context. Although a native Tetum speaker, Borja da Costa, as did many of his time, referred to himself as Timor Oan (Children of Timor) and not on the basis of ethno linguistic background. Posters and T-shirts carrying revolutionary words from poems were printed to refer to the ancestors, including later nationalists, and to express profound pride in their struggle (Borja da Costa's Poem in Table 3.1).

Table 3.1: A revolutionary poem by Borja da Costa

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ONE MINUTE SILENCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>By: Borja da Costa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be silent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mountains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>valleys and springs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rivers and streams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stony ways</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and grassy reaches,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>be silent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be silent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>canes and bamboos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bushes and eucalypts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>palms and grasses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>endless verdure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of tiny Timor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>be silent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be silent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>your silence, our silence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOR ONE MINUTE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is a time for silence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for the silenced time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for the life times lost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the lives given.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOR THE HOMELAND</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOR THE NATION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOR THE PEOPLE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOR OUR LIBERATION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BE SILENT – ONE MINUTE OF SILENCE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The East Timorese refer to funu against the colonial governments with pride, regardless of their (usually limited) knowledge of places, times and details of events from such wars. Just like the Afghans who refer proudly to their resistance against the outsiders
in the past, contemporary East Timorese refer to their predecessors' resistance against the colonial powers as rewarding. Funu against both the Portuguese and the Indonesians was regarded as ita nian (lit., we own) or 'our' funu. Ita Timor nia funu refers to the war as the East Timor war. It signifies that everyone fights, resists and strives together for something that the East Timorese have assumed together since the days of beiala. The term lori hamutuk (lit., carry/lift/bear together) symbolises a bond among the people, reflecting cohesion of the people despite their different ethnic backgrounds. The Timorese refer to a common proverb:

Matak idak-idak nian What is uncooked, belongs to the individual
Tasak ita hotu nian What is cooked belongs to us all.

While this saying is interpreted differently by different ethnic groups, it is generally held to suggest that people's common interest should be their collective responsibility in spite of their differences. Thus, at the political level, ita nia funu (lit., our war) is a collective responsibility and not the duty of certain individuals. Any deed that brings ethnic interests to the fore is always deemed un-nationalist, and the issue of complacency often comes up in discussions about the history of colonialism. As retold to me by João Nunes:

Once, our ancestors fought the colonialists. They had only katana [parang] and stick. The wars in Cailaco, Liquica, Luca, Atabai and others, show that, since long ago, we have refused to be ruled by other people. The ancestors' bravery has made East Timorese renowned warriors, and we will continue to be warriors. (Pers. Comm. João Nunes, September 2000).

In daily conversations, such references are highlighted and reiterated. During the Indonesian army occupation of East Timor, recitation of funu in the uluk (lit., past) was especially common. I recall my student days in the early 1980s, when we read letters sent from the guerrillas to students in Dili. References to the heroic struggle of various wars against the Portuguese were emphasised to justify the sacrifice of the lives of East Timorese (guerrillas) – Timor Oan (lit., Children of Timor) or Ass'wain (Warriors) – for the liberation of the country. The strong emphasis on Timor-oan ass'wain (lit., Timor Sons are warriors), Timor Oan Futu-nain (lit., Timor Children are Warriors), mate-fatim

25 The Afghans look at their ancestors' resistance against outsiders as a source of inspiration to stand together as a people. The notion of having never been conquered among these people is similar to what can be seen in East Timor today (Time Magazine, source: www.time.com/time/covers/1101020909/index.html or http://www.time.com/time/magazine/archives.
(lit., death places), when one stands one's ground to the death, funu oan (lit., generations of resistance) is, according to Juvêncio Martins, meant to confirm the immortal character of the spirit that runs in the blood of the East Timorese (Pers. Comm. 15 September 2000). The generation who were exposed to war and resistance against Indonesia and had access to more 'nationalistic' ideas, posses rich perceptions of the past and their relation to the circumstances in which they live. Therefore, this generation was keen to adopt more nationalistic ideas and put them into practice.

V. In Search of Nationalism and Nation

Thus, with reference to their history, the East Timorese argue that nationalism gains strength when there is a common enemy to face. Various groups, even former enemies, unite to wage war against outsiders. The Cailaco, Manufahi and later resistance struggles against Indonesia are good examples, while shared experience of the years of living under colonial administration contributed to the formation of nationalistic feelings in East Timor (Anderson 1993). It is significant, but perhaps not surprising, that when referring to resistance against the colonial governments, East Timorese emphasise only the positive side of such struggles, rather than failures and drawbacks. Previous divisions and indigenous kingdoms' rivalries during the colonial period are ignored when retelling struggles of the past. One oft-quoted phrase in conversations and public speeches of political leaders is uluk nia abon sira funu la halimar (in the past, our ancestors waged serious wars) ikus ne'e ita tenki lori rai ne'e ba diak (now we have to lead this country to its best). Most elders expect the younger generation to learn from history, although not even they (the elders) have clear memories of, or ideas about, past 'struggles'. Indeed, not every one in East Timor understands the history of their ancestors' resistance, particularly those that occurred in the early years of Portuguese settlement. Primary school teachers do not have the knowledge or the expertise to inform their pupils in detail about the history of colonisation. Most colonial textbooks recounted the colonialists' version of history and their involvement in East Timor.26

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26 The writer's own father, Saturnino de Jesus Soares, was a primary school teacher during the Portuguese period. He acknowledged that teachers were not told the details of history, and that the difficulty they faced in gaining access to library and other old archives served to deepened their ignorance (Pers. Comm, 2000).
Stories ‘about the past’ were passed verbally from one generation to another, from grandfather to father to son and so on.27

The achievements, successes and sacrifices made by ‘our’ forbears in resisting enemies are referred to again and again (Gusmão 2001). In public spheres and messages sent by the guerrillas to the towns during the struggle, references to past resistance were often presented proudly, with stress on the brave and valiant acts of the ancestors. Achievements in the struggle against Indonesia were equated with achievements in fighting the Portuguese. As an informant told me, “If the ancestors could resist the Portuguese, there is no reason for the current generation not to repeat the same success.” (Pers. Comm. Paulino Monteiro, March 2000). Jokes circulated among the people during the ‘integration’ period about the persistent failure in years past of various forces to establish themselves in Timor. Thus, if the Indonesian kingdoms were defeated in the ancient times, if the Japanese were ousted in 1945, if the Portuguese were forced to leave in 1974, then there was no reason the East Timorese could not repeat history, by ousting the Indonesian army. Such jokes naturally encouraged and provided impetus for resistance against the Indonesian occupiers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In the days of the foreigners</th>
<th>In the days of the colonialists</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Iha malae nia tempo</td>
<td>Iha colonialista nia tempo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iha colonialista nia tempo</td>
<td>Iha colonialista nia tempo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ita nia beiala sira la fo ulun</td>
<td>Our ancestors did not give up their heads (resist)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sira la hakru’uk arbiro</td>
<td>They did not kneel (before others) for no reason</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Despite their being undersized</th>
<th>Despite their weaknesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maski sira kiik</td>
<td>Maski sira forsa laiha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maski sira forsa laiha</td>
<td>Sira funu-hasouru</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sira funu-hasouru</td>
<td>Beiala la monu arbiru</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beiala la monu arbiru</td>
<td>The ancestors did not submit for any reason.28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The history of local resistance (the Cailaco, Manufahi and other wars) is interpreted in various ways. However, to contemporary East Timorese, the sense of pride is always

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27 Throughout my field work, I attended seminars and meetings with young people and politicians and I often brought up matters of history in order to grasp their understanding of East Timorese struggle, particularly on issues they often referred to, say, the war in Luca, the war in Ermera and others. I was aware that not even I, with my university education, knew the full extent of these wars. However, in daily discussions and public debate, references to the ‘great wars’ and past successes in evading the enemies have long been the ‘main ingredients’ of nationalistic slogans.

28 Monteiro was an underground activist who was captured, beaten and detained for months by the Indonesian military (Pers. Comm. Paulino Monteiro, March 2000).
placed highly when recounting such glorious days of the past and interpretations are always characterised by patriotism, self-importance, pride and, above all, nationalism. Xanana Gusmão argues that his people's history can be identified with their ancestors' resistance against outside domination, and that this history of resistance has become part of the political identity of 'our' people (Gusmão 1998). He rejects the claim that the war against Indonesia was a product of political change in Portugal, for instance a result of the overthrow of the Salazar and Caetano regimes in Portugal in 1974. Gusmão argues that *funu* (resistance) is part of his people's political identity and that, therefore, wherever there is suppression in East Timor, there will be resistance (Gusmão 1998). Likewise, East Timorese political actors argue that resistance against Indonesia owed much to the *tempo-uluk* or *beiala nia nian*, the 'glorious past'. In 1999, when talking to José Luis Guteres, an East Timorese freedom fighter, the son of the late ruler of Luca, who spent most of his life in Portugal and South Africa, I asked him why he had devoted his life to the fight for independence. He replied, "I am only implementing the words of [the *abon* (read, avô)] the ancestors. If it had not been for them, had they not shown the courage and determination to resist foreign domination, I could have given up this struggle" (Pers. Comm. Canberra, May 1999). East Timorese politicians and political actors' understandings of the past came from their social contacts and their reading of written versions of history. They then drew their own conclusions. Interpretation of the past was often made to maintain and boost one's patriotic feeling and spirit of struggle, and local songs were composed to retell the heroic stories of the ancestors and thus express and encourage sentiments of resistance.

In the last years of Indonesian occupation, the desire to distinguish East Timorese from outsiders (Indonesians) was given public expression. The term *Timor Oan* (lit., Children of Timor) was popularised and used to refer to East Timorese as distinct from non-*Timor Oan*, especially Indonesians. The pride of being East Timorese, of being a *Timor Oan* for 24 years of resistance against Indonesia, expressly underlined the great difference and divide between the East Timorese and the Indonesians. While conscious of the fact that West Timorese (Indonesia) were also part of greater Timor by virtue of their existence in the island, when referring to *Timor Oan*, allusion was made within the
boundary of that which is East Timor. The following verses were common in the streets of Dili:

Ne'e Timor Oan
Ne'e ita nia maluk
Ne'e la'os Timor Oan
Ne'e la'os ita nia maluk

These are the children of Timor
They are our relatives
These are not the children of Timor
They are not our relatives

Plate 3.6: Remembering the Past: Naming a Street in Dili after a modern independence hero, Nicolau Lobato. (Photo: Author)

The emphasis on ‘us’ here is strong. The international demarcation of what marks East Timor from Indonesia today is seen by the contemporary generation as a border that not only defines geographical frontiers but also defines identity. If one is part of ‘our’ group, one shares our skin colour, political beliefs and language. One may be a friend, a relative or a true brother or sister. If one is not East Timorese, then one is not one of ‘us’. This difference is emphasised by the ‘us’ versus ‘them’ and ‘insiders’ versus ‘outsiders’ distinctions. That is, ‘we’ are different from them because we have been different since the beginning and our ancestors manifested these differences when they decided to wage war against ‘them’.

VI. Culture of Shared experience

Apart from relevance to the present circumstances, perceptions of the past are also evidence of a shared way of thinking, as nurtured in the tradition of shared belief.
There is a shared way of thinking when it comes to comparing past, present and possible futures. Most political actors and activists lived in Dili, the centre of political life during the Indonesian period. While Dili is actually quite a ‘multicultural’ town, the years of struggling, fighting and suffering together produced strong and special bonds among its political activists and actors. Although they were from many different backgrounds, many of them participated in the clandestine resistance movement, sat in prisons, hid in the bush and suffered intimidation and terror together, and now their perceptions about politics are very similar.

Since the beginning of the struggle we, the East Timorese, have always fought together as one people. We never distinguished each other on the basis of ethnic background, language or cultural differences. This is because of the fact that we all have found a common ground that we are one people and indeed we are. East Timor, the name given to our country is not a mere name but it is also our identity. Our fighters fought in the name of East Timor, they did not fight in the name of their ethnic origins. The issue of firaku [east] and kaladi [west] is remote as far as our political objectives are concerned and our identity as Timor Oan remains.29

Even now that independence has been achieved and most of these people affiliate themselves with different political parties and groups, their mutual respect is still strong and seriously upheld. There is, therefore, a strong emotional bond that unites them. For example, all believe that their ancestors (beiala) were warriors who fought various wars and defeated the colonialists, notwithstanding their different origins. Such perceptions also embrace the belief that Timorese forbears once lived a good life, but this good life was interrupted by the arrival of outsiders. Such statements offer a different understanding of nationalism to Anderson’s (1991) concept of imagining. For a society like East Timor in which print capitalism (print media) is absent or very limited, the nation is constructed entirely through similarities within the society, without outside pressures. Thus, East Timorese nationalism has little to do with print capitalism, since, apart from the absence of the latter and the high illiteracy rate (Anderson 1993), as Fox explains, it is a society of various cultural backgrounds (Fox 2000).

29 This view was uttered to me by Gergorio Saldanha, the leader of Organisación Juventude Católica de Timor Leste (Dili March 2000). He was imprisoned by an Indonesian court for life and was held in Semarang, Indonesia for almost nine years. I met Gregorio in several occasions during my fieldwork and had interesting discussions with him.
It is my conviction, after exploring East Timorese perceptions of history, that there is a bond constructed by way of collective experiences, particularly among those sharing their past. These include myths of the glorious past and years of repression, suffering and colonial subordination. Since the community possesses similar perceptions of East Timor’s political history, political actors and activists seem to accept interpretations of their past struggles so long as they are in their (political) interests. Indeed, for societies that continue to struggle for identity, history and past lives present a moral validation of contemporary institutions and political interests as well as present grounds for advancing their present positions (Reid and Marr 1979).

30 Anderson (1993) himself offers some examples in his paper Imagining East Timor of the bond that was created during the Indonesian period. For example, he says, although the name ‘East Timor’ comes from a ‘Mercatorian map’, which separates East Timor and West Timor (Indonesia), this ‘aerial demarcation’ seems nonetheless to have strong connotation for the young East Timorese in Dili who identify East Timor by distinguishing it from Indonesia. The fact that young political demonstrators often held placards with slogans like “Viva Timorleste” (all one word) is just one piece of evidence of the popular belief in the sameness or common identity of all East Timorese people in their subjugation to and struggle against the Indonesian occupiers. While Indonesians were unable to see East Timor as part of Indonesia, at the same time military repression over the years made it ‘possible’ for East Timorese to imagine East Timor as different from Indonesia (Anderson, 1993: 2). This came to be especially so over the years as the Indonesian government and people committed all sorts of wrongdoing against East Timorese which caused great disappointment and distrust among East Timorese, and made their feelings of disenfranchisement even more acute. But shared experiences like these also created strong emotional bonds among East Timorese, and made them ever more aware of what really separated them from the Indonesians.
PART TWO

THE SPREAD OF BRANCHES: FRICTION, DIVISION AND THE CHANGE OF PERCEPTIONS
Chapter 4

Tracing the Roots of Division: Independence and Uncertainty in the Post-1999 Period

I. Introduction

The East Timorese perceived their resistance against Indonesia and subsequent liberation as the culmination of years of nationalist struggle against outsiders. This is a struggle that has continued since the time of their ancestors. In the modern historiography of that country, this period (1975-1999) has been referred to as guerra da libertação, a struggle in which all East Timorese fought together for their common cause, national independence (Gusmão 1998). However, as this chapter will show, although East Timor has finally achieved its independence, the liberation struggle itself did not pass without consequence. The fight for independence was coloured by friction and divisions among the nationalist forces, which resulted in heightened competition for political leverage, and indeed, the death of a number of compatriots.

While this had little impact on the common struggle for liberation and independence, nevertheless, other political conflicts came to the fore coalescing around sacrifices during the war, geographical distinctiveness, and the division of labour between the old and new generations.

This chapter, however, will focus on the political developments, the perception of independence and the instability after independence, and not the socially motivated political conflicts.¹ Thus, central to this chapter is an analysis of the post-1999 referendum political uncertainty and the friction

¹ These issues will be discussed at length in Chapters 7 and 8.
among nationalist forces during the struggle against Indonesia, which contributed to it.

II. The Setting: Political Changes in the Post 1999 Referendum Period

After the fall of Indonesia President Suharto in May 1998, the vice-president, Baharuddin Jusuf Habibie replaced him. On 27 January 1999, the Habibie government proposed a referendum for East Timor and announced that if the East Timorese rejected autonomy, East Timor could be released from Indonesia and returned to its former status prior to annexation.² The Indonesian parliament, which had decreed integration in 1976, would be called upon to decide on de-annexation. President Habibie promised that the government would recommend the new parliament, to be elected in June 1999, vote in favour of de-annexation. He referred to January 2000 as the date for independence, and for that purpose the Timorese would be consulted before the new Parliament's session in August 1999. The form the consultation would take was not specified; Indonesia was opposed to a referendum on self-determination, the form favoured by Portugal and the Timorese. Instead, the proposed self-determination would be called a 'consultation' and not a referendum (Babo Soares 2001: 56). On 5 May 1999, Indonesia and Portugal signed an Agreement that would allow an internationally supervised ballot to be held in East Timor.

The 27 January 1999 announcement surprised the advocates of continuing integration with Indonesia. The Indonesian military's brutality during the years of war in East Timor was well documented (Jolliffe 1978a; Dunn 1996), and it was commonly thought by many East Timorese that should an option to choose between continuing integration and independence be given, they

² Until then, East Timor was still regarded internationally by the UN as a Non-Self-Governing (NSG) Territory under the United Nations. The General Assembly only agreed to remove East Timor from the list of NSG Territories on May 1, 2002. (See General Assembly Press Release No 10014/2002).
would choose the latter. Habibie’s announcement thus sparked anger among the pro-Indonesian supporters, both in the army and in the civilian administration. It was this group which had benefited from political and economic privileges during the Indonesian occupation of East Timor. Thus any change to the political status of East Timor would be detrimental to their interests. Consequently, this group established various militia groups, allegedly with the assistance of the Indonesian military (McDonald et al. 2002), and carried out torture and killings around East Timor. As reported in *The New York Times*:

Last weekend 2,000 supporters of East Timor autonomy within Indonesia, armed with assault rifles, muskets, bows and arrows, spears and machetes rampaged through Dili, the provincial capital, attacking homes and offices of known and suspected supporters of independence. The toll is unlikely to be known, though accounts of up to 30 people killed are regarded as credible. Fearing persecution, scores of people have fled into the mountains, a common refuge since the days of the Indonesian military invasion in 1975. The violence has driven many independence supporters and their leaders underground (*The New York Times* 25 April 1999: 1-2).

As a result of militia activities between January and August 1999, as many as 150,000 people were classified as Internally Displaced People (IDP). After much wrangling, sporadic killings of civilians by militia groups and two postponements, the referendum was eventually held on 30 August 1999. On the ballot day, there was a 99 percent turn out in which 344,580 electors or 78.5 percent voted to reject the Indonesian proposal while 94,388 or 21.5 percent agreed with it, thus paving the way towards independence (Babo Soares 20001: 56).

Soon after the announcement of the referendum result, once again, Indonesian military backed militia groups reacted by burning, looting and...
killing more than one thousand people, while more than 250,000 people fled, or were forcefully driven, into Indonesian West Timor in the aftermath of the referendum. After international outrage, an international force led by Australia was sent to restore peace in East Timor. Indonesian troops and their created militias evacuated to West Timor ending 24 years of brutal military occupation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Militia Group</th>
<th>Leader</th>
<th>Base</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aitarak (Thorn)</td>
<td>Eurico Guterres</td>
<td>Dili</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mahidi (Mati Hidup Integrası – Dead or Alive, for Integration)</td>
<td>Cancio Lopes</td>
<td>Ainaro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saka</td>
<td>Joanico Belo</td>
<td>Baucau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alfa Team</td>
<td>Joni Marques</td>
<td>Lautem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makikit</td>
<td>Lafaek (Afonso Rangel)</td>
<td>Viqueque</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naga Merah (Red Dragon)</td>
<td>Miguel Soares Babo</td>
<td>Letefoho (Ermera)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darah Merah (Red Blood)</td>
<td>Lafahek Saburai</td>
<td>Ermera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Besi Merah Putih (Red and White Iron)</td>
<td>Manuel Sousa</td>
<td>Liqüica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laksaar (Eagle)</td>
<td>Olivio ‘Moruk’</td>
<td>Suai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABLAI (Aku Berjuang Lestarikan Amanat Integrası – I Struggle for Integration)</td>
<td>Nazario Corte-Real</td>
<td>Same</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dadurus Merah Putih</td>
<td>Natalino Monteiro</td>
<td>Rita-Bou/Maliana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sera</td>
<td>Sera Malik</td>
<td>Bobonaro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rajawali (Eagle)</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jati Merah Putih (True Red and White)</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pana</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Lospalos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mahadomi</td>
<td>Vital Doutel</td>
<td>Manatuto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sakunar</td>
<td>Sarmento &amp; Aquino Caldas.</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahi (Ami Hadomi Integrası – I love Integration)</td>
<td>Simão Lopes</td>
<td>Oe-cussi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1: Militia groups in the lead up to 1999 referendum.

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4 For further information see also Indonesian Daily Newspaper The Jakarta Post 5 October 1999.
5 My parents and the rest of my family fled initially to Kupang but only a week later decided to travel with Catholic nuns to the island of Flores, where they remained for a month before returning to East Timor.
6 For a future analysis of the East Timor population see Terence H. Hull (2000).
III. Defining Independence

Colonial intervention and local dispossession are the main reasons perceived to be behind the resistance between 1975 and 1999.7 While international intervention was the main ingredient in facilitating the political transition in 1999, through international solidarity and the UN sponsored referendum, the East Timorese nevertheless consider their political independence to be the result of their own struggle. Independence has been perceived conceptually as ‘getting rid of the occupier’. Thus, although formal independence was to be decided later, many of my informants referred to 30 August 1999, the date on which the referendum was held, and the period thereafter as ‘the time of independence’ suggesting that independence had come with the end of colonial hegemony. For example, post-September 1999 was commonly referred to in conversations as ‘now that we are independent’ (Agora ita ukun a’an ona).8 This nationalist viewpoint was shared by political activists, and since most of the generation of the time had experienced living under colonial rule and subsequent occupation, to use their terms, independence or ukun a’an (lit., self-rule) was seen as the achievement of the right to self determination and rule themselves.

Independence was thus not only understood as an achievement but was seen in the context of continuity, a concept that embraced the long journey from colonial legacy and local resistance through the culmination of years of struggle, to be free. When asked the definition of independence, East Timorese tend not to give a straightforward answer but provide an

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7 Timorese political leaders often refer to the proud history of the ancestors and argue that their ability to resist rested on their denunciation of colonial imposition and the disposition of indigenous power for exploitation and political hegemony. For further information refer to East Timorese political leader’s speeches and political reports (Gusmão, 1996; Alkatiri, 2000).
8 In discussions and seminars, political activists used Portuguese slogans such as a patria está libertada, mas o povo ainda não está libertado (the country is freed already but the people have not been freed yet), a reference to the fact that much needs to be done to liberate the people from poverty, hunger and destitution.
explanation which reflects their experience, thus situating the whole meaning of independence as a thesis that emerges out of a 'cause and effect' situation. In other words, independence was the hybrid result of colonisation, local dispossession and the endeavour to free oneself from outside hegemony. In the words of João Nunes, “independence embraced the whole concept of recovering and bringing back the peaceful times of the ancestors” – the pre-European period. (Pers. Comm. September 2000).

For political activists, politicians and ordinary people alike, independence was simply explained as a result of ‘we fought against the enemy’ (*ita funu hasouro funu-maluk*). Articulation of the past and its importance in achieving freedom parallel the general understanding in Timorese thinking, of a process that begins from *hun* and terminates with *rohan/dikin*. The end of the colonial legacy and the beginning of self-rule accordingly constitutes the whole concept of *ukun a’an* or independence. We, together, united as a people fought against the colonisers until we became free (Pers. Comm. Juvêncio Martins, September 2000).

This explanation recalls the discussion in Chapter 3 that independence was the fruit of years of struggle and national unity. The notion of national unity or *nacionalismo* therefore represents an important element in the whole process leading up to political freedom. As Xanana Gusmão explained:

> We won the war, not because of military capacity on our part ... but ... [the] fundamental political factor for such a victory to come about was National Unity. The civil war divided the Timorese, the ideologies divided the Timorese. And it was only through ... National Unity with the aim of seeking freedom [and] independence for our Nation, [that] we succeeded in overcoming the enormous and challenging difficulties we encountered in those long years (Gusmão 2000a).

Indeed, to contemporary nationalists, the proud political past transcended ethnic barriers and internal differences. Their understanding of independence
embodied national unity and conscious integration of ethnic groups to unite and fight for the common cause. Being deeply related to the past, the articulation of the concept of *ukun a'an* thus embraces not only time and space, but also consciousness and action. The then leader of FALINTIL, Taur Matan Ruak, remembers the past as an act of considered action that enabled people to collectively accomplish what he called an 'historic mission'. He states,

[Our people came together] to defend their Homeland, our People stood up en masse, offered their sons, fed the guerrilla soldiers, gave shelter, cared for the wounded and thus further encouraged the struggle for the Liberation of our country. *The People, the entire Nation* [emphasis is mine], upheld the FALINTIL banner as their own. This unconditional support of the People ..., made it possible for FALINTIL to accomplish its historic mission: TO LIBERATE OUR HOMELAND (Ruak 2000).

Bringing together the past, the present, and the actions that permeated the two periods embodied a concerted effort to sacrifice, a willingness to contribute and a determination to achieve independence. Indeed, the country's proud history was quoted over and over again by political leaders in their speeches and in seminars which I attended during my fieldwork. Certainly, the reflection of past sacrifices infused nationalistic feelings across the country and among the people (arguably all East Timorese) who believed that they had a stake in this achievement. This included, among others, people who were previously pro-Indonesian but who in later years became independence sympathisers. Euphoria was therefore the most precise way to describe this mood of accomplishment. Nevertheless, what followed independence remained unclear.

IV. Uncertainty in the Post 1999 Referendum Period

In the first five months of my fieldwork (December 1999-May 2000), I became acquainted with a number of politicians and political activists. Dili, being a small town, is not a difficult place in which to make friends. Many of my
acquaintances – both local activists and newly arrived international staff working for UNTAET – regarded Dili as an appropriate meeting place and as a venue where words would not pass unnoticed. Indeed, the sense of closeness among people made it often difficult, as the East Timorese used to say, ‘to keep one’s business away from other’s eyes’. My Timorese friends would say that in Dili, ‘my business is everybody else’s business’, whereas my foreign friends would make the joke that ‘Dili is a city full of gossip’. Both statements underline the communally oriented character of relationships among the people in that city. As most of the politics of state took place in Dili and was concentrated mainly in the offices of UNTAET, CNRT and various political parties, it was not difficult to find people with whom to discuss issues on the topic in which I was interested.

I became acquainted and closely affiliated with members of two prominent Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). Initially, I came to know members of the Yayasan Hukum, Hak-Azasi dan Keadilan, the Law, Human Rights and Justice Foundation, popularly known as the Hak Foundation (Yayasan Hak), a respected local Human Rights NGO in East Timor.10 I became indirectly involved with this NGO because its director at the time was one of my university friends.11 This particular NGO shared an office with another local study group which called itself the Sahe Institute for Liberation (SIL).12

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9 Pers. Comm. Cirilo José Cristovão, 22 August 2002. Cirilo was a lawyer and a judge in Dili after 1999. In September 1999 at the height of the militia rampage and forced evacuation to West Timor, he led more than 10 trucks of people heading to Lospalos. He was interrogated by the militia in Metinaro (outskirts of Dili) but was not hurt. Some members of his group were tortured and killed at that time.

10 I would like to express my sincere gratitude to members of this NGO who were ‘good friends’ throughout my fieldwork and were able to make it possible to discuss various issues – formally and informally – with me. Particular in this is, Aniceto Lopes, José Luis, Lito Exposto, Aniceto Neves, Leão, Oscar, Lazaru, Rui Viana, Nuno Hanjan, Joaquim Fonseca, Nugroho Kacasungkana, Titi Herawati and others.

11 At the time, the director of Yayasan HAK, Aniceto Guterres was kind enough to accept me as a friend and allow me to use the facilities in his office. In the lead up to the hand over of power from UNTAET to the government of East Timor on 20 May 2002, he was appointed as the head of the East Timor Commission for Truth, Reception and Reconciliation.

12 I would like to mention specifically the members of this group who were always available to discuss what they call “sociological issues”, particularly Adérito de Jesus Soares and Abel.
Sahe is the nickname of an East Timorese student (Vicente Reis alias Bie Ki Sahe)\textsuperscript{13} who returned from Portugal in 1975 and, along with his friends, introduced the grass-roots development ideas of Paulo Freire, a Brazilian activist in the 1960s (Jolliffe 1978a; Hill 2000).\textsuperscript{14} Sahe was killed together with his comrades during the struggle against Indonesia. This small study group used Sahe's name to honour his achievement and dedication in educating rural East Timorese.

With both NGOs, I travelled frequently to the districts and villages to hold workshops about democracy, human rights and to listen to people's grievances during that period. Usually, upon return to Dili, such issues would be discussed and analysed with those interested in the topic. Being a close contact, I found myself involved in those discussions, particularly on issues pertaining to the existing political process. Two of the most debated issues were \textit{nacionalismo}, and the growing dissatisfaction and conflict among political groups in Dili throughout that period. I enjoyed the openness and the in-depth quality of analysis during those discussions in which the discussants attempted to ascertain the nature and roots of conflict, an issue which until then was regarded by many as a hidden, if not taboo, topic. I became involved because the discussions were linked to my topic of research. Often, people with some degree of knowledge were invited to speak at weekly seminars. A noted Indonesian academic with an interest in East Timor, George Aditjondro; the former FALINTIL commander Raul, now

\textsuperscript{13} After the Carnation Revolution in Portugal which overthrew the António de Oliveira Salazar and António de Spinola regime, many educated East Timorese who studied in Portugal and educated nationalists in the 1970s, began to popularise Timorese names. They used Timorese names, instead of their names given when they were baptised in accordance with the Catholic Church. Sahe is one of them, and many later names like Xanana, Mau Lear, Lu-Olo, Hodu Ran Kadalak are examples of the use of local names by East Timorese nationalist leaders.

\textsuperscript{14} Sahe however was not part of the five leftist students who returned from Lisbon in 1974 and played a major role in influencing FRETILIN's ideology at the time. These were Abílio Conceição Araújo Abrantas, Francisco Borja da Costa, Antonio Duarte Cavarino, Vinaco Gomez and Hamis Bassarewan whose involvement was seen to increase militancy within FRETILIN in 1974-1975 (See \textit{The Jakarta Post} [Undated] 2002).
colonel Falur Rate Laek; and the former president of CNRT, later to be the president of East Timor, Xanana Gusmão, were some of the speakers. In addition, former political ‘dissidents’ such as members of CPD-RDTL were also invited to participate.

Two of the topics discussed among political activists, notably by the members of the two NGOs, were the chaotic situation and political uncertainty after independence. Political uncertainty was the major concern. Indeed, that period saw the emergence of various political groups and growing political rivalry, as well as politically motivated social conflict around the country. Political differences stemming from past individual frictions, ideological differences, as well as culturally based divisions were also widespread, which

\[15\] As part of their work, Yayasan HAK and SIL were also involved actively in discussions with UNTAET regarding the drafting and promulgation of regulations in the new country. This came as UNTAET tried to embrace local civil society amid protest of its poor handling of the situation in East Timor in the first few months.

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reminded people of the early days of the civil war in 1974-1975 and the September 1999 political turmoil.

Plate 4.2: Some members of Yayasan HAK posing after discussing the impact of political developments in Dili on the people in the villages (Photo: ....)

What was interesting about these developments was the quick spread of conflict, social tension and street battles. Fighting in the streets between gangs allegedly affiliated with certain political groups occurred regularly for months. People were also divided over the issue of *kiraku* and *kaladi* (see Chapter 8). Dili residents who had just begun to recover from the September 1999 mayhem complained about this instability. Apart from the chaos in the streets, prominent claims over property (see Fitzpatrick 2002: 1-43), together with individual and personal accusations against each other on the basis of past political differences dominated people's relations. Some accused others of collaborating with the Indonesian army and working as *mau-hu* (lit., the blower), a reference to Timorese working as secret agents for the Indonesian military.¹⁶ Some pro-independence supporters insulted or beat those accused

¹⁶ *Hu* literally means 'to blow' and *Mau* is the generic first name among the Mambai to refer to male names such as in other common names such as Maubere, Mauzande, Maulear and so on. This expression, *mau-hu*, became popular in early 1990s, a reference to those who would not hesitate to "blow people's lives" (*hu ema nia vida*) or those who earned money by providing information to the Indonesian military.
Likewise, political conflict was also heightened, particularly when the ensuing conflict among political groups and their leaders intensified. These developments, within the East Timorese political community, continued for the next two years. In addition, after the referendum, amid competition for jobs and education, some sections within the community attempted to give preference to certain groups of people for their sacrifices in the past.\(^\text{17}\) Claims of preference were so high that when he travelled to Sydney, Australia, to receive the Sydney Peace Prize on 9 November 2000, Xanana Gusmão criticised the situation:

> Some political parties consider themselves to have an historic mandate for the simple fact that they were established immediately following the events of 25 April 1974 in Portugal, seemingly forgetting that they too caused the Maubere people great suffering. These parties attempt to act against the desire for political stability, trying desperately to evoke nostalgia for the political monoliths of the early years, which have left their marks on the minds of our people (Gusmão 2000b).

Likewise, rumours circulated in Dili that preference should be given to veterans of the resistance when it came to government positions and jobs. Classification of war veterans was divided into three levels: Armed combatants occupied the first level, followed by former clandestine members and then members of the diplomatic front. Very often, members of the diplomatic front were seen by the others to have, as the East Timorese put it in Tetum, *matan sorin-balu deit* (lit., only one eye), meaning they were not acknowledged. However, since the parameters for being classified as a

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\(^{17}\) When I arrived in Dili on 20 December 1999, a fight occurred in my parents’ neighbourhood. One of the residents mobilised his friends to assault and beat another man in the neighbourhood accusing the latter of being an arsonists in the neighbourhood. Indeed, the man who was beaten was known as a staunch supporter of integration with Indonesia before the August 1999 referendum. Many houses in the neighbourhood, as in any parts of East Timor at the time, were burnt in the September 1999 violence, and since the house of this former supporter of Integration was untouched and remained intact, suspicion about his involvement in destroying the houses was high.

\(^{18}\) I would refer to the period from late 1999 and throughout the year 2000 as a ‘tense’ period. Anger with the East Timorese pro-Indonesian collaborators for the destruction in 1999 was so widespread that distrust among people in towns and cities was common. Many East Timorese, I observed, spoke highly of the guerrilla fighters and members of clandestine groups, an assessment that later created discontent among the wider population.
'veteran' were unclear, everyone could claim to have contributed to the war (Xanana Gusmão in *Suara Timor Lorosae*, 20 August 2002). Groups such as students who organised protests in the cities throughout Indonesia, and individuals who claimed to be sympathisers of the struggle believed that they received little recognition since they were excluded from the three levels above. As a former member of a clandestine activist group and a former student at the University of East Timor (UNTIM) told me:

Why now do people not value our [contribution in the] struggle? Currently, those of us who fought in the cities are considered worthless. It is a pity, once we held demonstrations and gave ourselves to confront the guns [of the Indonesian army] – we were lucky not to have been killed. Our death could have been in vain. [These people do not recognise] the students' effort [as part of struggle]. Now, only the outsiders [reference to the diasporic Timorese] and those who held the guns [reference to the guerrillas] are regarded as true warriors (Pers. Comm. José Antonio Neves, 2 April 2001).

The events in the post 1999 referendum period posed questions to many East Timorese, including whether the sense of *nacionalismo* that bound them as a people during the years of war would be sustainable in the new political atmosphere? They also wondered what impact the changes in the political landscape would have on the daily lives of people and how the population would perceive these changes. For the political activists, *nacionalismo*, an almost mythical word, seemed to be disappearing. The sense of an *imagined community* (Anderson 1991), that had been built through years of painful struggle against outsiders and which had been used to present East Timorese as one people, was fading away. For the East Timorese, at this juncture, national unity did not necessarily guarantee long-lasting peace. In this sense, national unity was merely a means to achieve an objective when it was needed: once the invaders had gone there was no objective to achieve. The bond that kept the East Timorese together began to break down and differences among the nationalist forces re-emerged. To understand this in
detail, the next section explores the nature of the conflict and division among nationalist factions during the resistance.

V. Divisions during the Indonesian Period

- Background

Although it was common knowledge among East Timorese that divisions that were beginning to take shape in their country embraced not only the competition for power but also included old political differences, some of which dated back to the years of struggle, such issues were not discussed publicly. Among the various discussions I had with political activists and members of the key NGOs, the common perception was that the political differences among politicians during the period could be traced back to the years of funu against Indonesia. Indeed, reference to the past remained little known to many of the later generation. Not even those who belonged to the older generation could relate a story about past differences in a systematically authentic way. Some who claimed to know what had happened in the early 1980s dared not speak, arguing that these were sensitive issues. Thus, why did the past matter so much in the present context? This was due to the nature of the conflict which concentrated on symbolic differences originating in the past. These included the demand that no new proclamation of independence should be declared in East Timor, but reference should be made to the proclamation of independence on 28 November 1975 (Chapter 2). In addition, supporters of FRETILIN asserted that there should be a full and unconditional restoration of the flag, symbols and the Constitution of the

19 As I have argued elsewhere in this thesis, some informants blamed the competition for political position in the new government for the renewed division and friction among political actors and groups in the post-Independence East Timor.

20 Indeed, while writing this thesis, UNTAET, which had administered East Timor for two years and seven months (October 1999-May 2002), handed over power to the newly elected political party, FRETILIN. In the Constitution of East Timor, the FRETILIN dominated Constitutional Assembly voted to re-install the date 28 November 1975 as the date of Independence, legalising the proclamation declared by the same party 24 years earlier.
short-lived RDTL in 1975. In fact, many in East Timor perceived that the struggle for independence was not the fruit of FRETILIN alone. Likewise, the demand that other non-FRETILIN political groups – most of which switched sides and supported independence in 1999 – should apologise for the mistakes they had committed in the past (for supporting integration with Indonesia), became a hotly contested issue, which triggered disappointment and threatened stability as a whole. Finally, the persistent demand by CPD-RDTL, UDT and FRETILIN that CNRT should be dismantled also became a topic of dispute in the post-1999 period. The following section explains the basis underlying these conflicts and delves further into the forms of divisions which have been left unresolved since the 1980s.

- Structural Change and the Roots of Current Divisions

FRETILIN and Non-FRETILIN Factions

The divisions in October 1999 and onwards were closely associated with the political circumstances of 1974-1975 and the period thereafter. This is understandable since the major differences occurred mainly among leaders, most of whom were leaders of traditional political parties in 1974-1975. Thus, the source of their rift and its consequences in the post-independence period can be traced back to the political behaviour of such groups during the years of resistance against Indonesia. This was the best way to seek, as the East Timorese put it, the hunlabbut and rohan causes of the contradiction.

First and foremost was the accusation by traditional non-FRETILIN political parties (UDT, APODETI, KOTA and Trabalhista) that FRETILIN killed many...
of their compatriots during the civil war in 1974-1975. Such accusations referred to the extra judicial killings in the aftermath of a failed coup by UDT in 1974. For example, the president of APODETI, José Osorio Soares, who was also imprisoned in Aileu, was later killed along with other fellow prisoners (Babo Soares 2000a: 7) allegedly by retreating FRETILIN forces. Along with Osorio Soares, a number of other detainees were also killed. Others escaped unharmed and later publicised their stories (Ramos-Horta 1981). As FRETILIN took control of the situation, it is not surprising some of these crimes were forgotten. Nevertheless, evidence of subsequent capture, detention and killing of non-FRETILIN supporters in a prison in Aileu district is well documented. As reported in The Jakarta Post, an Indonesian English newspaper in 1985:

Amnesty International also confirmed receiving reports of human rights violations by FRETILIN, including the killing and serious ill-treatment of prisoners held in Dili and Aileu. It also received a statement issued by FRETILIN itself, announcing the execution, in December 1983 of a number of alleged collaborators, as well as complaints about FRETILIN brutality made by Carlos Filipe Ximenes Belo, the Bishop of Dili, in interviews given in 1984 (Amnesty International 1985).

These accusations by non-FRETILIN factions came as a response to the accusations made earlier by FRETILIN supporters that the former had actively supported East Timor’s incorporation into Indonesia and abandoned the struggle for independence in the past. Non-FRETILIN factions who had responded to – then independence leader – Xanana Gusmão’s call for national unity in the 1980s, and turned themselves into pro independence

23 Arsénio Ramos-Horta, the brother of East Timor resistance spokesperson who was not a FRETILIN supporter was captured and tortured in the bush in the late 1970s. He later surrendered to the Indonesian army and published a book entitled, The Eyewitness. The book details his own experience of three years in the jungles of East Timor, most of the time allegedly as a FRETILIN prisoner. Arsenio argued that he witnessed thousands of prisoners massacred by FRETILIN between the years of 1975 to 1978. Whether such accounts were true or made under duress while in custody of the Indonesian military, they represent personal stories of former FRETILIN detainees. For information see Arsenio Ramos-Horta (1981).

24 Aileu has an emotional attachment for me. In 1975, I visited – along with my family – the husband of my mother’s sister, Tonilio Franco, who was captured and detained in a prison there. According to later reports, Indonesian forces killed him after he escaped from FRETILIN’s prison.
sympathisers, resented the fact that they were blamed for the claims they had renounced (Pers. Comm. João Baptista, August 2002). Members of non-FRETILIN factions who sympathised with independence and cast their votes in support of independence in August 1999 felt betrayed. These groups, although having sympathised with independence for a long time, only joined the nationalist umbrella, CNRT, in 1998, in support of the notion of a National Unity Pact proposed by the incumbent President of East Timor while he was the leader of the resistance in the 1980s (Pres. Comm. João Baptista, August 2002). When CNRT was appointed to represent the independence faction in the 1999 referendum, these non-FRETILIN groups continued to extend their support. After the referendum, when accusations were made that these non-FRETILIN groups should be held accountable for their past actions, they became disillusioned and turned the issue into a source of conflict. Nevertheless, being politically weak, most statements made by non-FRETILIN factions took a conciliatory tone and gave the impression that they rejected any confrontation. When FRETILIN (and UDT) decided to withdraw from CNRT in August 2000, these non-FRETILIN groups remained loyal to Xanana Gusmão.

Differences during the Struggle

The second reason for conflict in the post 1999 period can be traced to the years of struggle against Indonesia. This conflict among erstwhile FRETILIN supporters was based on symbolic differences and the claim to legitimacy: Who had the right to represent FRETILIN? Friction and division among these

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25 I had a chance to talk to João Baptista who was a strong supporter of integration with Indonesian until the early 1980s but turned independence supporter when he cast his vote in the 1999 referendum (Pers. Comm. 20 August 2002).

26 While it is true that some political leaders of non-FRETILIN parties in 1970s later decided to collaborate with Indonesia, not all members advocated this idea. As the political landscape changed with Indonesian intervention, many former supporters of these parties changed allegiance to support the resistance. One example is the leader of APODETI, a party that formerly supported integration with Indonesia, Frederico de Almeida. In the post-1999 referendum, together with his colleagues, he re-named the party APODETI Pro-Referenda, suggesting that integration with Indonesia was no longer a platform of the party.
political groups and individuals occurred when the resistance experienced a number of setbacks, especially from 1978 onwards, before it reorganised in 1986. Resistance at this time was carried out under the banner of FRETILIN. The story began when FRETILIN and its army wing, Forças Armadas da Libertação de Timor Leste (FALINTIL) or the Armed Forces for the Liberation East Timor retreated to Aileu, 60 km south of Dili (Subroto 1997) upon the Indonesian invasion of Dili on 7 December 1975. This district is also where FRETILIN opponents, including some political figures, were imprisoned between 1974 and 1976. From a nationalist perspective, the invasion was seen as gross interference in East Timor’s affairs, and it is for that reason that FRETILIN, FALINTIL and thousands of people fled into the hills in order to resist. In the words of Francisco Xavier do Amaral, “FRETILIN, FALINTIL and the people of East Timor carried out their resistance against Indonesia”. However, it was the dynamics within the resistance that lay at the centre of later disputes.

Following the military invasion in 1975, FRETILIN was reorganised and maintained its resistance on three fronts. FALINTIL, which was known in Portuguese as Frente Armada (Military Front), represented the first front. The second front was pursued by the Frente Diplomática (Diplomatic Front) represented by FRETILIN envoys abroad, and the third was the executive front concentrated in the style of the former Soviet Union Polit Bureau, Comité Central da FRETILIN (The Central Committee of FRETILIN), hereinafter CCF. Through this civil committee, whose members also included members of the military and some East Timorese in the diaspora, decisions about resistance were made. With the reshuffling of the organisation, plus around 2,000 army reserves and light, modern NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation)

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27 In a seminar organised by Forum Komunikasi Maubere (Fordem) on 8 April 2000, Francisco Xavier do Amaral, explained his vision of a guerra urbana (urban war) which led to his capture and detention by the new cadres in the Central Committee of FRETILIN between 1976 and 1977.
weapons, FRETILIN was able to resist Indonesia for three years (Dunn 1996). Nevertheless, between 1975 and 1979, communication on the diplomatic front was paralysed by the intensifying war with Indonesia, when the armed resistance was constantly evading enemy capture.

Military setbacks resulting from Indonesian troops intensive attacks, the threat of famine, lack of medicine and the death of many civilians in the first two years disillusioned many leaders, including the first President of RDTL, Francisco Xavier do Amaral. A Supreme Council of the Resistance was set up in order to respond to the crisis, and a meeting was held in Soibada from 20 May to 2 June 1976. The continuing attacks by the enemy confused members of the CCF and, as disillusionment widened, differences began to surface (Niner 2000). To avoid division, many soldiers were included in the CCF (Gusmão 1998). Nevertheless, because of internal disputes, the CCF did not work effectively. The events of 1976-1977 also led to the arrest and detention of a former President of FRETILIN and the proclaimer of RDTL, Francisco Xavier do Amaral, in September 1977. Xavier do Amaral was deposed and it was alleged that he had sought compromise with the Indonesian forces.

He was deposed as president, charged with treason, and placed in custody. He was accused of planning secret negotiations with the enemy, plotting to seize full power, creating divisions between the military and civilian sections of the resistance, not paying enough attention to the war, and behaving like a traditional feudal lord (Niner 2000: 13). 29

Xavier do Amaral was later captured by the Indonesian army and became an advocate for integration with Indonesia (Dunn 1996). Xavier’s Vice-President, Nicolau dos Reis Lobato, replaced him. Nevertheless, only a year later, on 31 December 1978, when the last pocket of the resistance in the mountains of Matebian fell to the Indonesian army, Nicolau was killed. Sarah Niner calls

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28 These NATO made weapons were obtained because of Portugal’s membership in the organisation.
29 Xanana Gusmão also detailed the behaviour of Francisco do Xavier do Amaral during the resistance in his bibliography (Gusmão, 1994: 26).
the death of Nicolau the end of the first phase of the resistance (Niner 2000).
In a rare public revelation of his political past, Xavier do Amaral’s version of
his capture and detention by his own comrades is explained as follows:

The problem started when we were still living in Dili [before the
invasion] and when Alarico Fernandes [the then information minister]
heard that there were some people in FRETILIN who wanted to
‘dethrone’ the mestiços. There was a time when we [myself, Rosa Muki
Bonaparte, the then head of the women’s group and Alarico
Fernandes] were having coffee at my house ... Then Alarico asked if I
had heard the rumours that the native East Timorese wanted to
annihilate the mestiços. I said, I did not know. Then, Alarico punched
the table shaking it very strongly, causing the coffee to spill and
knocking over the cups. Then, when we were in the mountains [he
refers to these as ai-laran or bush] in 1977, in a place called Bucoli [a
sub-district of Baucau], I observed that the situation was deteriorating.
There was mass starvation, there were people dying from starvation
while the enemy was on its way in our direction. Then, I proposed
that the civil population should be allowed to surrender [then go and
live in the towns]. In my opinion, before the people were told to
surrender [to the Indonesian troops], they should be taught or be
politcised so that when they had settled in the towns they could
undertake political activities. What I had in mind was to shift the
[strategy of] war from the villages to the towns [my emphasis]. I
wanted to start ‘guerra urbana’ [urban based war]. Because [in my
view], strategically, after witnessing the two years of war, we were
militarily powerless against Indonesia. Economically, we did not have
money whereas the enemy continued to strengthen themselves and
our people continued to die. Geographically, we were not like
Cambodia, Mozambique or Angola, which are connected to other
countries and might acquire [military] assistance from the allies. In
our case, Indonesia surrounded us [East Timor] and big countries like
America continued to support Indonesia. Based on all these
considerations, I started to ponder changing the strategy of war from
‘guerra rural’ [village-led war] to ‘guerra urbana’. Yet, as I said, before
introducing this approach, we need to educate the people first.30

30 Francisco Xavier do Amaral, speaking at a conference organised by Forum Komunikasi
Maubere (Fordem) on 8 April 2000. This testimony was the first public revelation of his own
version of the events surrounding his capture and detention by his own political party in 1977.
His account differs from Xanana Gusmão’s account in his bibliography described elsewhere
in this thesis. See Chapters 5 and 6 for more information.
While Xavier's version of history may still be a long way from being substantiated, stories about the events of the late 1970s resurfaced after the post-1999 referendum. Divisions among political groups were based largely on such events.

The drawback to the above development was that in the restructuring process FRETILIN dismantled the existing traditional structure of rule by liurai, claiming it to be a feudally oriented system that prevented the mobilisation of the population and failed to meet requirements in terms of FRETILIN's politico-military strategy. In fact, many of the guerrillas were people who had formerly lived in the villages. Their emotional attachment to their traditional rulers was deemed indispensable. The change from a political to a full-scale war strategy further exacerbated the situation. Disillusioned by the situation, some members of CCF pursued a change in ideology and transformed the previously nationalist movement FRETILIN into a left-wing movement. According to members of this group, this change of approach was deemed necessary to respond to the exigencies of the war (Gusmão 1998). FRETILIN was then called Marxista-Leninista FRETILIN (MLF), a change that was made, as Xanana Gusmão said in his bibliography, 'without measuring the consequence of such an act' (Gusmão 1998). This act, coupled with pressure from Indonesian forces, caused widening differences and disagreements among members of the resistance. With this change of ideology, MLF embraced the 'single-revolutionary' idea and denounced the anti-revolutionaries as 'reactionary' or 'counter-revolutionary'. Consequently, many cadres were captured, tortured and killed by their own comrades.

31 As I have and will argue later in this thesis, political leaders, most of whom belonged to the 1975 generation are now turning into politicians. Most of them prefer not to reveal what happened in the war, particularly what they call “mistakes committed among us” (For example, Xanana Gusmão’s unwritten speech in CNRT Congress 28 August 2000).

32 According to Hodu Ran Kadalak, a former commander of FRETILIN, in Neon Metin, an underground monthly bulletin issued by the RENETIL in Bali, the change from FRETILIN to MLF was merely a political strategy to respond to the exigencies of war and not an ideological orientation per se. (Forthcoming book by Carlos da Silva Lopes: Pers. Comm with the author, September 2001).
(Niner 2000), something that has received very little attention from East Timor’s chroniclers. Nevertheless, this tragic event served as a cause for many later divisions and led to the emergence of opposing groups. One example is CPD-RDTL in the post referendum period. 33

Three years after the death of the first commander of the resistance, Nicolau Lobato, he was replaced by Jose Alexandre ‘Xanana’ Gusmão. Together with his remaining friends, Gusmão organised the First National Conference entitled ‘The Re-organisation of the Country’. This meeting was held in Lacluta in March 1981 and led to a total restructure of FRETILIN. The war was then directed from/by the newly established council known as Conselho Revolucionário da Resistência Nacional (National Council for Revolutionary Resistance) or CRRN.

As a result of the transformation from MLF to CRRN, a conflict occurred between members of the resistance. One group rejected the change of name, claiming it would violate the principles of the struggle. Another group, of which Xanana Gusmão was a member, disagreed and rather advocated a conciliatory approach. Despite this, open conflict broke out and led to the killing of a number of resistance members, including Reinaldo Freitas Belo (Kilik Waegae), 34 Commander Aquilis Frederico Freitas Soares, Agostinho do Espirito Santo, Fernando de Sousa, Adão Amaral, José dos Santos, José Exposto and other cadres. Perreira (1999) argues that: The CRRN suffered internal struggle which led to the [political] demise of some leaders and the [actual] death of others. Under the Marxist-Leninist Party structure, Mauk Moruk, alias, Paulino Gama – the then First Commander of the Red Brigades – and Kilik Wae Gae, the Chief of Staff of FALINTIL, were two of the key

33 CPD-RDTL traces its roots to 20 May 1974, the birth of Associação Social Democrática Timorese (ASDT), later to become FRETILIN. It comprises people and groups who ‘disagreed’ with Xanana’s faction, which in later years came to be known as the National Council of Maubere Resistance (CNRM) and then CNRT.
34 Kilik was then the Chief of Staff (Chefe do Estado Maior) of FALINTIL.
figures brought down by the process for defending the continuation of the Marxist-Leninist FRETILIN Party (Perreira 1999).

At the CNRT Congress in August 2000, this issue was raised for the first time in public. The family of five victims, namely Ponciano dos Santos Fátima, Aquiles Frederico Freitas Soares, António Freitas, João Teodozio de Lima and Agostinho do Espírito Santo (Mau-Leki) presented a message to the Congress asking for an inquiry to be made into these deaths. So far, there has not been any attempt to inquire openly into such events. Instead, while keeping the issue closed, opponents of CNRT have used the issue to challenge Xanana Gusmão’s authority. Some members of the current FRETILIN party have also used the same events to threaten each other, thus making this ‘untold’ story a continuing source of division in East Timor politics. With regard to the death

Plate 4.3: Xanana Gusmao, chatting with bishop Belo, the Noble Laurcate (Photo: www.lusa.pt).

35 These are the names of people killed in FRETILIN internal conflicts, and who died in different areas. The names were extracted from a message sent by their families who demanded an explanation from the CNRT Congress on 20-30 August 2000, I have obtained an original copy of this message while conducting fieldwork.
of Kilik Wagae, there are two positions. One, from the opponents of Xanana Gusmao, contends that Kilik Wae Gae was killed by the group in which Xanana was a member. The second position maintains that Kilik Wae Gae was killed during combat by the advancing Indonesian forces.

In 1983, after Xanana took control of the resistance leadership of CRRN and FALINTIL, he successfully compelled the Indonesian forces to accept a cease-fire. The cease-fire resulted in CRRN and Indonesia dividing the area of control into two halves, the eastern part of East Timor controlled by the resistance group and the western part controlled by the Indonesian army (Babo Soares 2000a). This was the first time FALINTIL had been given room to move around the territory, which then provided the chance for FRETILIN to reorganise itself. Clandestine groups were also formed (Niner 2000). During the cease-fire, Xanana and his group used the opportunity to tour East Timor and to consult widely. From this consultation he began the process of pluralizing the resistance (Gusmao 1998). Nevertheless, the incoming military commander in Jakarta, Leonardus Benedictus Moerdani, violated the cease-fire. The Indonesian military (TNI) then began another military campaign, code named Operasi Pagar Betis (Fence of Legs Operation), which aimed to force the East Timorese to walk ahead of the troops advancing on FRETILIN’s positions in an attempt to smoke out the guerrillas from their bases and hideouts. It resulted in the deaths of hundreds of civilians due to illness and starvation (Taylor 1991; Singh 1995).

36 This delicate issue was not discussed at all during my fieldwork. I, as do many other informants, suspect that the deaths of some of these former FRETILIN members will remain unclear, although suspicions remain high among members of the resistance.
37 Pers. Comm with commander (now colonel in East Timor Defence Force) Mau-Nana Kaer-O-Mate (lit., Mau-Nana Catch You Die) on 27 August 2002. Mau-Nana was a second commander in the eastern sector (sector I) during the struggle against Indonesia. I had the chance to discuss this topic with him when he visited Canberra in late August 2001 to attend training, organised by the Australian Defence Department. However, as many other respondents whom I talked to before, he refused to go into detail about the events which occurred at the time.
38 There was another version from the Indonesian government that the Indonesian army cancelled the cease-fire because FALINTIL used the opportunity to re-arm and escape with much TNI weaponry.
In 1984, facing isolation from the world and other non-FRETILIN factions in East Timor, the CRRN launched a policy of ‘National Unity’. Xanana’s group intended to embrace not only other factions opposing integration with Indonesia, but also those who were working within the Indonesian government. There were four reasons for pushing ahead with this idea. Firstly, facing internal division and the decline of numbers in the armed struggle, it was unlikely that FRETILIN alone would be able to resist Indonesia because it lacked the support of other groups. Therefore, a strategy of national unity was necessary. Second, after travelling around East Timor for several months following the death of Nicolau dos Reis Lobato, Xanana received support not only from FRETILIN supporters, but from the population at large, which convinced him to adopt this approach (Gusmão 1998). Third, the division and conflict between UDT and FRETILIN overseas led him to realise that FRETILIN could not rely on itself to carry out the resistance without the support of other East Timorese political groups. Fourth, the new generation of East Timorese had, by then, forgotten the former political affiliations of their parents and saw Indonesia as their common enemy, which made them aware that independence was the only option. In light of this, Xanana

... asked everyone to admit the mistakes of the past. He called for the creation of a common nationalist platform. He declared that all atrocities committed during the counter-UDT coup and in the early resistance period would be punished and those who had suffered or committed atrocities would be guaranteed freedom of expression. He ended the message declaring: “The war is the cause of all the fighting ... misunderstanding ... between the sons and daughters of East Timor” (Niner 2000: 13).

Indeed, in March 1986, a National Convergence Pact was signed in Lisbon between UDT and FRETILIN leaders, but working together was still a long way ahead. Internal differences between the two made the pact unworkable. On the one hand, the lack of experience among East Timorese diaspora, who had little access to politics placed the National Unity Pact in question. On the
other hand, most of the younger generation in towns and cities who supported independence were not necessarily of FRETILIN background. Some of them were even born of parents who were previously supporters of Indonesia.\footnote{Reference can be made to a guerrilla commander known by his friends as Pai-Zito who was killed in the 1990s in an ambush by the Indonesian army. His father Frederico de Almeida, founder of APODETI, the party who supported integration with Indonesia but later switched sides and became a pro independence supporter with CNRT. He re-established APODETI in 2000 and renamed it APODETI \textit{pro-Referendo} and ran in the election of Constituent Assembly in August the same year. Pai-Zito's remains were collected on 20 May 2003 along with hundreds others to be buried properly by their families.} Acknowledging that positioning FRETILIN as the sole and legitimate representative of the resistance was unworkable, the strategy of war was changed from inside East Timor. On 7 December 1986, Xanana declared that FALINTIL, the armed wing, was unaligned to any political party. One year later, on 7 December 1987 or eleven years after the Indonesian military invasion of East Timor, Xanana Gusmão submitted his formal resignation to FRETILIN and CRRN, and established \textit{Conselho Nacional da Resistência Maubere} (CNRM) or the National Council of Maubere Resistance.

CNRM, an umbrella organisation, had the following objectives: First, to unify factions within the resistance, which had remained divided until then; second, to embrace all factions in the East Timorese political community in the war against Indonesia; and third, to develop the three aspects of resistance into a more nationalistic effort rather than on the basis of only one political group's mandate. Thus, the new mission of the diplomatic front, the clandestine movement and the military arm (FALINTIL) was to fight for the liberation of the country and dismiss factionalist ideas (Babo Soares 2000a: 60). Nevertheless, new problems arose around the perception of national unity.
Factors Challenging the National Unity Pact

Three factors that later challenged the ‘National Unity’ pact were related to the use of the term *maubere* and the process of restructuring within FRETILIN. The term *maubere* is a common male name among the Mambai and other language groups, which was used derogatively by the Portuguese to refer to the East Timorese but which was taken up by FRETILIN to refer to ordinary nationalists. UDT rejected the word *maubere* due to the fact that the word did not necessarily represent East Timorese society (Babo Soares 2000a). During the colonial period, *maubere* was used to distinguish the ordinary East Timorese from the Portuguese, as well as the *mestîos* (Traube 1986). UDT, therefore saw the term *maubere* as an insult to the East Timorese in general.

The second factor was the denouncement of the revolutionary Marxist ideology (MLF) and the shift of the decision-making power from FRETILIN (re-MLF) to CRRN and then CNRM inside East Timor. This restructuring angered a number of FRETILIN members. Opponents argued that only FRETILIN could command the struggle and not other political parties or movements, including those newly established. Some groups within FRETILIN saw the establishment of CNRM as a violation of the principle of struggle. So too, the creation of CNRM, according to the same opponents, was also problematic because it incorporated those who had formerly cooperated with Indonesia. During my fieldwork, FRETILIN, although claiming to respect the National Unity Pact, denounced the progeny CNRM and the late CNRT as no longer valid, an issue which continues to be a source of contemporary conflict and division in East Timor politics.

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40 The UDT official version of the term Maubere was made public on the Internet on the UDT webpage [http://www.unitel.net/udttimor/duvesclarlinguas.html](http://www.unitel.net/udttimor/duvesclarlinguas.html) entitled *Dúvidas e Esclarecimentos* (Doubts and Explanations). The then Bishop Carlos Filipe Ximenes Belo made a statement in a Portuguese newspaper *Diário de Noticias* 17 February 1996 that he did not entirely subscribe to the use of the term *maubere*.

41 This view was expressed to me by Francisco Cepeda, former head of FRETILIN Office in its Headquarters in Dili (July 2000).
The third factor was the withdrawal of FALINTIL from FRETILIN by Xanana Gusmão, which made it a national, rather than a factional force. This issue encountered less resistance but continued to be a highly debated topic. This separation was made official with the *Reajustamento Estrutural da Resistência* (Readjustment of the Structure of the Resistance) in December 1988 to correspond to the exigencies in the field. Xanana Gusmão was elected the leader and José Ramos-Horta was appointed the official spokesperson for the resistance abroad. This change of strategy and ideology, although welcomed by non-FRETILIN factions, was opposed by Abílio Araújo, the leader of the FRETILIN Central Committee in Portugal. He argued that Xanana had
disregarded the sacrifices made by, and the noble intentions of, previous leaders (Niner 2000). Abílio Araújo was then dismissed from FRETILIN abroad and José Luís Gutерres was appointed caretaker pending an extraordinary Congress held in Sydney, in August 1998. At this Congress, leaders of FRETILIN in East Timor were able to participate for the first time and Abílio Araújo who was absent at the time, was officially replaced by a presidium comprised of Lu-Olo, Mau Hudo and Mau Huno inside East Timor, and Mari Alkatiri as the head of the external delegation.42

Amid confusion and tensions within the resistance, in 1988, Abílio Araújo advocated another strategy or what he called the ‘Third Way’ solution for East Timor. Araújo’s group sought autonomy, instead of independence, from Indonesia. For this reason he worked closely with Francisco Lopes da Cruz, the then Indonesian ambassador for East Timor affairs and daughter of the then president of Indonesia, Siti Hardyanti Rukmana. While it is not clear what Abílio Araújo had in mind when deciding to move in this direction, his opponents have since dubbed him an integrationist. For political activists who were concerned with the events in 1999 these differences constituted barriers to the pact of National Unity advocated earlier by CNRM and later CNRT.43

**Indonesia’s Policy Change and Its Impact on the Resistance**

In December 1988, President Suharto issued Decree No 62 changing East Timor’s ‘closed’ (tertutup) status to an ‘open’ (terbuka) one.44 This new

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42 With the exception of Lu-Olo, Abílio Araújo and Abel ‘Larisina’ Ximenes, all leaders both inside and outside East Timor met for the first time at this Congress.

43 A brief discussion on the change from CNRM to CNRT, see Chapter 4 of this thesis. See also Niner (2000) and Babo-Soares (2000a).

44 Between 1975-1989 Timor Timur, as East Timor was known during the Indonesian period, was placed under military supervision. During that period, foreign visits were restricted, locals were not allowed to speak to foreigners, letters were censured, travelling inside one’s territory and to other places needed a ‘surat jalan’ (letter of passage) issued by the local military commanders.
freedom enabled various clandestine groups, comprising mostly youths who had operated underground before 1989, to organise street demonstrations in Dili and throughout East Timor. These groups were the *Organisasião da Juventude Católica de Timor Leste* (OJECTIL) which later became *Organisasião da Juventude de Timor Leste* (OJETIL), *Frente Iha Timor Unidos Nafatin* (FITUN or lit., star) and *Organisasião Popular Juventude Lorio Ass’wain Timor Leste* (OPJLATIL) (Babo Soares 2000a). One of the demonstrations was on 12 November 1991, in front of the Santa Cruz cemetery, during which Indonesian troops shot dead more than 200 students.

A number of East Timorese students in Indonesian Universities at Java and Bali also established their own clandestine groups such as the *Resistência Nacional dos Estudantes de Timor Leste Independente* (RENETIL) or The East Timor Students National Resistance front, the *Frente Clandestina Estudantil dos Estudantes de Timor Leste* (FLECLETIL) The Clandestine Front of East Timor students, and the *Liga Estudantes Patriotas* (LEP) or The League of Patriotic Students. Other groups such as *Ikatan Mahasiswa dan Pelajar Timor-Timur* (Impettu) East Timor Students Association were non-political and were established merely to represent the students, but were then used as a *curtina* (lit., curtain) to hide their members’ political activities.45

One year after the killings in Santa Cruz on 12 November 1991, Xanana Gusmão was captured and sentenced to life in prison, a sentence that was subsequently commuted to 20 years in detention. He continued to lead the resistance from his prison in Cipinang, Jakarta. Nevertheless, not all political factions in the East Timor political community were able to sit down together. The establishment of CNRM did little to attract UDT and other factions. After much wrangling, in April 1998, East Timorese political groups met in

45 I was a student in Denpasar, Bali from 1986-1990. I witnessed the establishment of RENETIL as an underground student network while studying there and found how politicised the East Timorese students were. A number of them, including Fernando ‘Lasama’ de Araújo were later captured by the Indonesian army and sentenced to prison for several years.
Peniche, Portugal to discuss the political situation. At the height of the Indonesian economic crisis, all East Timorese both outside and inside the territory, agreed to restructure the resistance body and change its name from CNRM to Conselho Nasional da Resistência Timorense (CNRT) or the National Council of East Timor Resistance. At this meeting, all political factions agreed to submit to CNRT and fight for independence. Xanana Gusmão, despite being absent, was elected leader of the new organisation while José Ramos-Horta and Mário Carrascalão were elected as Vice-Presidents. It was the CNRT that officially represented East Timorese during the referendum. Its flag and attributes were used to represent the symbols of resistance. The April 1998 event in Portugal was seen as the culmination of years of effort to place all divisions in one front and the different factions within the struggle in one faction. Many East Timorese – politicians and activists alike – refer to this achievement as the culmination of the efforts to bring all East Timorese into the framework of ‘National Unity’. Some, during my fieldwork, referred to it as the culmination of ‘nationalism’ (Pers. Comm. Juvéncio de Jesus, 2000), while others referred to it as an effort to restore independence, which had been proclaimed on 28 November 1975.46 In fact, it illustrates how fragile and of limited duration the ‘unity’ of purpose actually was.

VI. Political Groupings

- Background

On 20 September 1999, with the approval of Indonesia and the United Nations, INTERFET arrived in East Timor and subsequently took control of the territory from the Indonesian forces. Barely a month after, UNTAET was established by the Security Council (SC).

46 Discussion with founders and members of CPD-RDTL (Feliciano Mau Siri, Olo-Gari Asswain and Antonio Aitahan Matak, in Balide Dili, 29/02/1999.
With the formation of UNTAET, East Timorese politics experienced an unprecedented revival after being ‘outlawed’ during the 24 years of Indonesian occupation. While the UN administration was the legal government in East Timor from October 1999, a number of democratic institutions were established, political parties were permitted to carry out their activities, and freedom of expression was guaranteed. Thus, in local political circles, East Timorese political entities – political parties and non-political parties as well political activists – operated independently of the UN system. A detail description of how and why new political parties mushroomed in the post 1999 East Timor will be discussed in Chapter 5.

- Party’s Affiliations

After my first three months exploring the field, I was generally able to group the main actors (individuals and political parties/groups) within the East Timorese political community into two major clusters. The first cluster consisted of four groups, who were considered mainstream politicians: First, those who strongly advocated the dissolution of the CNRT. These individuals and political parties were rather exclusive and were independent in their own right and rejected political compromises. The group included the traditional political parties such as FRETILIN and UDT. Second were those who were still considered mainstream political parties and actors but preferred to remain in CNRT. They too pursued a non-compromising approach with their political counterparts. Small and middle-size political parties such as Partido Socialista Timor (PST), Partido Social Democratico (PSD), Klibur Oan Timor Ass’wain (KOTA), Trabalhista (the Labour party), APODETI Pro-Referendo, União Democrática Cristã/ Partido Democratico Cristião (UDC/PDC) and Partido Democrático, which was formed late in the political process, were part of this group. Third were those political parties and groups which acted independently and thus challenged the ongoing political process. They rejected the existence of CNRT and the whole process of political transition.

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This group included *Conselho Pela Defesa-Republica Democratica de Timor Leste* (CPD-RDTL), *Partido Nacionalista de Timor* (PNT), *Partido Popular de Timor* (PPT) and *Associacão Social Democratica de Timor* (ASDT). Nevertheless, a year later, with the exception of CPD-RDTL, the members of this group participated in the election of the Constituent Assembly, in August 2001.

Fourth were those parties that did not necessarily reject CNRT but remained politically independent. This group included *Partido Democratico Cristão* (PDC, different from UDC/PDC) and three newcomers, *Partido Democratico Maubere* (PDM), a political party that was set up in October 2000, *Partido da República de Timor Leste* (Parentil) which was set up in June 2001 and *Partido Liberal* (PL) which was also set up in June 2001, remained neutral.

The second cluster comprised groups that could be distinguished on the basis of generational difference. These included those who were politically active but were not necessarily involved in the decision-making process. Let me call these groups the political activists. The cluster included most of the young political activists, most of whom were graduates and students in Indonesian universities prior to the 1999 referendum. These people had access to the political space and maintained their links with non-political organisations such as academics, former members of the clandestine movement, NGO and voluntary social groups. Their links with non-political groups were so good that they gave the impression that they constituted an independent political community, which was in fact not the case. This was because political activists were also actively involved in social activities. Included in this group were former clandestine activists who were no longer active and preferred to remain out of the political arena.

The identification of such political groups into various factions was based on both differences and similarities between them. These political differences, which often reflected through their verbal threats and physical encounters
between their supporters, presented a real challenge to the post-independence political development.

For former members of clandestine and passive political activists who chose to work for NGOs, outside the political mainstream, these developments were perceived as a process in which different interests, perspectives, ideologies and objectives were employed by opposing groups and individuals to compete for political recognition. Such differences and divisions introduced some uncertainty which reminded them of the civil war in 1975. An activist with the Yayasan Hak complained during a discussion:

Current politics are not based on the principles of national unity. Each person fights to have a place in the government. Everyone wants to be a 'big' person, to have a position within the government. That is why they use politics to pit them against one another (Pers. Comm. Aniceto Neves, 24 July 2000).

The political uncertainty also cast some doubt on the process as a whole. My discussions with a number of people who appeared to be unsatisfied with the political process in Dili, provided me with some understanding of the political situation they were facing. Blame directed towards political leaders was common. Since the divisions in Dili were structured down to the districts and villages, they created antagonistic groups and allowed for the creation of tensions even at the grassroots level. For example, in most of the districts which I visited, people were used to classifying 'who belongs to what' when asked the question 'who supports whom'. My conversations with different individuals pointed to the fact that in a village, different sub-villages (sucos or aldeias) belonged to different political parties.47 In other words, during that period political division was common throughout the country.

47 I am indebted to Luis Gonzaga (Dili), António Guterres (Ermera), Luis Soares (Ermera) and José da Silva (Viqueque) for insights on various occasions during my fieldwork. These people not only became a good source of information; they also helped me to understand the political environment in which they were living.
With each political party trying to attract supporters, rivalries emerged among the political groups within the East Timorese political community. As Indonesian troops left East Timor, all political leaders, both in exile and in hiding, returned to Dili. Mari Alkatiri, Ana Pessoa and Rocke Rodrigues (FRETILIN), João Carrascalão and Domingos de Oliveira (União Democrática Timorense) and Vicente Guterres, leader of the Christian Democratic Union/Christian Democratic Party (União Democrática Cristã/Partido Democrata Cristã - UDC/PDC), a political party founded in Portugal during the struggle. Most of these were leaders of political parties and political groups during the 24-year struggle for independence. Some were leaders from before the invasion of Indonesia on 7 December 1975. In addition, new personalities who appeared as leaders during the struggle joined political parties, and highlighted the history of their political group to denounce rival political parties and groups.

The old political parties reorganised themselves and with the return of Xanana Gusmão to East Timor after his release from Jakarta’s Cipinang prison in September 1999, CNRT members returned to their offices. Among these were the political parties which were affiliated with CNRT. These included UDT, FRETILIN and UDC/PDC. However, it was CNRT that was recognised by the UN since its emblem, flag and other attributes were used to represent East Timor in the 1999 referendum. Other old political parties such as KOTA, Trabalhista and later on APODETI (which changed its name into APODETI pro-referendum in 14 August 2000), also came to the fore. After the September 1999 referendum, CPD-RDTL came into being. Calling itself a movement, not a political party, its followers saw it as equivalent but opposed to CNRT. The emergence of CPD-RDTL added to the increasingly divided FRETILIN and deepened further division within the resistance forces.48

48 For a detailed discussion of CPD-RDTL and division within FRETILIN see Chapter 5.
Such divisions at the top level and fighting among its supporters at the lower level of the society disillusioned the East Timorese at the time. People talked about the unsettled political division of the post-independence period and were dismayed by the fact that the sense of unity was disappearing. Interestingly, most people – particularly ordinary citizens – were not aware of the source that drove the post-independence conflict and divisions among the elite. This was partly because during the 24-year struggle against Indonesia, little attention was given to the dynamics within the East Timorese political community. It was also because of the lack of information provided about the dynamics within the resistance, particularly the relations between different nationalist factions in the past.

Reference to the political struggle tended to be given a positive slant and no mention of internal divisions and differences was made in detail by writers about the East Timorese struggle (Taylor 1991; see also Dunn 1996). In fact, conflicting views as a result of splits among the resistance forces created friction and division in the early 1980s and thereafter. One leader of the conflicting groups – Paulino Gama or Mauk Moruk – who was later captured by the Indonesians and then moved to the Netherlands in the late 1980s attempted unsuccessfully to ‘leak’ information about what he considered ‘crimes’ through some of his unpublished letters, in 2000. These letter were copied and distributed by his sympathisers in Dili alleging the then incumbent political leaders were criminals who ought to be brought to justice. Such information however failed to gain wide publicity or public interest due largely to the fact that Paulino Gama was regarded by some supporters of independence – both inside and outside East Timor – as working for Indonesia after his surrender to the Indonesian army (Perreira 1999). His comments could be taken as propaganda. Another reason was to
avoid cases of internal conflict or dissent being used by the Indonesian government for its propaganda.49

Political activists' discussions of past differences during my fieldwork provided a picture of how developments in the past had come to shape the existing political landscape in East Timor. Most of the discussants belonged to the new generation,50 who grew up knowing only about fighting the enemy (Indonesian forces) but failed to understand the nature of conflict and division among their own predecessors; nor did they have any emotional link with the ideologies of old political parties established in 1974 and 1975.51 Certainly, it became clear that in the post 1999 referendum, these past differences began to re-emerge, not in the sense of public revelation but rather in the form of hidden agenda of different political actors who were still associated with past frictions. Indeed, it was the involvement of the groups represented by the 1970s political actors that intensified the divisions.

VII. Closing Remarks: Euphoria and Factionalism

After the August 1999 referendum, the sense of euphoria was overwhelming. Independence was looked upon with a sense of release, the end of a long and arduous journey and endless sacrifice. The overwhelming sense of euphoria could be seen during the early weeks of my arrival in Dili despite the fact that physical and material destruction caused by the September 1999 in East Timor was huge. People congratulated, hugged and saluted each other for the

49 This was done carefully to avoid the use of such differences by the enemy as happened on 27 July 1995 when Indonesia used the statement of a former partner of José Ramos-Horta, Wendy Holland, to discredit him. See W. Holland (1995).
50 This generation, as I argue later in Chapter 7, is defined as those who were born or were still children in 1974-1975 and therefore had no direct contact with political involvement during that period.
51 As a researcher, I tried to talk to a number of people who are widely tipped as witnesses to what happened in the past. As I argue in Chapter 6, most of these people refused to speak fearing the repercussion of leaking such information. I approached some of them, who lived in Bua-Laran, Kuluhum and Becora, three sub-districts in Dili, but they refused to disclose anything they knew about the past.
achievement, in households, in the streets and in public venues. It was an unprecedented phenomenon in my life. I was lucky to witness this sense of collective achievement, and proud to be part of this generation. Phrases like ‘finally we got what we wanted’; ‘after 500 years (reference to the commonly perceived years of colonial domination), we finally succeeded’; ‘our forbears sowed the seeds, now we harvest’; and other phrases like ‘for me, independence is what matters, the rest is rubbish’ were common in the streets of Dili. Slogans such as ‘to resist is to win’; ‘victory’; ‘united we prevail’ and ‘always once forward never retreat’ were repeated frequently everywhere I went. As João Nunes explained about independence: “it is a long journey that had started centuries ago, but never before, have we prevailed; now we deliver the fruit of what our ancestors have sown” (Pers. Comm. September 2000).

Nevertheless, while the East Timorese were pleased to welcome their newly attained independence and proudly presented their notion of ‘national unity’, new conflicts that occurred at the political level in the post 1999 referendum period presented people with fear and qualms. The period also witnessed attempts by some individuals and political groups to bring to the surface unfinished ‘business’ among members of the resistance during the 24-year struggle against Indonesia. In addition, politically oriented social and economic conflicts also surfaced. For example, new interpretations of the role of each individual or group in the struggle led to clashes and the demand for recognition over a number of competing claims. These included the issue of who was considered to have fought more strongly during the struggle for independence. Likewise, new disparities which led to further conflicts between old and new generations, home-stayers and the diaspora, educated Timorese and non-educated came to the fore. While some of these were seen as merely social issues or economically driven differences, they fuelled divisions within the East Timorese society that contributed to frustration, despair and distrust among their leaders. Interestingly, Xanana Gusmão was
aware of what would happen after independence in January 1999. In his New Year message to the East Timorese he warned his people of the problems facing the country. He argued, "[t]oday, feelings that separate, divide and lead to conflict between us still exist in East Timorese society, although at the National Conference, held in March 1981 we identified National Unity as a prime objective of our struggle" (Gusmão 1999).

The establishment of new political movements after the referendum and their rejection of CNRT were major political hurdles. Next, the unfinished business between CNRT and FRETILIN, the latter being the political party which led the war against Indonesia in the first few years and the initial stake holder of the (former) resistance body was an issue of great concern. FRETILIN wanted to be recognised as the sole nationalist front and rejected CNRT's presence after the post-1999 period. The return of its leaders from Mozambique openly challenged the leadership of CNRT. Another ensuing conflict between FRETILIN and CPD-RDTL over the use of party symbols and attributes led to clashes between supporters of the two political groups in some areas of East Timor (Chapter 5). The FRETILIN split and their disagreement over political jurisdiction and the legitimacy of the party made things worse.

Such political developments called into question the issue of national unity and the sense of *nacionalismo* that many people have subscribed to and believe they could attain once political independence had been achieved. Not surprisingly, questions emerged as to why political groups and parties which have fought for independence and had initially pledged to remain united until the country declared its formal independence decided to go their own ways. To various political activists and some politicians to whom I talked on various occasions, these developments reflected a swift change of atmosphere from independence euphoria to factionalism and division.
Chapter 5

Narrating the Nature of Post-1999 Conflict

I. Introduction

This chapter analyses the forms of internal friction among previous advocates of independence. It outlines the general political mood in the first months after the 1999 referendum, the return of old generation politicians to the political scene in East Timor and the split of FRETILIN. This is then followed by discussion of the conflict between FRETILIN and CPD-RDTL. This was an institutionally oriented conflict, which also involved some degree of personal differences but which was characterised by two things, attempts to claim legitimacy over 'Who is the true representative of FRETILIN?', and the emergence of the CPD-RDTL, as a movement that greatly influenced post-1999 East Timor. This chapter details the friction between this movement and the former resistance body, CNRT. The nature of this conflict seemed to have been based on personal rancour among individual actors, but was often presented in public as a dispute involving political institutions. Finally, the conflict between FRETILIN and CNRT is examined. The result of these conflicts understandably contributed to other forms of division among the population as newly created social and political groups become institutionalised and were caught up in the midst of the post-1999 political battle.

II. The Mood, Conflict, Uncertainty and Division

Succession within a state often causes segments within the community to be divided over issues pertaining to social and political identity. As a
consequence, conflict emerges and, in turn, fragments society into classes or
groups (Gledhill 1988). The situation in East Timor post-1999 is a case in
point.

The situation in Dili, and other towns after the September 1999 violence was
appalling. Property was destroyed and more than half of the population of
800,000 was displaced.\(^1\) The first two years after the 1999 referendum was a
time for rebuilding the country’s infrastructure.\(^2\) The population was still
trying to recover from both material and psychological loss as a result of funu.
Those who had fled the chaos only several weeks or months before came back
to East Timor to find their houses occupied by ‘new owners’, who in many
instances refused to surrender these houses back to the previous owners. The
East Timorese suffered profound psychological pain and physical destruction
for more than 20 years of Indonesian occupation, during which the military
harshly controlled the daily lives of the East Timorese. Then, the people were
compelled to face the results of a scorched earth policy by the same military
and by the militias they sponsored.

The chaotic post-1999 period also saw a number of additional problems. The
first was the emergence of various political groups, each attempting to claim
political leverage, some of which were disguised under the banner of both
social and cultural principles. For example, the emergence of an organisation
called Sagrada Familia (the Holy Family), headed by a former resistance
commander traced its foundation to the long period of struggle and to its
members’ particular beliefs.\(^3\) A second issue involved claims that one group
fought more in the war than the others and therefore should be given

\(^1\) It is estimated that over 70 percent of the population was displaced at the time, and around
the same percent of the country’s infrastructure was destroyed. See Report of the Joint
Assessment Mission to East Timor, in World Bank (1999), Report of the Joint Assessment
Mission to East Timor. New York, World Bank:19

\(^2\) Since September 1999, there have been many books and papers written about the
‘rebuilding’ of East Timor. See for example James J. Fox and Dionisio Babo Soares (eds)
(2000).

\(^3\) For a detailed discussion on this group’s activity, see Chapter 8.
privileges in post-independence political life. The emergence of the latter topic caused different groups to highlight the significance of their, often unreported, role in the war against Indonesia. A third issue questioned the whereabouts of people and their role during the war against Indonesia to determine whether they were East Timorese nationalists or integrationists. Likewise, only home-stayers were regarded as having fought – in a physical sense – the war against Indonesia, whereas those who lived among the diaspora were accused of leading a good life and suffering less than their compatriots at home. Since only those who were able to speak English and Portuguese were prioritised for jobs within the UN during that period, rivalry ensued on the basis of language proficiency between diasporic Timorese and home-stayers.

More complex still, former political activists and guerrillas became involved in the political scene, claiming the right to do so on the basis of their involvement in past struggles. In addition, competition to re-establish political parties and to claim political leverage emerged among politicians and former political activists. Old and newly established political groups jockeyed for political position. New political parties, apart from trying to recruit members and maintain both social and political influence, attempted to present themselves as contenders in the new government.

Although on the ground the population was still trying to recover from the long trauma they had gone through, political competition intensified. The death of their loved ones and the loss of property created an additional burden for the local people, something which attracted little attention at the decision making level at the time. It was such a competitive and anxious

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4 As I have explained elsewhere, after arriving in Dili for my fieldwork I spent the first few months observing local political dynamics. I visited the CNRT’s office regularly, set up contacts with CPD-RDTL leaders, and discussed local political developments with representatives of various political parties. I noted that politicians and political activists had little interest in the economic side of the country’s life. Instead attention was focused on security and politics.
period that the Timorese often asked, *rai ne’ e atu ba los nebe?* (Where is the country going?) (Pers. Comm. Victória dos Santos, August 2000).

During my fieldwork, clashes among the political activists turned politicians intensified; each wanted his or her role in the past struggle to be acknowledged. Fighting between different political supporters took place in different places around East Timor.⁵ Members of FRETILIN argued that only their party had fought in the war against Indonesia.⁶ Mari Alkatiri, the vice-coordinator of FRETILIN and later Prime Minister, on the occasion of a meeting between political rivals before the Constituent Assembly election in August 2001, again reiterated this view. Alkatiri said, “it was because of FRETILIN’s determination that people like Nicolau Lobato (first Prime Minister in 1975), Sa’he (Vicente Reis), Konis Santana, and Hudo Ran Kadalak (one of the leaders of the resistance) died. It was FRETILIN which waged the war against Indonesia”.

Likewise, newly established political groups, particularly those created by the younger generation, claimed that their role in the struggle needed to be acknowledged⁷, so too, youth groups affiliated with FRETILIN, such as OJETIL, who cited, as part of their work, the 12 November 1991 demonstration in Santa Cruz cemetery, which resulted in a massacre by the Indonesian army.⁸ Other more independent organisations such as the

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⁵ One example was the fight between two groups in Bobonaro in around February 2000. This fight had its origins in the difference between supporters of CPD-RDTL and CNRT. Since there was no government institution ready to control the situation and detain the perpetrators, it was left to the traditional rulers in the villages to resolve and reconcile the respective groups (Personal Communication with Lázaro of Yayasan HAK, March 2000).

⁶ On Thursday, May 30th 2002 at 10.00 pm, Australian ABC Television presented the story of Lu-Olo, a long time guerrilla turned politician entitled ‘Lu-Olo’s Story’. It referred to a campaign in Baucau leading up to the Constituent Assembly election, in which Lu-Olo claimed that only FRETILIN participated in the war against Indonesia.

⁷ The dispute over who ‘fought most in the war’ continues to be one of the issues used to claim political leverage. In Lu-Olo’s story, the film shows how tense rival politicians were trying to threaten each other by trying to claim political influence in the first few years after September 1999.

⁸ Personal Communication with Gregorio Saldanha, the leader of OJETIL in Dili, 2000.
RENETIL, DSMPTT, and other clandestine groups and local NGOs, all wanted to be heard and acknowledged in the political process. Yayasan HAK, participated actively in the debates regarding the future of the country, while other small study groups like SIL translated nationalist-oriented books from English into Bahasa Indonesia to promote the East Timorese side of history. Former guerrilla commanders and their groups also wanted to have their voices heard and so become involved in the political process. In fact, the restricted political space limited the role dissenting political activists could play. The great emphasis put on CNRT was seen by other political groups as a hindrance to the new political atmosphere. Conflict and divisions were then unavoidable.

At least until August 2000, CNRT was still regarded as a united body and the organ which represented the East Timorese as far as its relation with UNTAET was concerned. Nevertheless, dissatisfaction with the resistance body had begun to take shape in October 1999, as soon as INTERFET arrived in East Timor. This dissatisfaction was exemplified by the rise of CPD-RDTL, the splintering of FRETILIN into a number of groups, and the open conflict among these groups and with CNRT. As the British newspaper, The Independent, reported at the time:

Having been united for so long in its struggle against Indonesia, the independence movement already appears to be splintering along factional lines. There are rumours of instigators stirring up social unrest for political reasons. "I'm greatly worried about it," Mr [Sergio] de Mello said. "And I fear that things will get worse before they get better" (Richard 2000: 3-4).

The formal withdrawal of the two supposedly main traditional parties, FRETILIN and UDT, from CNRT in the aftermath of the August 2000

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9 FALINTIL leaders used to make (political) statements in the media during that period as a way to assert their position and make their views known to the public. Examples of this can be found in various interviews carried out in Suara Timor Lorosae and Timor Post - the only two circulating daily newspapers in the country at the time. For further information see also Amuduli and H. Freitas (2002).
Congress, further exacerbated the social and political divisions. The situation was not only perceived as a threat to social life in general, but as a destructive gesture that could lead East Timor back to dark days like those in 1974 and in 1999 (Pers. Comm. Cirilo José Cristovão, April 22, 2000). Indeed, the roots of these conflicts were deeply-seated and were based on both individual and group differences which had been hidden behind the banner of ‘national unity’ during the struggle against Indonesia, only to re-emerge and colour the post-independence atmosphere. First and foremost was the involvement in the political scene of the previously little known splinter group of FRETILIN, called CPD-RDTL. Before examining the emergence and conflict of political groups and parties, the next section will briefly discuss the general picture of division during the resistance years.

III. The Setting: Splits or Reorganisation of the Resistance

Following the dismantling of the MFL in the early 1980s and the establishment of CRRN, Xanana Gusmão hoped the resistance would overcome its factional problems and adopt a more conciliatory approach to national unity. In 1987, Xanana resigned formally from FRETILIN, a movement which stood previously as umbrella for all nationalist groups fighting for independence. The establishment of CRRN was then interpreted in two ways. First, to the advocates of change, it was a move towards what was to be known as the nationalist groups, CNRM and CNRT respectively. To its opponents of change, it was interpreted as an attempted transformation of FRETILIN, implying a violation of the principles underlining the foundation of FRETILIN as a nationalist front. Thus two groups emanated from this event. On the one side, opponents of the transformation of MLF to CRRN, while maintaining their nationalist stance, remained passive and kept a low profile, without interfering in the resistance movement led by CRRN, which later became known as CNRM and CNRT. The leaders of this splinter group – as mentioned in Chapter 4 – included the
late Reinaldo Freitas (Kilik Wae Gae), Paulino Gama (Mauk Moruk) and Olo-Gari Asswain. It is the latter figure, Olo-Gari Asswain, who is known today as the leader of CPD-RDTL.

![Figure 5.1: The reorganisation/transformation of the resistance body. Solid black lines show direct changes whereas single dotted lines show readjustment or changes into new forms. The double dotted line shows continuing support from FRETILIN to CRRN.]

On the other side, members of MLF who supported the establishment of CRRN decided to remain loyal and 'return' to FRETILIN and supported what was known as the Readjustment in the Resistance. Thus, with the emergence of CRRN, FRETILIN's position as an umbrella body was reduced to only a faction within CRRN. The establishment of CRRN aimed primarily to unify all non-FRETILIN nationalist forces.

CRRN appointed Xanana Gusmão as its leader and José Ramos-Horta as its spokesperson abroad, whereas FRETILIN from then on was headed by people like the late Hudo Ran Kadalak (José da Costa), Ma-Huno (António Gomes), Nino Konis Santana, Lu-Olo (Francisco Guterres) inside East Timor, and José Luis Guterres, Abílio Araújo and Rogério Tiago Lobato (who also opposed the establishment of CRRN), and Mari Alkatiri in the diaspora.
Institutionally, the seeds of difference within the resistance began to develop with the transformation of MLF and the establishment of CRRN in the early 1980s. Opponents of the establishment of CRRN, now CPD-RDTL, have maintained ever since that they have continued to defend the principles of the founders of FRETILIN and regarded their counterparts who supported CRRN as ‘fake’ FRETILIN. Lu-Olo and Mari Alkatiri headed the latter after 1999.

Table 5.1: Split of members of FRETILIN in the 1980s following the establishment of CRRN. The division can still be seen in the post-1999 referendum period. *FRETILIN leadership in the diaspora.
Interestingly, the post-1999 period saw the emergence of new political parties, a number of which were set up by former staunch members of FRETILIN. In other words, FRETILIN itself also experienced a split into different groups soon after 1999. The division in the post independence period thus should be seen in this context (see Table 5.1).

IV. Spread of Branches: Splits in the Post-1999 Period

- The Return of Old Actors into the Political Arena

People's concern of local political development and the attitude of the local political leaders was not without basis. The political change in post-August 1999 period saw a massive return of the diaspora politicians, including the leaders of old political parties.\(^{10}\) Thus, a large number of political leaders within the East Timorese political leadership after 1999 were those who had been involved in politics since 1974-1975, and whom fled following the Indonesian invasion, and took up residence overseas, in countries such as Australia, Portugal, Mozambique and Macau.

In reference to Chapter 2, that period refers to the time when the Portuguese government conceded the right of the East Timorese to self-determination. In 1975, when civil war broke out and FRETILIN forces successfully quelled an armed uprising led by a rival political party, UDT on 11 August 1975, it was the same political leaders who played a role in that conflict.\(^ {11}\) After maintaining control for several months, FRETILIN declared East Timor to be a Democratic Republic (RDTL) on 28 November 1975. However, only nine days later, on 7 December 1975, the Indonesia military invaded the country.

\(^{10}\) Until 20 May 2002, the so-called political leadership in East Timor –comprising mostly party leaders– were not elected democratically. Most of these were political party appointees and represented only the political party with which they were identified.

\(^{11}\) This conflict resulted in the death of around 2,000 people. UDT and other political parties fled to Indonesian West Timor and remained there when Indonesia invaded East Timor on 7 December 1975 (see James Dunn 1977).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Political Party</th>
<th>Leader (Former Residence)</th>
<th>Period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>FRETILIN</td>
<td>Mari Alkatiri: (Mozambique)</td>
<td>1974 – Present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lu-Olo: (East Timor)</td>
<td>1974 – Present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Abilio Araújo</td>
<td>1974 – Now</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rogerio Lobato: (Mozambique and Portugal)</td>
<td>1974 – Present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Jose Luis Guterres: (Mozambique, Portugal and South Africa)</td>
<td>1974 – Present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ana Pessoa (Mozambique)</td>
<td>1974 – Present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Abel ‘Larisina’ Ximenes: (East Timor)</td>
<td>1974 – Present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>UDT</td>
<td>Joao Carrascalao: (Australia)</td>
<td>1974 – Present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Domingos Oliveira: (Australia)</td>
<td>1974 – Present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Aleixo Ximenes: (East Timor)</td>
<td>1974 – Present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>APODETI</td>
<td>Frederico Almeida: (East Timor)</td>
<td>1974 – Present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Laurentino: (East Timor)</td>
<td>1974 – Present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Vicente Tilman: (East Timor)</td>
<td>1974 – Present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>Trabalhista</td>
<td>Paulo da Silva: (East Timor)</td>
<td>1974 – Present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>KOTA</td>
<td>Leao do Amaral: (East Timor)</td>
<td>1974 – Present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Clementino Amaral: (East Timor, Indonesia)-</td>
<td>1974 – Present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Manuel Tilman: (Portugal, Macau)</td>
<td>1974 – Present</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.2: Political Leaders of 1974-1975 and now (Source: Compiled by the Author).

Those who remained in East Timor were either killed by the Indonesian army or had already retired from politics. Among the nationalist leaders inside the country, such as José Alexandre ‘Xanana’ Gusmão, Hudo Ran Kadalak and Ma’ Hunu Bulerek Katariano, were second-generation leaders of the resistance who came to prominence during the war against Indonesia.

In the 1990s, a number of members of these traditional political parties established new political groups which then became contenders for the Constitutional Assembly election of August 2001. Some leaders such as José Alexandre Xanana Gusmão and José Ramos Horta preferred to remain independent and not participate in any political party. Nevertheless, due to
their recognised status as leaders of the resistance, both personalities remained politically active.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Original Political Party</th>
<th>New Political Party</th>
<th>Names of Leaders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>UDT</td>
<td>Partido Social Democrático de Timor</td>
<td>Mario Carrascalão</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Leandro Isac</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Agio Perreira</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>FREITILIN</td>
<td>ASDT</td>
<td>Francisco Xavier-Amaral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Feliciano Alvês (Mau-Siri)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cristiano da Costa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>FREITILIN</td>
<td>Partido Democrático</td>
<td>Fernando Araújo</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Constâncio Pinto</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lucas da Costa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>FREITILIN</td>
<td>CPD-RDTL (Movement)</td>
<td>Olo Gári Asswain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Antônio da Costa</td>
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<td>Feliciano Alvês (Mau-Siri)</td>
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<td>Cristiano da Costa</td>
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<td>FREITILIN</td>
<td>Partido Socialista</td>
<td>Avelino Coelho</td>
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<td>VI</td>
<td>FREITILIN</td>
<td>Partido Nationalista Timor (PNT)</td>
<td>Abilio Araújo</td>
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<td>Aliança Araújo</td>
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<td>VII</td>
<td>FREITILIN</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>José Alexandre Gusmão</td>
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<td>José Ramos-Horta</td>
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Table 5.3: Political leaders and new Political Parties Post-1999.

Political differences after the 1999 referendum cannot, arguably, be understood without looking at the personalities involved in these disputes. The differences should also be explored with regard to the position and background of the leaders concerned. In other words, such differences cannot be understood without looking to the origins of conflict and differences that took place earlier, particularly in 1974-1975. Likewise, some of the differences and conflicts can be traced back to internal conflicts during the war against Indonesia. Table 5.3 lists some of these influential people who changed affiliation after 1999.
Factionalism within FRETILIN

After August 1999, FRETILIN no longer presented itself as the ‘independent front’ it had between 1974 and 1987, but played its role more as a standard political party. This situation added to the existing differences among various former supporters of FRETILIN. The broad political disagreement and tension in the post 1999 period referendum began with the split of FRETILIN into several groups. The ‘divorce’ between these groups was based not only on ideological differences but also on old divisions resulting from the war against Indonesia. These divisions were created by conflict among their leaders and constituencies on the ground. Five splinter groups are described briefly below:

FRETILIN Lu-Olo and Mari Alkatiri: This group was set up on 20 May 1974 and was a transformation of the previously nationalist front ASDT. This faction held its first congress from 15 to 20 May 2000, in which more than five hundred supporters from all districts in East Timor participated. The congress elected and endorsed both Lu-Olo and Mari Alkatiri as leaders of the party and maintained all the symbols and attributes of the original party set up in 1974. These included the flag and the party’s anthem, the salute of the kumu liman (lit., raised fist), when addressing the flag or singing the national anthem.

The party has its own Constitution. It has, however, altered some of its past leftist ideas to adjust to the changing circumstances in the international political scene. For example, it holds friendly relations with the international community and is committed to solve its own internal problems by reconciliatory means (Lu-Olo 2000).

Partido Nacionalista Timorense (PNT): A former leader of FRETILIN, Abilio Araújo heads this political party. Abilio Araújo was dismissed from
FRETILIN in the 1980s for accepting work with Indonesia. At that time, Abilio began contacting and working closely with the daughter of the then president (Suharto) of Indonesia, Siti Hardianti Rukmana. In the early 1990s, the two set up a business network and successfully established the Portugal-Indonesia Friendship Association. Although dismissed by FRETILIN, Abilio Araújo reclaimed the symbols of FRETILIN, such as the flag of RDTL (current national flag of East Timor) as a symbol of PNT until August 1999. Abilio’s insistence on maintaining the flag is a vindication of his association with the FRETILIN since its inception and the resulting proclamation of the short-lived *Republica Democrática de Timor Leste* on 28 November 1975.

PNT was established a week prior to the historic referendum on 30 August 1999. Abilio declared that the party defended autonomy with Indonesia as a ‘Third Way’ since there were two opposing groups (Independence and anti-Independence) fighting each other. Although he has tried to explain his intentions during the election of Constitutional Assembly (CA) in August 2001, for the ordinary East Timorese, he was seen as an opportunist; at times supporting one side and at times supporting another side. In the CA elections in August 2001, PNT changed its attributes and flags but continued to retain most of the characteristics of FRETILIN. For example, the flag of the party was designed differently but maintained the basic colours found in the FRETILIN flag.

*Associação Social Democrática de Timor (ASDT):* This party is headed by the first president of FRETILIN and former president of the short-lived RDTL in 1975, Francisco Xavier do Amaral. ASDT was the predecessor of FRETILIN in 1974 and represented itself as an anti-colonial movement. However on 11 September 1975, members of this nationalist movement changed ASDT into FRETILIN and portrayed the latter as a revolutionary front similar to the revolutionary fronts for independence such as FRELIMO in Mozambique and
UNITA in Angola. Thus, the change of ASDT into FRETILIN was based on the idea of declaring East Timor an independent country free from Portuguese colonialism (Hill 2000). With the birth of FRETILIN, ASDT disappeared. During the war against Indonesia, Amaral was captured and detained by his own comrades as a prisoner who accused him of betraying the struggle (Subroto 1997: 230-232). He was later captured by the Indonesian forces and exiled to Jakarta for over 20 years.

However, after the 1999 referendum he returned to East Timor. Proclaiming himself the founding father of FRETILIN, he aimed to unite the nationalist forces within FRETILIN. In response, FRETILIN appointed him as the head of the Reconciliation Commission of the party in mid 2000. However, he quickly disagreed with the new leaders of the party, and due to internal contradictions between himself and the FRETILIN faction of Lu-Olo and Mari Alkatiri, re-established ASDT.

Partido Socialista Timor (PST): PST is a new party. The founder is a young East Timorese, Avelino Coelho, who has strong adherence to Marxist and Leninist ideas (Pers. Comm. March 2000). Avelino Coelho first founded a student organisation called Frente Clandestina Estudantil de Timor (FLECLITIL) in the 1980s when he was a university student in Jakarta, Indonesia. In the mid-1990s, he, along with his friends, changed the name of the group into Associação Socialista de Timor (AST). In the late 1990s, this group was transformed into a political party.

Initially, the party used some attributes of FRETILIN and claimed to be a metamorphosis of FRETILIN. On the first day of FRETILIN’s Conference in Dili 15-20 May 2000, Avelino spoke of his party as ran (lit., blood) and still

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12 Indeed, leaders of this party such as Francisco Xavier do Amaral, Mari Alkatiri and José Ramos-Horta had either studied or worked in both Mozambique and Angola before 1975. Their association with the nationalist movements in both countries contributed a great deal to their views on an independent East Timor.
very much FRETILIN. He said “My flesh and skin is PST but my blood is FRETILIN” (Hau nia isin no kulit maka PST maibe raan FRETILIN nian).

This party does not seem to be in confrontation with others or show any inclination to confront the political process. Rather, it seeks to establish itself as a new version of FRETILIN since its proponents believe that FRETILIN is only, as its name suggest, a front that unites all factions fighting for Independence. Most PST supporters are new generation East Timorese.

**Conselho da Defesa Popular – República Democrática de Timor Leste (CPD-RDTL):**

This body was established by some former members of FRETILIN. The main aim of CPD-RDTL is to defend the proclamation of independence on 28 November 1975. It denounced and challenged both CNRT and its original political party, FRETILIN. Spokesman for the Preservation Council, Cristiano Da Costa, describes the organisation as “like [an] umbrella body, like [the National Council], with the main objective [being] restoration of ... [the] republic proclaimed in 1975” (Canberra Times, 21 September 2001). CPD-RDTL declared that UNTAET’s role in East Timor to prepare the country for independence contravened East Timor’s existence as a nation proclaimed 24 years earlier. Instead, CPD-RDTL insisted that UNTAET should operate within the framework of the independent East Timor proclaimed in 1975. Its members declared openly that only CPD-RDTL had the legitimacy to serve as an umbrella organisation representing the East Timorese political community and not FRETILIN or CNRT. Not surprisingly, verbal insults and accusations between the leaders were common. Most pointed the finger at CPD-RDTL as the instigator of political instability including riots in some areas in East Timor.14

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13 When I met the representative of this group for the first time on 31 December 2000, I was told that both FRETILIN and CNRT have walked ‘the wrong path’, by distorting the noble aims of the founding fathers of the struggle in 1975. These representatives included Olo-Gari Asswain, Feliciano Mau-Siri Alvês and António Aitahan-Matack.

14 In the first few months and throughout the year 2000, supporters of CPD-RDTL tried to raise the national flag of the now East Timor (formerly belonging to FRETILIN) in various
- Repercussions of the Break up

Several factors contributed to the split within FRETILIN. First, disagreements among the leadership of the party and between them and some of their sympathisers intensified until they decided to break up. All the constituent groups claimed to be the ‘true’ representatives of FRETILIN and claimed the symbols of the party. Before the election of the Constituent Assembly in August 2001, UNTAET only recognised the FRETILIN party led by Lu-Olo and Mari Alkatiri. Other groups then operated as independent and separate from FRETILIN. Second, the disagreements within FRETILIN were rooted in the long-term political friction which was perpetuated further by the tragic events during the resistance against Indonesia.

The split of FRETILIN into a number of parties brought a substantial change to the local political landscape. It divided the East Timorese into factions, which have been transferred from Dili to the villages around the country. Many East Timorese were concerned about violence that might ensue as a result of this division (Pers. Comm. António Guterres, August 2001). Indeed, during that period, each political group mobilised its supporters and each formed its own security force. CPD-RDTL, like other breakaway groups, was able to bring people to Dili – often en masse – to attend commemorations of the movements’ birthday and other ceremonial events. They also mobilised people to protest UNTAET policies at opportune times.

districts and met with strong resistance from its opponents in those areas. The leaders of this group have always denied accusations that they intended to bring instability to the country and to re-integrate East Timor, as they were accused, into Indonesia.

\[15\] In late 2002, and when I was observing the Constitution Assembly election in August 2001, there were rumours that the ASDT of Francisco Xavier do Amaral was training its paramilitaries, both in Dili and in the district of Aileu. Indeed, some friends of mine saw people dressed in army fatigues undergoing training in Xavier’s house (Pers. Comm. Antonio Guterres, August 2001). This of course frightened the population, and people talked about such issues privately fearing the violence that might occur as a result of such actions.

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After September 1999 CNRT was hailed as the forum representing various political interests of the East Timorese. This organisation was set up in April 1998 in Peniche, Portugal as a metamorphosis of the previously disputed Conselho Nacional da Resistência Maubere (CNRM). The aim of this body was to unite all factions within the resistance and to lead East Timor towards independence. The various political parties that constituted this umbrella organisation, particularly small political parties such as APODETI, Trabalhista, PST, and KOTA, maintained that the existence of CNRT and its leadership was imperative during that period. Therefore they supported it. However, traditional political parties such as FRETILIN and UDT began restructuring and orienting themselves towards independence, thus distancing themselves from CNRT. Internal conflict between the leaderships of FRETILIN and CNRT became public, and verbal accusations appeared in the local media for months. These actions constituted the public expression of division and had a lot to do with the change of perception about nationalism among contemporary East Timorese.

It was the FRETILIN of Lu-Olo and Mari Alkatiri which rejected the overwhelming domination of CNRT in the new country's politics. FRETILIN leaders, in addition to denouncing CPD-RDTL, regarded CNRT as a mere umbrella organisation whose role was irrelevant in the post independence period. The latter, they claimed, was a resistance body and not a government. FRETILIN wanted CNRT to be dissolved so the political parties could take the lead of the country.

To better understand the nature of this conflict, the next section explores the conflict at the political level, a perspective that combines both past and presents differences and contributed a great deal to shaping the 'degradation' of people's views about nacionalismo.

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16 See for example, Suara Timor Lorosae, 15-20 November 2000.
V. Conflict between FRETILIN and CNRT

In general, neither individual friction nor principal differences existed between FRETILIN and the CNRT. Lu-Olo had always been a close friend of Xanana Gusmão and had always referred to him as one of his ‘guru’ (teacher).¹⁷ FRETILIN was indeed a supporter of CNRM and CNRT. The sharp difference between the two groups is based largely on relatively new developments whose roots can be traced back to the months leading up to the 1999 referendum.

When CNRT was established in Portugal in 1998, a front called Conselho Politico Nacional (CPN), or the National Political Council, was set up, the members of which comprised political leaders selected from among those who were based in East Timor and the diaspora. This body was established to work as the ad-interim government in East Timor, under the auspices of CNRT, taking account of the situation in Indonesia, which was grappling with both economic and political turmoil at the time. In other words, CPN was expected to become the first cabinet of East Timor in any changed political circumstances pending a democratic election, should Indonesia withdraw. However, after East Timor came under the UNTAET administration, the leadership of CNRT replaced those of CPN, since changes in the political scene required adjustments. As a result, CPN was paralysed. Among members of this group were Lu-Olo, the then general coordinator of the FRETILIN, and Mari Alkatiri, the then member of the troika and head of FRETILIN’s external delegation. Worse still, after the 1999 referendum, UNTAET recognised CNRT as its only institutional partner, and communications with the East Timorese were conducted through its

¹⁷ Lu-Olo told me on one occasion that another person who influenced his political views was Hudo Ran Kadalak (José da Costa). The later was a leader of FRETILIN and the resistance but was later captured and killed by the Indonesian military and its created militia following the September 1999 violence in West Timor.
president. This outraged members of CPN, particularly those who were part of the FRETILIN leadership.

In an interview on Radio UNTAET,18 Lu-Olo publicly attacked CNRT, insisting that his party was distancing itself from CNRT because the leaders (of CNRT) had acted as authoritarians and disregarded the role of CPN. According to Lu-Olo, it was important that the body, not the leadership, of CNRT be consulted on issues regarding the fate of the country since it had been agreed in Peniche (Portugal) in 1998 that the political direction of CNRT should be determined by the members of CPN. This was the first open reaction against CNRT through the media by FRETILIN, despite tension which had been running high for some time. Lu-Olo’s reaction came somewhat belatedly because FRETILIN’s leaders and members had always expressed their dissatisfaction – although not publicly – over CNRT for its dominant control of the country’s affairs. Apart from that, regarding itself as a large political party, FRETILIN wanted to be consulted when dealing with UNTAET. I found this difference even more profound when talking to the then head of the secretariat of FRETILIN in his headquarters at Comoro in Dili. He claimed that Xanana Gusmão and CNRT were a stumbling block to FRETILIN’s participation in the political process. Taking a more or less similar attitude to that of CPD-RDTL, he said CNRT should have been dismantled since its task had been accomplished with the 1999 referendum. Thus, FRETILIN should take charge of the political process and work alongside UNTAET, not CNRT. He also referred to other political parties which depended on, or had formed a coalition with, CNRT as ‘opportunists’, accusing them of collaborating with Indonesia in the past but now wanting to

18 Lu-Olo revealed his dissatisfaction in an interview on Radio UNTAET on 20 March 2000. He criticised the leadership of CNRT for lacking considered action to include all nationalist forces in the decision making process.
have a ‘piece of the cake’ in the political process (Pers. Comm. Francisco Cepeda, 3 November 2000).\footnote{It is very common in East Timor to accuse the old political parties such as UDT, APODETI, KOTA and \textit{Trabalhista} of being collaborators with Indonesia. This is because during the 1975-1999 occupation by Indonesia, FRETILIN was the only institution to set clear goals about independence. In fact, however, in later years the so-called nationalists that came to the fore consisted not necessarily of members of FRETILIN alone but also of people from the alleged ‘collaborator’ parties.}

One reason for this criticism, apart from the failed implementation of recommendations made in the Peniche conference regarding the function of CPN, was that the result of the conference legalised the position of previous non-supporters of independence who seemed to play a bigger role than they were required to under the banner of ‘national unity’. Likewise, in Cepeda’s account, these developments lessened the role of FRETILIN as the traditional independence front in that country, paralleling the view held by CPD-RDTL that FRETILIN was a front and not a political party, although FRETILIN changed into a party when it accepted the establishment of CRRN.

In the meantime, FRETILIN had its own internal problems, such as the rise of dissenting groups which were turning into splinter groups. The leaders of FRETILIN tried to ease such criticism by creating reconciliation among themselves, for example by setting up a reconciliation department in the party to promote unity among its members. However, the action came rather late, and FRETILIN was no longer able to present itself as a front in the post-independence period since dissident groups decided to go their own ways. Nevertheless, FRETILIN managed to present itself as a national unity advocate during that period. In the CNRT Congress in August 2000, FRETILIN (and UDT) collaborated fully with CNRT to justify its adherence to the Pact of National Unity and demonstrated that it had not abandoned the pact. Yet, during the Congress, conflict between the leaders of FRETILIN, notably Mari Alkatiri and the leader of UDT, João Carrascalão, on the one hand, and the leadership of CNRT, on the other, emerged. FRETILIN and
UDT wanted CNRT to be dissolved to pave the way for the involvement of political parties in the country, whereas most participants in the Congress wanted CNRT to be maintained since it was seen as the symbol of national unity. As this debate heated up and no agreement was reached, Xanana Gusmão (President of CNRT) and José Ramos Horta (one of the then vice-presidents) announced their withdrawal from the body. They argued that there was a need for a new leadership with new ideas. Nevertheless, they were both re-elected on the final day of the Congress. Mari Alkatiri of FRETILIN expressed his disgust with the results of the Congress:

To be honest, no strategic decisions were taken at the Congress. The Congress was carefully planned with a view to maintaining the status quo, though with a facade of change. The intention was to have an uneventful Congress in terms of strategy... The only change that has been made was to strengthen the power base of three people - Xanana, Ramos-Horta, and Mario Carrascalão. I would say it was done in a Machiavellian fashion. So, the change has been for the worse (Valentim 2000: 1-2).

Nevertheless, the Congress went ahead. CNRT was restructured, and its name modified to CNRT/CN or National Council of Timorese Resistance/National Congress. As a result of the Congress, three bodies were proposed within the structure of CNRT/CN. Among these was the Comissão Permanente or the Permanent Council (CP). All political parties in East Timor supposedly constituted this body for the sake of 'national unity'. Nevertheless, only the small parties agreed to be part of CP. FRETILIN decided, along with UDT, to withdraw from the new council of political parties, claiming their membership was put on hold since they, as representatives of historical political parties, still had to consult their constituency.20 Francisco Cepeda of FRETILIN told me that:


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The fact that we challenged Xanana shows that we are ready to face the best or the worse. We have thought and anticipated whatever may occur. We refused the Permanent Council because it is a manipulation. We do not know what role [the body has], we think the Permanent Commission will curb the activities of political parties. So, we do not accept it. We still have to consult the people (Pers. Comm. Francisco Cepeda, 3 November 2001).

Xanana Gusmão and Lu-Olo exchanged harsh words in the local newspapers during my fieldwork, each threatening to ‘reveal’ what wrongs the other had committed in the past. Indeed, the past ‘mistakes’ committed during the nationalist struggle became a ‘commodity’ for former guerrilla fighters turned politicians to threaten each other in the post-independence period. On 28 November 2000, the day FRETILIN commemorated Independence Day, Xanana refused to attend the ceremony and instead travelled to the district of Bobonaro to meet the local population (Suara Timor Lorosae 29 November 2000). After this period, a sense of difference between these individuals and the bodies they represented continued to exist despite the same leaders often pretending to hide their differences when appearing in public.

The continuous attack on the presence of CNRT/CN in the post-independence politics intensified when newly established politics groups coming to existence. Realising that such tension might lead to an even more chaotic situation, Xanana Gusmão himself presided over a ceremony in late July 2001 to dismantle CNRT/CN, claiming that the resistance body has completed its mission, bringing East Timor to the threshold of freedom. In the campaign for the election of a Constituent Assembly that would write a constitution for the new nation, Xanana was often seen at non-FRETILIN party rallies – often disguised as a professional photographer – rather than at the rallies of the veteran political party. This is to say that while institutional differences between FRETILIN and CNRT/CN may have ceased to exist, differences between leaders continued to exist. As soon as FRETILIN gained a majority (57 percent of votes) in the elected Constituent Assembly on 30 August 2001,
it proposed that the body be automatically changed into the first parliament of East Timor. In early October 2001, Xanana called for a new election for the parliament of East Timor, refusing to accept that the Constituent Assembly would turn itself into the future parliament of East Timor. Mari Alkatiri and Lu-Olo, in response, stated that Xanana Gusmão was entitled to express his views in the media like other ordinary citizens, but that he did not have any political power to endorse his views.21 However, FRETILIN's dismissal of Gusmão's position intensified, particularly after the party's success in the 30 August 2001 elections. Xanana Gusmão was still widely viewed as a dominant figure in East Timor politics and was elected as the president of East Timor after independence.

VI. The Existence of CPD-RDTL

The People's (Popular) Defence Council–The Democratic Republic of East Timor, known by its acronym CPD-RDTL, was an example of a new political group asserting its political existence on the basis of divisions in the past. As an institution, CPD-RDTL was little known before the May 5th Accord between Indonesia and Portugal to hold a referendum in East Timor, although some of its leaders were former resistance activists and were already known to the public.22

At the time of my fieldwork, CPD-RDTL was slowly but certainly emerging as a force in East Timor politics. When I first arrived in Dili in December 1999, I heard rumours about the group and planned to set up contact. It was a rather exclusive political group in its early stages, and received very little

21 The decision to transform the Constituent Assembly (CA) into the first parliament of East Timor was based on UNTAET Law 2001/2 regarding the Election of a CA to Prepare for the independence of East Timor. In one of its articles it states that the Constituent Assembly may change itself into the first parliament of East Timor if its members wish to do so.

22 While its members trace CPD-RDTL's origin back to the birth of ASDT on 20 May 1974, Lu-Olo, the then general coordinator argued that the group was established just before the May 5th Accord (Suara Timor Lorosae 7 November 2001).
publicity in the media. I visited its headquarters, which were located opposite the Balide Church and adjacent to the headquarters of the East Timorese Socialist Party (PST) in the area of Quintal Boot, Dili. I had an interesting meeting, for I was caught between some members and prominent leaders of CPD-RDTL. Among the latter were Olo-Gari Asswain (Leader of the movement and a former resistance commander), Feliciano Alvês, known by his nom de guerre, Mau-Siri (Second in Command), and António da Costa, known by his nom de guerre, Aitahan Matak (lit., raw leaves). This was the first of a series of meetings and later discussions between members of the group and myself.

In the post-September 1999 period they came out publicly and disagreed with FRETILIN and called themselves the 'defence front' for the original principles of the party. CPD-RDTL thus defended the proclamation of the RDTL on 28 November 1975 as its political platform. Although Olo-Gari Asswain, the leader of the movement, argued that the birth of CPD-RDTL dated back to the establishment of the ASDT, he failed to mention the exact date of the birth of the movement (Pers. Comm. December 1999).

CPD-RDTL still considered FRETILIN as a front or an umbrella body for all nationalist forces and not a political party under the leadership of Lu-Olo and Mari Alkatiri. CPD-RDTL, according to the leaders of the group, was set up

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23 Apart from that, the group received hostile treatment from both the media and other political groups in East Timor. Claims often associated CPD-RDTL with protests, riots and street battles that took place during that time, an allegation denied by leaders of this group (Pers. Comm. Cristiano da Costa, September 2000).

24 To my surprise, at the entrance of the building, I met some former students from Universitas Timor Timur (UNTIM) where I worked as a lecturer for less than two years between 1996 and the first half of 1997. I had known these former students as staunch independence and FRETILIN supporters but I had never heard anything about CPD-RDTL, let alone knowing its operation outside FRETILIN’s structure. My understanding only came after several discussions with members of this group after our first encounter in late December 1999.

25 I am indebted to discussions with the leaders and members of CPD-RDTL, particularly the second in rank, Feliciano Alvês (Mau-Siri) who then joined ASDT in 2001, the spokesperson, Cristiano da Costa and the member of Comissão Deliberativa of CPD-RDTL, Antonio Aitahan Matak.
to defend not only the proclamation of 28 November 1975, but also the
Constitution of the RDTL and the flag and other attributes of the (former)
state. ‘Defending the proclamation of 28 November 1975’, in the context of
this debate implies the commonly perceived reaction to other nationalist
forces, particularly FRETILIN, which in the eyes of CPD-RDTL, violated the
principles of the party as enunciated in the 1975 declaration of independence.

In this group’s view, the earlier proclamation of RDTL should be reinstated
and the international community, including the UN, should accept it as a fact
(da Costa 2000). On this basis, this group questioned the legitimacy of the
UN in East Timor and CNRT to act on behalf of the East Timorese resistance.
It insisted that the presence of the UN in East Timor was merely – and
necessarily – transitional. It argued that the ‘transitional character’ of the UN
administration ought to be within the framework of the Democratic Republic
of East Timor (DRET) as proclaimed in 1975. CPD-RDTL maintained that
FRETILIN under the leadership of Lu-Olo and Mari Alkatiri had violated the
party’s earlier stance by submitting to CNRT (Pers. Comm. Olo-Gari, 31
December 1999). FRETILIN was supposed to be an independent front or
umbrella organisation under which all factions fighting for independence
sheltered. Members of CPD-RDTL believed that their movement had been
established simply to respond to the distorted proposals of FRETILIN and
CNRT which aimed to violate the spirit of the former Democratic Republic
(RDTL) (Pers. Comm. Cristiano da Costa, March 2000). It also rejected the
existence of former political parties which collaborated with Indonesia during
the occupation such as UDT, APODETI, KOTA and Trabalhista, arguing that
they should not be allowed to operate or to participate in the political process.

26 The idea of reinstating the independence proclaimed on 28 November 1975 known locally
in its Portuguese expression, restauração (lit., restoring) is not the idea of CPD-RDTL alone.
Political parties like FRETILIN, the reawakened movement turned party, ASDT, the Socialist
Party, the Christian Oriented Party (PDC), the Liberal Party and the PARENTIL Party also
advocated the same idea in their political platforms.

27 On 20 May 2002, the FRETILIN-led government reinstated 28 November 1975 as the day
of independence. The Constitution of the new state accepted all attributes of the former RDTL
declared in 1975, except the national anthem.
since they had not accepted the RDTL of 28 November 1975. As António da Costa (Aitahan-Matak) expressed it in his poetical verse:

Independencia hanesan uma ida
Atu hamrik nudar uma
Tenki iha kakuluk no tatis
Hafoin mak fahe quarto-quarto

Independence is like a house
To stand as a house
It needs roof and ceiling
Only then, (bed) rooms are determined

Oan sira mak sei hadia idak-idak
their nia quarto
haida, haburas, infeita ho lei
decoramento atu hafuras uma ne’e

The children would each develop rooms
Improve, develop and decorate with laws
Decorate, so that the house looks good

Bainhira quarto ida diak liu ne’e
Buras
Ne’e sai hanesan mata-dalan atu
Hadia mos quarto seluk

The better the rooms develop
(the better they) improve
It will serve as an example
So that other rooms also follow.

Nune mos ho Independencia

So too, (the quest for) Independence

Nasaun ne’e tenki iha uluk lai
(Declaraçao 28 Novembro 1975)
Depois mak fahe partido
(Declaration 28 November 1975)
Only then, political parties may be set up

Cidadeun idak-idak hare no hili
Partido sira mak sei concorre
Hili tiha partido politico
Ida manan mak sei sai
governo Timor nian

Each citizen would observe and choose
(It is) the political parties that will contest
After electing the political parties

This simple metaphor of the house reflects the need to harii fila-fali or (lit.) 'reinstate' the previous proclamation of independence because, according to this group, East Timor was already an independent state whose existence had been interrupted by the invasion of Indonesia in 1975 and an occupation of

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twenty four years. Therefore, any political process should remain within the framework of an independent East Timor. Thus, it insisted that the UN should recognise the existence of CPD-RDTL as the legitimate political force instead of CNRT.

Plate 5.2: Both FALINTIL and CNRT flags bear the same colour and shape, yet the symbols and names are different (Source: Courtesy of CNRT Headquarters, Dili).

The point is, as argued by parties opposing CPD-RDTL, that the word 'reinstate' means bringing back the whole package of the Democratic Republic of Timor Leste, including its flag, its constitution, its national anthem and its former president. However, on 30 August 1999, the people of East Timor went to the polling booths to vote against Indonesia's proposal for autonomy, and it was a flag based on that of FALINTIL with the attributes of CNRT that was used to represent East Timor in the referendum. Furthermore, according to opponents of the CPD-RDTL, supporters of independence at the time did not necessarily comprise members of one political party but all the people of East Timor who called themselves nationalists. Opponents of CPD-RDTL considered that the May 5th Accord between Portugal and Indonesia signed under the auspices of the UN, which aimed to conduct a

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28 This was voiced by the speaker of the Social Democratic Party (PSD), Agio Pereira, at the last debate among political parties during the campaign for election in August 2001.

29 This was voiced by the speaker of the Social Democratic Party (PSD), Agio Pereira, at the last debate among political parties during the campaign for election in August 2001.
referendum in East Timor, naturally removed previous decisions regarding the fate of the country.

What is interesting is that CPD-RDTL entered into conflict with FRETILIN and accused Lu Olo and Mari Alkatiri of "not acting in accordance with the spirit underlining the foundation of the founders of FRETILIN" (Pers. Comm Cristiano da Costa, March 2000). It also strongly rejected the existence of CNRT, which was then headed by Xanana Gusmão.

VII. Conflict between CNRT and CDP-RDTL

- Background

On 30 August 1999 CNRT was acknowledged by the UN as the representative body of the East Timorese in the referendum to determine the nation’s future. Likewise, it was CNRT which was later regarded as a partner organisation for the UN in East Timor.

Members of CPD-RDTL claimed that the creation of CNRT was a violation of the principles established by the founders of FRETILIN, which led the struggle for 24 years against Indonesia (Pers. Comm. Olo-Gari, 29 December 1999). I learnt in the early months of my fieldwork that the rejection of CNRT by CPD-RDTL was based on the issue of authenticity or legitimacy rather than on the personalities representing the bodies. In a way, CPD-RDTL continued to consider people like Xanana Gusmão, José Ramos-Horta, Lu-Olo, Mari Alkatiri and others as the 'lost-sheep' of FRETILIN who should be persuaded to return to their barracks and to follow the path set by the founders of the political front. Thus, apart from dismissing FRETILIN, CPD-RDTL also rejected the existence of CNRT claiming that it did not represent the interests of the East Timorese because East Timor was, by definition, already an independent state. The emphasis on CNRT's legitimacy has
indeed raised a number of questions. Why was the existence of CNRT made an issue despite the fact that the body was only a pact of previously factional groupings within the Timorese resistance? Some political activists asked where, if CPD-RDTL had existed since 1974, the movement had been during the years of struggle?

In the first months of my fieldwork, the conflict was dominated by the objections of CPD-RDTL to the political process as a whole. CPD-RDTL argued that the political process was outside the framework of an already independent East Timor and which allowed for non-independence forces to 'sneak their spoon into the plate' (Pers. Comm. Cristiano da Costa, March 2000). Firstly, apart from rejecting Lu-Olo's FRETILIN and Xanana's CNRT, there was widespread discontent among members of CPD-RDTL towards UDT, which had advocated independence through a process of transitional autonomy from Portugal in 1974 but later decided to support the integration of East Timor into Indonesia.30 UDT later decided to join CNRT and became an advocate of independence. This switching of positions angered members of CPD-RDTL, who in turn dubbed non-FRETILIN parties as opportunists. The dissatisfied members of CPD-RDTL – and to some extent FRETILIN – demanded that UDT should apologise for the mistakes it committed in the past before taking part in the political process.31 Nevertheless, despite protests and disagreements, UDT was granted a position within CNRT under the terms of national unity. Secondly, the fact that UDT helped FRETILIN to establish CNRT in 1998 raised discontent about the resistance body because, according to members of CPD-RDTL, UDT had seized the opportunity of

30 Politically, UDT itself also split into two groups from the early 1980s onwards. The first group, led by Francisco Xavier Lopes da Cruz, decided to support integration with Indonesia whereas another group led by two exiled Timorese in Australia, João Carrascalão and Domingos de Oliveira supported the National Unity Pact advocated by CRRN, CNRM and later CNRT.

31 UDT has been blamed by CPD-RDTL for its role in 1974-1975 as the party which initiated the coup which triggered civil war, and which in turn bought the invasion (7 December 1975) and annexation (16 July 1976 by Indonesia six months later. For a detailed version of this story see Dunn (1977) and also Subroto (1997).
\textit{national unity} as an avenue to take up a position within the government (Pers. Comm. Antonio Aitahan Matak, March 1999). While such arguments may be true, in my conversations with various informants, I was told another story regarding the emergence of CPD-RDTL. This account was like many of the ‘untold’ stories that have their roots in the previous conflicts in the late 1970s when most of the current political leaders were still fighting in the bush.

- \textbf{Roots of Individual Conflict}

Part of the conflict between CNRT and CPD-RDTL lies in differences between the leaders of both organisations. In the late 1970s, FRETILIN changed its name to the Marxist-Leninist FRETILIN (MLF). However, this ideologically oriented change was short lived due to pressure at the height of the Cold War period. The struggle would have obtained no assistance from the dominant capitalist world if it adopted a ‘leftist’ stance (Gusmão 1998). According to some accounts, the decision to change MLF into CRRN was influenced also by the suggestion of Martinho da Costa Lopes, the first Catholic Bishop of East Timor, that Catholics might find it hard to cooperate with Marxist ideas (Gusmão 1998).\footnote{This view was expressed to me by Francisco da Silva on 12 August 2000. Francisco was a lower rank assistant in that area when the ‘brawl’ between the political leaders took place. I was aware that Francisco attempted to avoid going into depth about the issue as he considered it as ‘undisclosed’ issue.} When MLF changed into Conselho Revolucionário da Resistência Nacional (CRRN), there were disagreements and rifts among the members of the CCF. Two of the most prominent guerrilla commanders were dismissed from the Central Committee of FRETILIN by their ‘comrades’ following a conference held in Hudi Laran (lit., middle of banana trees), in the district of Manatuto, when they were trying to restructure the party’s Central Committee. The two were the then chief of staff, commander Kilik Wae Gae (\textit{nom de guerre}), and commander Paulino Gama, known by his \textit{nom de guerre}
as Mauk Moruk (Gusmão 1998: 98-9). This event split FRETILIN into two groups. For those who agreed with the modification, the time is remembered as the birth of the CCF of Hudi Laran, whereas for the opposition, it is remembered as the Hudi Laran Tragedy. Two factions then emerged, the one in which Xanana was a member, and the faction of Kilik Wae Gae and Mauk Moruk. The rift intensified and ended with the disappearance of commander Kilik Wae Gae and a number of his friends. Mauk Moruk escaped unharmed but later surrendered to the Indonesian army and has since lived in the Netherlands (Gama 1995). Olo-Gari, who is currently known as Olo-Gari Asswain and has assumed the leadership of CPD-RDTL, was a member of Kilik and Mauk Moruk camp. The Indonesian army later captured him. Olo-Gari however, continued his political activities and worked hard to mobilise support for his ‘version’ of FRETILIN (now CPD-RDTL), alienating his group from the current FRETILIN headed by Lu-Olo and Mari Alkatiri.

There is an ai-knanoik (narrative), as Olo-Gari put it in our first encounter, about the birth of his organisation, although he failed neither to explain nor to provide the exact date of the birth of his movement (Pers. Comm. 29 December 1999). Since the revival of this group in the post referendum period, it has remained little known to the public particularly ordinary people and most young activists who are unaware of the dynamics within the

33 Maukmoruk or Mauk Moruk is a short version of Mauk Moruk Ran Nakali Lemori Teki Timor, the nom de guerre of a FRETILIN commander. Between 1975 and 1985, he held the post of Operational Commander of FALINTIL and, in addition, from 1980 he was a member of the Timorese National Resistance Supreme Council - the political command of the resistance, with special responsibilities as Deputy Chief-of Staff of FALINTIL and as Commander of the Red Brigade Commando. He also held the portfolio of Secretary for Defence & Security of the FRETILIN Central Committee.

34 Reasons for the death of Kilik Wae Gae remain subject to debate. Opponents of Xanana Gusmão alleged that it was his group who was responsible for the disappearance of the commander. Nevertheless, another argument suggested that commander Kilik was killed in an ambush by the Indonesian army. The interesting point to note is that his body was never recovered (Personal Communication with Comandante Mau-Nana Kaer-O-Mate, Canberra 27 August 2002).

35 In his autobiography, Xanana Gusmão explains that the rift between him and both Commanders, Kilik Wae Gae and Olo-Gari, took place when both accused Xanana of hiding in the eastern part of the island to avoid the Indonesian army and of refusing to join in the battle front (Gusmão 1998).
resistance. There were a number of interpretations among people about the emergence of CPD-RDTL. While this chapter has indicated that CPD-RDTL may trace its origins to the change of MLF into CRRN, it is worth underlining the confusion in Dili at the time of my fieldwork. Talking to various youth groups in Yayasan Hak, SIL and other political activists revealed a common ignorance about what had happened in the past. Many young people as well as older people alike were unaware of the circumstances in the past and took what had happened for granted. In addition, whether for reasons of safety or otherwise, those who knew a little about the past discord among leaders often tried not to disclose it. As such, public interpretations of the past were unstructured and unchallenged.

An initial interpretation pointed to the ideological differences among the guerrillas at the time of struggle as the source of division. Another narrative indicated that the dismissed commanders of the now CPD-RDTL and their followers did not want changes, and believed that only by submitting to Marxist and Leninist ideas could the people be liberated. A third argument pointed to the power struggle over the leadership of the resistance that was left unresolved after the death of Nicolau Lobato in December 1978. Another narrative suggested that one group was not satisfied with the composition of the newly established structure and demanded change. While it was widely understood that such friction and division should be seen in the context of ‘past’ and ‘present’, attempts to cover up such ideological differences were not uncommon.

The events of Hudi Laran, however, have remained untold until the present. Xanana implicitly defended the event by arguing that this occurrence took

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36 This is one of the much-debated ideas in contemporary East Timor politics. Proponents of the anti-Xanana faction argue that their disagreement over the change of name was merely to honour the heroes who fought for the cause, and that they did not want to see the principles of the struggle violated.

37 I am indebted to discussions with various personalities, many of whom wanted to remain anonymous. For the purpose of their safety, I cannot reveal their true names here.
place at a time when the guerrillas were demoralised by the Indonesian army assaults and when the commanders did not want to listen to each other (Gusmão 1998). However, such explanations have yet to satisfy the East Timorese at large, as the same actors have never revealed the full story in public, let alone the details of such a tragic event in East Timor’s history. Only a few East Timorese who witnessed those events know what actually happened. Nevertheless, as far as this issue is concerned, these people are currently divided into two political extremes. One view disagrees with what happened in the late 1970s and early 1980s, and demands an inquiry into the ‘tragedy’. Another view agrees, but remains silent over the issue arguing that it is best left alone. According to this argument, had it not happened that way, the struggle for independence might have taken a different path (Pers. Comm. Abel Guterres, Canberra, November 2001).

During the CNRT Congress in August 2000, the children of the victims of FRETILIN’s past internal conflicts spoke out and demanded that clarification be made about the death of their loved ones. While conducting fieldwork, I approached some of the witnesses of these events but none wanted to talk to me about them, fearing for their safety. In August 2001, I returned to East Timor to observe the election of the Constituent Assembly and found more witnesses who claimed to know about the events of the late 1970s and early 1980s, but they too declined to tell the story, again on the grounds of safety. Some of these people managed to speak, but without being specific and refused to have their identities revealed.

Regardless of the various political reasons presented, it is a common belief among former resistance actors that the conflict between CPD-RDTL and

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38 Even people like Mauk Moruk or Paulino Gama, who have been living in the Netherlands for several years, refused to speak about such events in their writings. For example, he alluded to these events without giving details in his paper entitled ‘The War in the Hills, 1975-85: A FRETILIN Commander Remember’, in Peter P.B. Carey and G. C. Bentley (eds) (1995).
39 Abel Guterres fled East Timor in 1975 when the civil war broke out. He was a political activist in CNRM and CNRT in Australia.
CNRT was deeply rooted in the rivalry of Olo-Gari Asswain and Xanana Gusmão, and that this personal battle has been disguised behind the image of the organisations the two individuals represent. Yet, the issue still remains unanswered, although there have been intensifying calls for revelations and reconciliation. In the eyes of the people and through media, the conflict has been portrayed as a conflict between institutions.

- The Pervasive Differences

The rift continued to unfold during my fieldwork. A number of street-fights between members of CPD-RDTL and CNRT occurred in Dili and other parts of East Timor. However, most street battles involved supporters who did not seem to base their grudge either on ideological grounds or any deep understanding of party politics, let alone the facts surrounding the friction among their leaders from the 1980s. I spoke to several young activists who were involved in street battles; I found that most of them claimed their anger stemmed from symbolical gestures by their adversaries, such as using their party attributes or raising their party’s flag illegally and so on:

They accused our leaders [FRETILIN] of not being faithful to the party but continued to use our flag and our symbols as theirs. We have told them to respect our symbols but they continued to do so. I think, if they do not stop doing so, we should stop them using our ways.

The UN Civilian Police (CivPol) took these issues as ordinary crimes and no attempts were made to investigate any connection between such street battles

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40 Its worth mentioning that when travelling to Portugal as the elected president of East Timor, Xanana Gusmão conceded that he would like to take responsibility for all acts by FRETILIN until 1987. [Não haja mais interpretações a pensar que agora que deixei a FRETILIN estou a fazer críticas. Não, eu assumo até 87 todos os actos praticados pela FRETILIN, como membro do Comité Central, in Xanana Assume Actos da FRETILIN até 1987] (LUSA, 23 October 2002).

41 See Suara Timor Lorosae, a local newspaper, from January to June 2000. It reported that conflicts, threats and street battles between groups claiming to be of CPD-RDTL and ‘others’, were common. Despite this, in my discussions with members of CPD-RDTL on various occasions, they rejected such allegations.

42 This view was expressed to me by Luis Soares, a coffee farmer and strong supporter of FRETILIN in Punilala, Ermera when commenting on the fighting between the supporters of FRETILIN and CPD-RDTL, in Gleno and Dili.
and political developments in the past. Whether this was due to CivPol's ignorance of the political circumstances in East Timor or because they did not want to become involved in a political battle remains unexplained.

Nevertheless, as a gesture to mend differences, Xanana Gusmão and José Ramos Horta of CNRT visited the headquarters of CPD-RDTL for the first time on 17 January 2000 and met most of the leaders of the movement. I was told that the meeting was cordial and both parties were open to each other (Pers. Comm. António Aitahan Matak, 21 January, 2000). At that meeting, CPD-RDTL made its position clear, that while seeking to pursue dialogue and other peaceful means, CPD-RDTL did not accept the existing political process and was calling for change and recognition of the 1975 proclamation of independence by FRETILIN's founders (Pers. Comm. António Aitahan Matak, 21 January, 2000).

This meeting hardly reconciled the two groups. They remained apart, and supporters of each party continued to show acts of defiance. Between December 2000 and August 2001, members of CPD-RDTL raised RDTL's flag in several districts such as Ainaro, Baucau, Viqueque, Bobonaro and Ermera. This resulted in fighting between supporters of the organisation and CNRT. CPD-RDTL supporters claimed that CNRT's flag should not be used to represent the resistance's flag because CNRT only entered the struggle late in the process, when it was established in 1998. A number of incidents took place in different parts of East Timor, in particular in Ossu, a sub-district of Viqueque, and the birthplace of two prominent figures in CPD-RDTL, Olo-Gari Asswain and António Aitahan Matak. In addition, a number of street battles, including fights between huge organised crowds took place in Dili as well as in the districts of Ainaro, Bobonaro, Baucau and Suai (Suara Timor

43 No comments were heard from Xanana and Ramos-Horta about this meeting, but it appeared that their intentions were to invite CPD-RDTL to change itself into a political party, an attempt which received no response from CPRD-RDTL.
Lorosae, 27 January 2001). The persistence of CPD-RDTL supporters in holding to their political line resulted in street fights and sustained political tension. Likewise, because CNRT maintained a high profile during that period, the popular view of CPD-RDTL was negative. Even some church clerics openly expressed their dissatisfaction with the group. In response, Cristiano da Costa, the spokesperson of CPD-RDTL, gave reasons why other political parties should be asked to recognise the RDTL and its attributes:

Because of RDTL’s flag the Children of Timor spilled their blood the children of Timor suffered pain and lost their mother, father, children, sisters. It is through this symbol [flag] that we gained independence [united]. I ask everyone to respect. I ask priests and nuns to understand and respect. We have raised this flag in various districts. Now we are going to hoist it in Dili. All East Timorese should accept it (Pers. Comm. Cristiano da Costa, February 2000).

This was different from CNRT’s political line which sought a more inclusive approach since the organisation represented no one single faction and wanted to maintain its non-partisan stance. Instead, CNRT continued to serve as an umbrella for smaller non-FRETILIN political groups which saw themselves as nationalists rather than collaborators with Indonesia.

In January 2001, CNRT and UNTAET decided to change the name of FALINTIL into Forca da Defesa de Timor Lorosae (FDTL), or the Defence Force of Timor Lorosae. This change of name induced protest by some members of the society including, most notably, CPD-RDTL which thought that the name FALINTIL (the Liberation Army) should be honoured. When delivering a speech in a sports Hall in Dili (Gedung Matahari Terbit) in March 2001, two central figures of CPD-RDTL, in a show of defiance, openly criticised Xanana Gusmão. However, they were later beaten, handcuffed and arrested by

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44 It is worth mentioning that Cristiano da Costa, the spokesperson of CPD-RDTL was the author of CPD-RDTL’s white-paper Secure East Timor’s Place in the Region in and in the World in the Year 2000 and Beyond (2000).
CivPol who alleged that the two were trying to endanger Xanana’s life. Both were detained and tried in the local court. 45

The persistence of CPD-RDTL in rejecting the transitional process was made clear on October 2001 when it rejected UNTAET’s regulation on the Establishment of Political Parties in East Timor (Suara Timor Lorosae 18 October 2000). António Aitahan Mata-k repeated his group’s political platform, arguing that they rejected any form of new government and demanded the United Nations recognise the Democratic Republic of East Timor proclaimed by FRETILIN in 1975. In such a situation, the administration quickly dubbed the group troublemakers who did not want to contribute to the political process in East Timor, preferring conflict to peace. The acknowledgment of CNRT by UNTAET further marginalized CPD-RDTL. Just days before the start of the political campaign to elect members of the Constituent Assembly in July 2001, the UNTAET Chief, Sérgio de Vieira de Mello, warned of election problems and tried to identify troublemakers, claiming: “The biggest dangers for the election are ignorance, disinformation and the resulting confusion”. 46 De Mello pointed out that there existed “manipulation of the population by a minority that wants to upset democracy in East Timor and that does not want an independent East Timor” (LUSA 11 July 2001). Although de Mello did not specify the name of the group, the clear reference was to CPD-RDTL as a radical group. 47 Accusations have also been made that this movement was a pro-Indonesian political group, because of the involvement of its members in supporting the Nationalist Party (PNT) prior to the referendum in August 1999. At the time, PNT was headed by a deposed leader of FRETILIN, Abílio Araújo, who called for autonomy with

45 I personally knew the two individuals, Gil Fernandez and Americo, thanks to contacts we had made before. The two were also students at the University of East Timor (UNTIM), an institution where I taught for more than one year before coming to Australia. While writing this thesis, the two completed their jail terms and were released.
46 Sergio Vieira de Mello made this accusation during the ‘election awareness’ campaign in Gleno (Ermera) 52 kms Southwest of Dili.
Indonesia instead of outright independence. De Mello charged that the “CPD-RDTL now has an ultra-nationalist stance. But in August 1999, it called for East Timorese to vote for autonomy (within Indonesia) [and urged] local residents to help authorities neutralize small groups that remain committed to disrupting the democratic process and have nothing to offer the population” (LUSA, 12 July 2001).

This was the first open accusation made by the leader of UNTAET against CPD-RDTL, although in my discussions with founders and members of this group, they rejected any notion that they had made or were willing to create instability. The leaders on various occasions dismissed criticism of themselves as being fabricators and manipulators of information designed to undermine CPD-RDTL (Pers. Comm. with Cristiano da Costa, April 2000). Allegations that this group was working together with Indonesia to destabilise East Timor were also made. Some even went further to claim that the group was receiving money from Indonesia. In response, as stated in one of East Timor’s newspapers, “the general co-ordinator of CPD-RDTL, António Aitahan Mataak, demanded proof that his party is linked to elements in Indonesia who intend to use the organisation to destabilise Timor Lorosae” (Suara Timor Lorosae, 31 March 2001).

In August 2000, through the first national congress inside the country, CNRT changed its name to CNRT/Congresso Nacional. Barely a year later, on 9 June 2001, the organisation was officially dissolved. Xanana Gusmão argued in his speech that the mission of the CNRT – to fight for independence – had been accomplished. Before the August 2001 election of the Constituent Assembly, Xanana remarked that there was a need for political parties to be given more room to move into a democratic East Timor.48 When CNRT was dissolved in

48 Xanana Gusmão’s speech at the closure ceremony of CNRT in Dili soccer stadium, 9 June 2001. A transcript for this can be obtained from the webpage of Lao Hamutuk or Back Door: http://www.pcug.org.au/~wildwood/Index.htm.
June 2001, conflict between the two groups scaled down and Xanana was later elected President of East Timor. Olo-Gari Asswain continued to lead CPD-RDTL but opted to remain outside the new political system, accepting neither to collaborate with nor recognise the new government.

The dissolution of CNRT left a vacuum for FRETILIN, the biggest political party, to fill, and renewed conflict with CPD-RDTL which had been put on 'hold' for sometime. The dissolution of CNRT did not heal the continuing tension between Xanana Gusmão and Olo-Gari Asswain. Until the end of my fieldwork, the rift between the two figures remained unresolved. Nevertheless, no escalation of conflict occurred between the time leading up to CNRT's dissolution and for several months after. This vacuum allowed the hidden friction between FRETILIN and CPD-RDTL to resurface.

VIII. Conflict between FRETILIN and CPD-RDTL

One of the most interesting of the existing conflicts is between two groups that claim to be the 'true FRETILIN'. Since FRETILIN is regarded as the largest and oldest independence advocate, it has also become a source of conflict. Indeed, judging by its name, FRETILIN or Frente Revolucionaria de Timor Leste Independente, was set up as a political front under which all independence factions could shelter. All groups, including some splinter groups formerly affiliated with the party, argue that FRETILIN is the ai-hun or the tree that provides shelter for all of them. During the course of my fieldwork, the tension and conflict between FRETILIN and CPD-RDTL was conspicuous. This was fortified further by the claims of formerly aligned groups with FRETILIN such as ASDT, PNT as well as other non-political party groups, that the party had sidelined the original intentions laid down by its founders.
In principle, there is no difference between CPD-RDTL and FRETILIN. Members of the two political groups trace their ideological affiliation to the birth of ASDT on 20 May 1974 and to the birth of FRETILIN on 12 September 1974. However, FRETILIN split with the establishment of CRRN. One group traces its roots to the Hudi Laran Tragedy in the early 1980s, following the view of the Kilik Wae Gae and Mauk Moruk group, while the second group is now led by Lu-Olo and Mari Alkatiri. Following this split, the former President of FRETILIN in Portugal, Abilio Araújo, was also sacked and José Luís Guterres then assumed the authority for the FRETILIN's external delegation.

Abilio Araújo later worked closely with Indonesia and, prior to the referendum, set up the Timorese Nationalist Party, advocating autonomy within Indonesia but using FRETILIN's flag and attributes as its symbols.69 Abilio Araújo seems to have developed a close relationship with CPD-RDTL.

Plate 5.3: FRETILIN's flag: Two groups claim legitimate inheritors of the party's flag (Photo: Author).

69 I was told that some members of the current CPD-RDTL such as Cristiano da Costa, Feliciano Alvés (Man-Siri) and Antonio Antahan Matek also joined PNT in the past (Pers. Comm. José Luís Olivéima 2000), a claim they never denied in public. Prior to the 30 August 2001 Constituent Assembly election, Aliança Araújo, the vice president and sister of Abilio Araújo, had defended her party's strategy arguing that he had no intention of integrating East Timor into Indonesia. His stance of supporting autonomy, he said later, was a strategy to derail Indonesia's attempt to make East Timor an integral part of Indonesia had the people chosen autonomy, instead of Independence, in the said referendum. By working with Indonesia, PNT reserved the right to persuade Indonesia, had the people voted for autonomy, to accept the fact that its proposal for autonomy was a transitional one. Therefore, argued Aliança, independence was still an option even if the pro-autonomy side had won.
On 28 November 2000, Araújo sent a speech from Portugal to be read at the ceremony held in CPD-RDTL headquarters in Balide, Dili (Suara Timor Lorosae, 29 November 2001). Another group was headed by the former President of ASDT (the embryo of FRETILIN), FRETILIN and the Democratic Republic of East Timor (RDTL) in 1975, Francisco Xavier do Amaral. My observations during fieldwork suggest that Xavier had always been working closely with members of CPD-RDTL. During the election for the Constituent Assembly in August 2001, a high profile member of CPD-RDTL, Feliciano Alvês (Mau-Siri), ran for Xavier’s political party (ASDT). This party obtained six seats in the Constitutional Assembly and Feliciano was elected as a member of the party.

CPD-RDTL representatives argue that it is the legitimate FRETILIN because it is the only group that has continued to uphold the principles of the front since its inception. The classic criticism is that FRETILIN has not upheld its principles, and that the same FRETILIN could have been maintained as a political front and not as a political party as it was at the time. It is for this reason that the group accused Mari Alkatiri and Lu-Olo of having violated the principles set by the founders of the front.\(^{50}\) Likewise, FRETILIN should have been maintained as it was in the beginning and not subsumed by later groups such as CRRN, CNRM or CNRT. The criticism also emphasises that it should have been FRETILIN’s flag and attributes that were taken to represent East Timor in the 1999 referendum. Instead it was CNRT which was recognised as the umbrella organisation of nationalist factions, of which FRETILIN was one. Finally, the FRETILIN of Lu-Olo and Mari Alkatiri is

\(^{50}\) Avelino Coelho, the leader of the Timorese Socialist Party, (PST) made it clear on 15 May 2000, at the Conferência de Quadros da FRETILIN (FRETILIN’s Conference 15-20 May, 2000), that despite his FRETILIN background, he established PST because FRETILIN was a front and not a political party.
criticised for not recognising the independence proclaimed in November 1975.\footnote{I am indebted to Cristiano da Costa, one of the leaders who remained the spokespersons of CPD-RDTL throughout the time of my fieldwork and made himself available to discuss various issues, mostly in informal terms, regarding his group’s view of FRETILIN under the leadership of Lu-Olo and Mari Alkatiri.} António da Costa (Aitahan Matak) argues that:

The current FRETILIN of Lu-Olo and Mari Alkatiri does not adhere to the original principle of the struggle, for it accepts other factions which formerly were collaborators of Indonesia [re-UDT, APODETI, KOTA and Trabalhista]. The current FRETILIN, instead of acting as a political force, acts most like a political party” (Pers. Comm. February 2000).

Therefore, the mission of CPD-RDTL is to defend the basic principles of the struggle (Pers. Comm. with Cristiano da Costa, July 2000). It continues to use the flag of FRETILIN, sing the party anthem (*Foho Ramelau*) and use the attributes of the party. CPD-RDTL also calls itself *FRETILIN Combatente* (FRETILIN in Struggle), despite objections from Lu-Olo and Mari Alkatiri.\footnote{This is parallel to Megawati Soekarnoeputri’s political party during the reign of President Suharto in Indonesia. Megawati set up her Democratic Party in Struggle, also known by its acronym, PDI-P (*Partai Demokrasi Indonesia – Perjuangan*) because of a party split allegedly masterminded by the Suharto regime.}

- **The Sources of Political Rift**

The use of the flag, symbols and attributes of FRETILIN by CPD-RDTL has been a source of conflict between this group and FRETILIN. Lu-Olo was the most vocal of FRETILIN when attacking its adversaries. He accused CPD-RDTL of being a group coming from nowhere whose members comprised activists of the PNT, a party which advocated autonomy with Indonesia before the 1999 referendum, and that it was a group which was trying to destroy FRETILIN (*Timor Post*, 7 November 2000). Lu-Olo contended that there were not two FRETILINs. There was only one FRETILIN, and the FRETILIN under his leadership did not have any relation with CPD-RDTL. FRETILIN, he argued, has always “seen CPD-RDTL as a splinter group.
frustrated by the course of events in the history of struggle" (Suara Timor Lorosae, 7 November 2001). Indeed, in the FRETILIN flag-raising ceremony by members of CPD-RDTL in some districts, fighting erupted between the supporters of the two groups. The most notable was the fighting in early December 2000. When members of CPD-RDTL were touring Venilale, a sub-district of Baucau in the eastern part of East Timor. In the early morning of 7 December 2000, a group claiming to be members of FRETILIN attacked a CPD-RDTL group. A number of CPD-RDTL members were injured and their leader, António Aitahan Matak, was stabbed and had to be treated for several days in Dili Hospital. On 20 August 2001, I met António Aitahan-Matak, and he warned that if the elected Constituent Assembly failed to recognise the 1975 proclamation, “We will continue to remain on one side of the river, and the others can remain on the opposite bank” (ami sei hela iha mota sorin, maluk sira seluk sei hela iha mota sorin ba). The division between the two has remained even after East Timor was officially declared independent and after UNTAET left the territory.

The inability of CPD-RDTL to attract support from other political groups has further marginalized the movement. As such, leaders, particularly those of its rival FRETILIN, used CPD-RDTL’s weakness to sully the groups’ image. Amid mounting pressure on CPD-RDTL for the alleged violence of its supporters, Mari Alkatiri stated that his party condemned violence by members of CPD-RDTL. He also accused members of trying to destroy the country (Suara Timor Lorosae, 9 March 2001). Using the same words as Lu-Olo, Alkatiri stated:

Their actions on Wednesday were criminal in nature. They are using the FRETILIN’s flag without our agreement. We have reminded them more than ten times to stop using FRETILIN symbols, but to no avail ... That’s against FRETILIN’s policies. FRETILIN has always fought for the full independence of Timor Lorosae and we want the country to be peaceful (Suara Timor Lorosae, 9 March 2001).
IX. The Future: The Rebirth of ASDT

FRETILIN also faced another internal problem. On 28 March 2001, three months after my fieldwork began, the first president of East Timor and former President of the FRETILIN party, Francisco Xavier do Amaral, announced a plan to form a new political movement, a FRETILIN 'Third Way'. This movement aimed to serve as either a 'pole for union' of party factions or an 'alternative' for the elections on August 30, 2001. This 'Third Way' movement was similar to that taken by another splinter group of FRETILIN headed by Abilio Araújo, the former and dismissed leader of the party and now leader of PNT. Xavier do Amaral stated that he had tried to stay in the middle, to get the others to join so that they could continue together as a party (LUSA, 29 March 2001) but his intention was overturned by his comrades, a reference to FRETILIN, PST, PNT and CPD-RDTL.

Earlier, in an attempt to unify all factions, a series of meetings were organised after August 2000 between FRETILIN and CPD-RDTL (Pers. Comm. António Aitahan-Matak, 17 August 2000). Xavier was entrusted to head a Reconciliation Body within FRETILIN which aimed to unite all factions within the party. In a way, this FRETILIN sponsored body intended to call upon CPD-RDTL and other factions to 'return' to the party. However, this objective failed and Xavier changed his mind and decided to set up his own political party (Suara Timor Lorosae, 7 November 2001).53 The announcement marked the formal return of Francisco Xavier do Amaral to political activity. Along with Jose Ramos Horta, Nicolau Lobato and Justino Molo, he founded in 1974 the Timorese Social Democratic Association [ASDT], which was later the same year replaced by FRETILIN. He was expelled from the movement in 1977 in circumstances that have never been fully explained (LUSA, 29 March 2001).

53 After his capture by Indonesian forces in the late 1970s, Xavier do Amaral lived in Jakarta, Indonesia and was a pro-integration (autonomy within Indo[n]esia) representative at reconciliation meetings of East Timorese leaders (LUSA, 29 March 2001).
On 28 March 2001, Francisco Xavier do Amaral presided over the raising of the flag of the Democratic Republic of East Timor (RDTL) at his home in Lecidere, a neighbourhood in Dili. He called on East Timorese from 13 districts to deliver their opinion to UNTAET that the Democratic Republic of Timor Leste had already been proclaimed on 28 November 1975, supporting the idea raised earlier by CPD-RDTL. This call suggested his distance from the FRETILIN of Lu-Olo and Mari Alkatiri and other historical political parties such as UDT, KOTA and Trabalhista, opening the way for conflicts and differences. Xavier was quoted in the local newspaper, saying:

Because of that, as one of the persons who proclaimed RDTL, I have a responsibility to the Maubere people. The future of Timor Lorosae as a country is tied to the wishes of the majority of the people ... [Xavier also promised to] help the people, who suffered 24 years of Indonesian occupation [and] force the United Nations through UNTAET to acknowledge the existence of the independence flag that was used in the proclamation of the republic (Suara Timor Lorosae, 29 March 2001).

Xavier’s new movement is popularly known as ASDT, reviving the movement that was set up on 20 May 1974. It was ‘re-founded’ in April 2001, a decision that was made, according to Xavier do Amaral, due to the FRETILIN leaders’ unwillingness to unite. In August 2001, ASDT also participated in the elections for the Constituent Assembly and gained six out of the eighty-eight available seats.54

Thus, there are now four political movements in East Timor which adhere to early FRETILIN principles and continue to use the attributes of FRETILIN as their symbols. Apart from FRETILIN itself, the CDP-RDTL, ASDT and the PNT claim that they have the right to use such symbols. During the election of the Constituent Assembly in August 2001, however, ASDT and PNT decided to use their new flag. PST has, since the beginning, designed its own

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54 Xavier do Amaral later was nominated by a small Republican Party, PARENTIL, and his own party, ASDT, to run for the presidency alongside Xanana Gusmão in April 2002.
flag, whereas CPD-RDTL continues to use FRETILIN's flag, its attributes as well as the flag of RDTL proclaimed in November 1975.

X. Closing Remarks: What do People Think?

This chapter has presented a history and interpretation of the conflict among the main political parties in East Timor. Of significance was not the substance of such conflicts, but the ways this friction contributed to shaping people's views. Friction and differences among the Timorese political community dominated local politics. Indeed these differences shaped the situation and the life of people in one way or another. Although such differences and friction occurred mainly among the leaders who lived in Dili, the capital, their concomitant effects created tension and distrust among people in the villages as well.

Friction at the upper level created tension and conflict among supporters at the grassroots level. Distrust and disillusionment became a common phenomenon. Some political activists and politicians argued that while the country might be able to stand on its own, it could also be shaken and remain unstable.
Chapter 6

Anxiety and Changing Perceptions

I. Introduction

For the East Timorese, nationalism is considered a binding sense of unity that builds up with time and through growing consciousness. This imagining is believed to have developed through the years of shared experience of colonisation, oppression and subjugation to foreign powers. The emergence of tension and political differentiation is reshaping East Timorese perceptions about national unity and the sense of \textit{nacionalismo}.$^1$

While some international staff working for UNTAET saw this development as part of democracy, many political activists view internal differences with concern. This is to say that for the East Timorese, the existing friction did not necessarily reflect the values inherent in democracy and national unity preached by their leaders. Instead of guaranteeing peace and harmony, the East Timorese described the situation as "something we did not expect" (buat \textit{ida ita la hein}).

This chapter introduces these changes of perception towards \textit{nacionalismo} in the post-1999 referendum period and examines the impulses behind them. It charts a process of initial euphoria followed by gradual disillusionment, dissatisfaction and disenchantment over the political process in the post-1999 referendum period. The implication and consequences of these shifting

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$^1$ Let me emphasise here by saying that I have made no attempt to distinguish between the meaning of ‘nationalism’ and ideas of ‘national unity’. As reasoned in Chapters 2 and 3, the East Timorese used the two concepts interchangeably to mean ‘unity’ or the ‘sense of nationhood’. When asked “what made you strong and independent from Indonesia”, their answers would be “because of our nationalism”, which is also a reference to ‘national unity’. Likewise, when the answer to the same question was “because of national unity”, it was a reference to the sense of nationhood that was believed to bind them together.
perceptions among different groups reveal a range of strong and persistent division within contemporary East Timorese society.

II. The Setting: Frustration and Disillusionment

I begin this chapter by presenting my experience of arriving in Dili for the first time to do my fieldwork. During these first days in Dili, I noted that despite the huge destruction of East Timor in September 1999, people continued to express a sense of euphoria about independence. Weddings and birthday parties served as venues where relatives, friends and neighbours came together to share the joy of independence. Discussions of independence often became the dominant topic of conversation in such events.

Certainly, the euphoria of freedom was so overwhelming that it coloured every social and political event that took place in Dili, and in the entire half-island country. Public meetings, social gatherings and political discussion took place regularly in the city where crowds came face to face with political leaders. Speeches by political leaders applauded the new era of democracy, openness and freedom from subjugation. This atmosphere was evident for several months.

While accounts of the tragic events in post-August 1999 referendum also continued to colour conversations and discussions, the East Timorese were overwhelmed by the freedom they had achieved. “Hi brother, we did it”, was the common phrase friends would tell me during that period. Embracing each other and toasting almost anything to salute the achievement was, as the East Timorese put it, the ‘face’ of Dili over that period. Nevertheless, despite this jubilation, in the following months, particularly from February 2000 a sense of discontent began to surface in public. Accusations between opposing political groups in the local media, leaders’ revelations of ‘culprits’ of integration in public gatherings, and reference to the ‘guilt’ during the
resistance years, coloured the public discourse. I began to sense this discontent which personified a change of ‘heart’, as a friend told me, a phenomenon that surprised me after witnessing the independence jubilation.

Astonished by this change of perception, in June-August 2000 I visited a number of villages in different districts of East Timor and talked to various people attempting to grasp their views about the political development in the post-independence period. Some of my discussants were political activists, some were former clandestine members during the Indonesian occupation and some were still politically active but remained mostly outside the politics of Dili.

In Dili, I maintained my contacts with students who were actively involved in political activism such as Juventude Loro Asswain, Organisāo Popular Juventude Loro Asswain Timor Leste (OPJLATL), The Student Solidarity Council (DSMPTT) and some women’s organisations. My continuous engagement with them enriched my understanding of the situation. Indeed, conversation and discussion with these people cannot be separated from the evolving events in East Timor in general at the time. The overall perception and ideas were related to the tense political rivalry and uncertainty after 1999. The lack of information from the government allowed for the population to rely on their, often miscalculated, interpretations of the existing political situation. While UNTAET was busy preparing the transition to full independence, political dynamics within the East Timorese political community presented a different version of history.

The East Timorese certainly valued their independence but its context became a source of scepticism on how to preserve the notion of unity and the sense of nationhood. This sentiment came as an expression of frustration with the

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2 This trip became the first of other visits and discussions with various people from different lines of political positions.
existing political situation, political leaders, and the atmosphere of conflict and chaos throughout that period.

In the first half of 2000, disappointment and dissatisfaction was evident among many sections within the society over the political situation. While political change and the effects of the scorched earth policy by the pro-Indonesian militia in September 1999 was one thing, growing disillusionment with East Timor politics on the ground was another. Political rivalry among old and newly established political parties increased as competition to claim political leverage and position intensified during the post referendum period (see Chapters 5, 7 and 8). To the locals, particularly those who had experienced the long trauma of war since 1975, it represented a different story. Ordinary people in the streets complained about and criticised the existing political condition, which was creating conflict and division.

Many East Timorese remembered the happy days ‘of the past’. They meant the times before 1975 and the Indonesian army’s occupation. To these individuals, the Indonesian period was a time of ‘terus no susar’, suffering and misery, because of the repression and fear they had to endure. Among the various people who I talked to was António Guterres, a man from Ermera, who was in his late 40s and had lost some members of his family and friends during the occupation. He informed me that independence was always his hope; he believed it would bring freedom from fear and harmonious life. During the war (a reference to the period, 1975-1999) António says, “we could not go to the gardens, we could not pick our coffee. The [Indonesian] army thought we would go and see our brothers and sisters in the bush [the guerrillas] to set up contacts. [We had] no money because [we] could not work”. He had always expected that political independence would be an era

of certainty and a return to ‘normal life’. In his words, it should be an era of calm and tranquillity. Indeed, many East Timorese had lived through the previous conflicts (1974 civil war and post the 1999 referendum period) and were forced to flee their homes and take refuge in the bush for months or years. To these people, their expectations were simple; the earlier experiences must not be repeated.

Plate 6.1: António Guterres, a former Civil Servant, Member of the Clandestine Movement in Ermera and militant of FRETILIN (Photo: Author).

However, the events in the independence period slowly swept away their early hopes and expectations. Disagreements and divisions among the political leaders post-1999, which caused other divisions to emerge, helped develop an uncertain political climate. Divisions among sections within Timorese society also became so obvious that hopes for peace were slim. Certain groups in the community claimed that they had fought most in the war and could sideline other groups for not cooperating with the resistance in the past. The new political process seemed to revert to issues that emerged prior to previous wars.

4 The political division at the centre was widely shared by people in the villages. The level of hostility was so widespread that social differences were often politicised. One example was the case in Watolari, the district of Viqueque. Rival ethnic groups in that area, which had Chapter Six 203
Most people I talked to expressed their disappointment with the existing situation. A woman told me that she had expected peace and harmony after independence but what she had heard and seen was very different. She said, "Why do the leaders fight each other ... They should be standing together and working for the well-being of our new country. Again, she repeated, Why do they have to fight? I do not know ... I am afraid, we might have to flee again" (Pers. Comm. Victória dos Santos, Liquiça, 20 January 2000). She made these statements in reference to the ongoing political frictions in Dili and fighting among supporters of political groups in other districts at that time. She recalled the previous wars in which people had to flee their homes and hide in the bush and jungles, or flee as far as West Timor. Likewise, Luis Soares, a farmer in Punilala, Ermera, reckoned that the chances of bringing peace to his country were slim since the fighting among political elites and parties continued to heighten (Pers. Comm. 17 July 2000). Luis thought the leaders’ disputes about leadership and competition for power – as he interpreted the situation – were regrettable.

The same experience happened to me when talking to political activists in Dili. This time, some young political activists at the Yayasan HAK, SIL, DSMPTT and Feto Foinsae Timor Lorosae, complained about the lack of attention the political leaders paid to ameliorate the poverty of the people who had endured long years of war. Their disappointment with the situation became even greater when students from DSMPTT, Feto Foinsae, the former university of East Timor (UNTIM) and others held public discussions in Dili to call for an easing of political tensions among the leaders, an issue which was a concern to many at the time. Interestingly, although the presence of

confronted each other since the Japanese briefly occupied East Timor in 1942, accused each other of collaborating with Indonesia and fighting against the Independence movement. As such, accused groups often sought protection with the government, fearing prosecution by their countrymen.

5 I owe this to my separate discussion with various people including Ricardo Ribeiro (Juventude Lorico Asswain), Jacinto Maia and Oscar Silva (DSMPTT), Rosa (Feto Foin Sae) and Olandina Cairo (ETWAVE) in various occasions.
UNTAET at the time was obvious, the cynical view was that the UN did not care whether the Timorese were united or not.6

Such complaints represented the common mood among the political activists within the East Timorese community throughout that period. Thus they said, “the leaders may say what they want; as long as we are not [forced to] flee again, [that is all right]” (boot sira koalia oin-oin, naran ita keta halai tan dala ida.). Nevertheless, their hope for good prospects seemed to be still far away.7 Indeed, it was political ‘clashes’ that their concerns were all about. This view was shared by people in the remote parts of East Timor. When talking to Humberto, a liurai who was in his seventies, in Watolari, Viqueque (the place where rivalry between pro- and anti-independence groups remained even after September 1999), he blamed the political elites (ema boot or big people) in Dili. They “were the ones who encouraged the continuing political debacle in the country” (Pers Comm. Humberto, Watolari July 2000).

Interestingly, apart from political party break ups and violent clashes, this man specifically took note of the activities of CPD-RDTL and the ‘old’ political parties whose leaders refused to join CNRT. CPD-RDTL’s refusal to enter the political mainstream and not to adhere to the Constitution of the new country was perturbing to ordinary people like Humberto. Likewise, accusations between the CNRT and FRETILIN were also another issue to this rural dweller.

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6 I have explained elsewhere in this thesis that the East Timorese were traumatised by the ‘lack of responsibility’ of the previous United Nations Mission (UNAMET), which left the East Timorese when pro-Indonesian militias rampaged the country in post-1999 ballot period. UNAMET made promises, as Luis often said, that they would stay on but left people in disarray. Many East Timorese were forced to flee the country and many more hid in the bush during that period. The malae cannot be trusted, said António Guterres. According to António, the malae had told them before the 1999 referendum that they would stay on; no matter who won and that no war would take place then.

7 Field notes from discussion at the Yayasan HAK on various occasions in 2000.
Plate 6.2: Humberto (Black suit and white shirt), a liurai from Watolari, in Viqueque sitting among his friends listening to a talk by UN officers about conflict resolution (Photo: Author).

Indeed, CPD-RDTL’s rejection of UNTAET’s handling of the transition process arguing that UNTAET should have operated within the framework of independence that had been proclaimed on 28 November 1975, added to the concerns of ordinary people. By defying the CNRT and the UN, and by using the attributes of FRETILIN, CPD-RDTL apart from showing its defiance of FRETILIN was also interpreted by the people as trying to cause problems (Pers. Comm. Luis Soares, 27 October 2000), despite the group’s leaders frequent claim that they had nothing to do with violence. While it was not certain whether these people spoke their minds or were merely influenced by the stereotypic view that CPD-RDTL was the source of all problems in East Timor, I noted their discontentment over the divisions was high. They believed that any open conflict at the centre would affect their daily lives as ordinary citizens including those in the rural areas.

Such political dynamics might be considered part of a process the new country was expected to undergo in its early years, if democracy is used as
point of reference here. However, being a new country which experienced constant violence and oppression in the past, there was very little room for discussion when it came to differences. The preoccupation of ordinary East Timorese was not with the opening up of space for political differences but with the translation of these differences on the ground. As one of my informants often told me:

The leaders might talk about their differences and insult each other as much as they want. However, as experience showed us in the last 24 years, whenever disputes among leaders occurred, fighting began on the ground between people who did not even know the essence of their leaders’ dispute. [He went on] In 1975 when the civil war broke out, it was only a handful of so-called leaders who were in dispute in Dili. Yet, the killings spread all over [East] Timor and many innocent people died. During the Indonesian period, most of political leaders [pro- and anti-independence] lived in the bush, in Dili, in Jakarta, in Australia, Mozambique and Portugal. However those who had to bear the consequences and faced torture by the Indonesian army were the small people in the villages. [he added] Now, the leaders are starting to fight again, the political leaders are divided again: Do you still believe in ‘national unity’, an issue they have called for during the years of struggle? [António asked; then he went on] I am really worried with the situation (Pers. Comm. António Guterres, August 22, 2000).

Questioning the ability to move forward and whether East Timor would be able to stand alone as a politically stable country coloured the anxiety of people during that period. Some local politicians like many UN staff working in East Timor, insisted that these divisions and conflicts were a natural development in societies experiencing a transition from foreign oppression to democracies.8 Their thin knowledge of the history of that country and of the impact of September 1999 traumatic suffering on the East Timorese might have contributed to the misunderstanding of local people’s concern.

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8 This was a view held among members of political parties such as FRETILIN and UDT. Indeed in my interview with Francisco Cepeda, at the FRETILIN Headquarters in Dili, he reiterated the need for political parties to play a major role in politics rather than relying on CNRT, whose task had ended with the implementation of the popular vote in August 30, 1999.

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As time went on, and political divisions continued, local pessimism continued to rise. It came as no surprise that after August 2000, politicians and political activists began to walk their own way and distanced themselves from CNRT. Indeed, two distinct views emanated from this debate: the first saw the change of political landscape from Indonesian occupation to East Timor independence as not the achievement of a single political party or group alone. Therefore, according to this view, the power of the state should be restored and the one party system outlawed, a pointed reference to CNRT, which was regarded by UNTAET as the representative of the East Timorese. Proponents of this view – most notably FRETILIN and UDT – argued that there should be an election held as soon as possible.

The second view was that East Timor was still in its early stage of freedom and had just emerged from the destruction inflicted by the Indonesian military and its created militias (Gusmão 2000a). There was a perceived threat from the border with West Timor, in which former pro-Indonesia militias took refugee after fleeing the September 1999 chaos. They might mount border incursions and destabilise the country. While, at the political level, this threat was not seriously considered due to the presence of the International Peace Keeping Force in East Timor, the September 1999 trauma had not been forgotten by ordinary East Timorese. Proponents of this view, consisting exclusively of the small political parties (see Chapter 5) believed that the fledging country should not rush to introduce a multi-party system since the population was still traumatised by the killings and destruction of September 1999. The same advocates argued that it would be better for the political system to remain committed to the national unity pact formulated under the aegis of the CNRT.9 According to this second view, independence was

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9 This idea was proposed by Clementino dos Reis Amaral, the Vice-President of KOTA, a small and feudal oriented political party in the extraordinary conference of CNRT 20-30 August 2000, an idea flatly denied by FRETILIN and UDT.
achievable due to the participation of all the East Timorese as represented by the CNRT, and not by individual groups or political parties alone.

Those who rejected the first view wanted, as they often claimed, to safeguard national unity. In order to do this, the CNRT and its leadership should be preserved for it represented and served the interests of all East Timorese regardless of their political background. Small and newly established political parties such as KOTA, Trabalhista and PSD were at the forefront of this idea.10

One thing is certain; the disentanglement from colonial power and the transformation into self-government was a confused period. Liberation from colonialism brought a sense of euphoria which in turn, raised high expectations among the population. Everyone wanted to be heard and have their rights recognised. There was the prospect that with the departure of the militia and the passing of the 1999 referendum, this chapter of the years of repression would be closed, bringing a lasting peace to the country. Nevertheless, divisions continued and disillusionment grew among the population. This gave rise to a third view; that since all the political parties had formed an alliance under the CNRT, there was a vision that the resistance body would be changed into a government and no political campaigning would be needed for the first few years. All political parties and groups were expected to be involved in the first administration and to develop the new country pending a democratic election several years later.11 However, these expectations failed to materialise. While UNTAET was busy setting up

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10 For example, during the CNRT Congress in 20-30 August 2000, Clementino dos Reis Amaral, along with leaders of other small political parties, expressed their support of this view. They wanted the leadership of the nation to be handed to a collective group representing various elements in East Timor and not to only one political party.

11 Upon my arrival in Dili for fieldwork, I spent time in CNRT’s office and attended various meetings coordinated by the resistance organisation for the first three months. All political leaders were present and talks revolved around the issue of a ‘national unity’ government in which all political leaders would participate pending an election to elect the first government. The time period given for this ‘national unity’ government was 5-7 years.
mechanisms for rebuilding the country, tensions within the East Timorese political community intensified.

As disagreement among political leaders grew, threats and insults became public. These developments dismayed people who were trying to recover from the ruins of September 1999. Various political groups and former members of the resistance, youths and former guerrilla members, also wanted to be acknowledged for their past political contribution to the struggle. These issues all created competition and hostility. The ensuing street battles and the formation of gangs posed new threats to security. In addition, in this climate of high competition, political groups quickly affiliated themselves – in a less transparent way – with street gangs, causing further fear in the society.\footnote{As described before, some former guerrilla fighters had their own groups and were closely affiliated with certain political groups in the new country. See also Chapters 7 and 8 for further information on this issue.}

An UNTAET report to the UN Secretary General in late 2000 noted that differences continued on the ground and that tension and destruction of property remained a concern to the transitional administration (UNTAET 2001). Blame was put on the different political groups which were divided over ideology, political inclination and political objectives, and were developing outside the existing political process. Concerns that these differences might derail the preparation for the independence of the new country were paramount. Again, CPD-RDTL, the group which denounced the political process and strongly rejected the legitimacy of UNTAET and local political parties, was singled out for blame. For example, in the same report, it was stated that:

CPD-RDTL continued to oppose the election on the grounds that East Timor became independent in 1975 ... a general stable security situation, marred in March 2001 by violent incidents in Baucau, in which members of CPD-RDTL and former members FALINTIL were involved, including the burning of the local mosque and attacks on the Timorese District Administrator and other UN staff; a widely shared fear among the population that the political process may not
remain peaceful; [In addition], continued advocacy by pro-Indonesian militias based in West Timor of armed struggle to bring East Timor into Indonesia (UNTAET 2001).

How were these political developments interpreted? There were two different ideas. Some politicians and UNTAET, as mentioned before, insisted that this development was part of a democratic process, while the second group, which consisted mostly of political activists and ordinary people disagreed. In their minds, disagreements that could potentially develop into conflict raised doubts about any smooth political process, particularly as differences at the political level and fighting between different street gangs affiliated with certain political parties became increasingly common. Based on their experience of the events of the 1974-1975 civil war and the 1999 September mayhem, democracy did not seem to be present in the existing political process.

III. Politically Motivated Social Divisions

In addition to these tensions, social resentment between the home-stayers versus diaspora also became widespread. Resentment occurred due to the commonly perceived assumption that East Timorese (particularly home-stayers) were united before the referendum or during the struggle against Indonesia, but cracks began to emerge after that (sees Chapters 7 and 8). In the lead up to the first CNRT Congress in August 2000, FRETILIN and UDT openly challenged CNRT and its leader, Xanana Gusmão. Diasporic East Timorese who had returned to East Timor were blamed for this confrontation. The conflict was interpreted widely not only as the renewal of conflict and divisions among leaders but also as a conflict between home-stayers and members of the East Timorese diaspora. Since Mari Alkatiri (FRETILIN) and João Carrascalão (UDT) lived in exile during the war and the political parties they represented vehemently challenged Xanana Gusmão’s (CNRT) leadership and pushed for the dissolution of CNRT, they were seen
as trying to derail the National Unity Pact promoted since the early 1980s. Interestingly, since both Mari Alkatiri and João Carrascalão were in exile, they were considered foreign to the developments in internal politics within the resistance inside East Timor during the 24 years of resistance.

To most home-stayers, political activists and those who grew up knowing only the fight for independence, CNRT was identified with National Unity because it united the interests of different political factions in the fight against Indonesia. Most young nationalists (non-FRETILIN groups) particularly those who grew up or were born during the Indonesian occupation had little knowledge of pre-1974-1975 political parties. As such, maintaining CNRT and respecting the leadership of the resistance was something they had lived with throughout their lives (Xanana Gusmão 1998). Some of these groups – but not all –, despite being unorganised, called themselves nationalists, and along with ordinary East Timorese preferred to see the national unity preserved under the leadership of the resistance leader, not an elected President of East Timor.

The difference between home-stayers and the East Timorese diaspora began to intensify when many of the latter returned to East Timor in late 1999. While relations at the political level soured, division extended to, as the East Timorese call them, ‘sensitive issues’. This included issues like giving

13 The withdrawal of Xanana Gusmão from FRETILIN and the adoption of a more nationalist oriented vision in the early 1980s – discussed in Chapter 6 – were perceived in East Timor as the inception of the national unity pact. Previously, only FRETILIN was identified with the resistance, but it received very little support from its former enemies.
14 FRETILIN, UDT, APODETI, KOTA and Trabalhista are often called ‘old’ parties whereas those established in the post-1999 referendum period are called ‘new’ political parties.
15 This division was captured initially by the expression of stereotypes -imi ema liur versus ami ema laran (lit., you, the outsiders versus we, the inside-people). The distinction was in part economically driven. The economic conditions of the time favoured those who came from outside more than those living inside the country. The fact that skilled and knowledgeable East Timorese diaspora gained employment during the UNTAET period was resented by home-stayers who constituted the bulk of the unemployed East Timorese. Most of the diaspora spoke English and Portuguese. These people had an advantage in terms of access to jobs compared to their home-stayer compatriots who only spoke Indonesian and Tetum (see Chapter 7 for detail discussion on this topic).
importance to certain groups because they were regarded as having fought more than others during the war, symbolic representation such as the new country’s constitution, flag and so on (see Chapters 7 and 8). Indeed, the uncontrolled spread of branches (political parties, ideology) of the tree (nation) during the time of my fieldwork was not limited to the conflict between CNRT and CPD-RDTL, CNRT and FRETILIN, or between FRETILIN and CPD-RDTL alone. The establishment of new political parties, for example, after August 2000 came as a result of internal political rivalries and discontent with the political process. Consequently, these parties began to address issues which were not only political, but also social and philosophical in character, thus shifting the context of political differences to embrace race, the generation gap, social origins and social status. As such, the political dimensions of conflict were ‘twisted’ and changed into cultural and social based expressions of differences. Such forms of differences can be conceptualised into a number of crosscutting sectional interests:

**Vertical Expression of Differences**

1. Age group: (old generation/new generation). These sorts of divisions were polarised political groups into those who belonged to the older generation and those of the new generation.

2. Leadership: seniors were expected to take the lead, the younger generation were expected to wait until their time came.

3. Educational qualification: graduate/non-graduates. Those who were graduates and those who were not; those who graduated in Western countries and those who graduated in Indonesia.

**Horizontal Expression of Differences**

This can be divided into:

1. Political divisions, for example, the conflict between political parties and between those who have been in the resistance movement.

2. Non-political horizontal conflict and divisions.
- Residential Status: (exiles/home-stayers). This differentiated the East Timorese from outsiders and those who remained in East Timor during the ‘integration period’.
- Racial Categories: *(malae-mestizo/rai-nain)* divided political players into ‘half-castes’ and ‘indigenous’.
- Language Competence: the ability to communicate in Portuguese or English versus Tetum or Bahasa Indonesia.
- The exploitation of geographical separation to maintain certain groups’ positions. The issue of *firaku, lorosae* (the East) versus *kaladi, loromonu* (the west). Those in the east claimed that were more involved in the resistance than those in the west.
- *Moturabus versus non-moturabus*: This is a term *Makassae*, the vernacular of an ethnic group in the districts of Baucau and Viqueque, which literally means ‘troublemakers’. At the time of my research, *moturabus* were identified with people from the *Makassae* who dominated most of the gang fighting in the streets of Dili.

Thus, by conflict and divisions, I refer not only to the differences that caused political parties to disengage from CNRT which they had helped to establish and the split with FRETILIN, but also to the ensuing social divisions that took shape as a result of the political process.

Indeed, from the first months of my fieldwork, apart from witnessing the chaos in the streets and the disagreements among political parties, there were rumours circulating in Dili and in East Timor that FRETILIN might wage another war against CNRT.  

16 Such rumours had no real basis due to the presence of UNTAET and around 8,000 International Peacekeeping Forces in the territory. 17 However, for the ordinary East Timorese whose thinking was associated very much with the 1974 civil war and the September 1999 mayhem, distrust of the situation was high. They feared that after the UN left,

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16 During the election of the Constitutional Assembly, I went back to East Timor as an a observer and researcher. In various FRETILIN campaigns, the leaders argued that they did not want war but peace. See also Mari Alkatiri (2000).
17 As of 31 March 2002, the military strength of International Peace Keeping Force in east Timor was as follows: 7,687 total uniformed personnel, including 6,281 troops, 1,288 civilian police and 118 military observers; UNTAET also included 737 international civilian personnel and 1,745 local civilian staff. Source: [http://www.un.org/peace/etimor/UntaetF.htm](http://www.un.org/peace/etimor/UntaetF.htm)
the situation would deteriorate in the absence of harmony among leaders and the political institutions they represented.

It was widely known in the post 1999 referendum period that each leader had his/her own faction within the former guerrilla body. In the view of the ordinary people, this also meant that these interest groups were prepared to defend themselves or mount attacks against their perceived enemies whenever it was deemed necessary. A woman told me “If the situation continues to be like now, it is better for us to go and live in the mountains, [a reference to their coffee plantation in Liquiça]” (Pers. Comm. Victória dos Santos, Liquica 12 April 2000). Although she was not a political observer and did not understand the level of conflict among political leaders in Dili, her reading of the events in the capital and towns around East Timor convinced her of what might happen should this conflict escalate to an uncontrollable level. The emergence of new political parties and groups in 2000 which lent their support to Xanana Gusmão by joining CNRT, therefore challenging FRETILIN, gave the impression that conflict and divisions were widening and East Timor was on the brink of another great conflict. This perception contributed significantly to the change of views about national unity.

Indeed, in the last days of my fieldwork, organised gangs and street thugs associated with certain political groups were responsible for most of the crimes in Dili and towns around East Timor. While security arrangements were devoted mostly to securing the border with Indonesia (Babo Soares 2000b), a number of former guerrilla members who returned to towns also set up their own groups in the name of maintaining security, each with a particular area of control. These were not officially recognized and were unknown to many. Their presence only attracted the attention of the UN administration seven or eight months after its arrival in East Timor. Examples of these groups were the *Sagrada Familia* group, led by former FALINTIL Commander L-7 (read: Eli-Sete) known locally as *Eli Fohorai Boot* (lit., L- the
Great Snake), and another FALINTIL commander, Samba Sembilan (Lit., Samba No 9) who retained his own jurisdiction in the western sector. Commander L-7 controlled most of the sub-district of Laga in Baucau and made it the home base of his group. Samba Sembilan had his own group in an unidentified area in the district of Bobonaro. While both were not necessarily antagonistic – as they often claimed to fight for the interest of ‘their people’, – it was their operation and their status as former guerrillas that remained a concern. Each former commander continued to control his own ‘men’ and had his own groups established with their own areas of control and jurisdiction (districts and villages). Their members operated as a group and would not hesitate to take the law into their own hands (see Chapter 8).

The East Timorese often complained that “these people still retained their weapons. If anything happens or if the malae (UNTAET or PKF) leave, they might use their weapons to make war again” (ema sira ne’e sei iha kilat. Buat ruma mosu ka malae ba tiha, sira bele lori kilat hodi halo funu fali). Why do these people behave like this? We are suffering, and will continue to suffer (Nusa mak ema sira halo beibeik hanesan ne’e? Ita terus, terus ba beibeik) (Pers. Comm. Evaristo Soares, Fatubolu, March 2000).

Internal security problems due largely to the increasing divisions and the defiance of former and marginalized guerrilla fighters contributed to this perception. Internally, in Dili and East Timor, claims that different factions within the army were loyal to different political leaders added to the existing confusion among the locals. For the ordinary East Timorese and political activists, the political division, conflict and threat of war were understood as

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18 This issue will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 8.
19 For example, around 700 FALINTIL members were “on voluntary leave” [during the years 2000 and 2001], either to rejoin their family or work outside the cantonment area” Security problems were quick to follow. As argued by Sukma (2002), “several incidents of violence involving members of FALINTIL had become a source of security concerns” throughout that period (see Sukma 2002).
part of political competition since the groups concerned were closely related to some political leaders. The continuous accusations against groups such as CPD-RDTL stereotyped it and shaped public opinion to view it as if it was really the instigator of both social and political instability. Although CPD-RDTL and some political groups such as former guerrillas were portrayed as the main source of instability (see Alkatiri 2000), leaders of groups such as CPD-RDTL always maintained their innocence (see The Canberra Times, 7 July 2001).

Accusations between splinter groups within FRETILIN were so visible that they brought back 'memories' of the past, adding to the perception that the events in 1974-1975 might re-occur. Several months after my fieldwork, such tension and division remained and criminal acts involving these groups occurred throughout East Timor. While most of these events were not publicly reported in the media, on 9 March 2001 the local newspaper Suara Timor Lorosae carried a story detailing accusations between party leaders. For example:

Plate 6.3: CPD-RDTL commemorate the proclamation of independence of 28 November 1975 (Photo: Author).
FRETILIN Vice-President Mari Alkatari stressed ... that his party did not have [any intention to back] CPD-RDTL in its violent acts. Their actions on Wednesday were criminal in nature (Suara Timor Lorosae, 9 March 2001).

The main aim of Mari Alkatiri's remarks was to discredit CPD-RDTL due to the conflict between it and FRETILIN. CPD-RDTL had split from FRETILIN some months earlier but continued to use the symbols of the latter, call itself the 'true' FRETILIN, and dismissed the FRETILIN led by Lu-Olo and Mari Alkatiri as 'fake' (Pers. Comm. Cristiano da Costa, January 2000). Alkatiri thus condemned the group, as reported in the same newspaper:

"They are using the FRETILIN flag without our agreement. And we have reminded them umpteen times to stop using FRETILIN symbols, but to no avail," he told journalists. Mari said CPD-RDTL's actions on Wednesday were meant to destroy the country. "That's against FRETILIN's policies. FRETILIN has always fought for the full independence of Timor Lorosae and we want the country to be peaceful," added the FRETILIN leader (Suara Timor Lorosae, 9 March 2001).

In addition, attacks on the CPD-RDTL included accusations that the group maintained links with the TNI. This was due to the groups' affiliation with PNT, which initially proposed autonomy with Indonesia but later reversed its decision. As a result, on 30 March 2001, António da Costa (known as Aitahan Matak) of CPD-RDTL reacted in Suara Timor Lorosae and challenged his critics to prove that CPD-RDTL was linked to certain elements in Indonesia who intended to create unrest in Timor Lorosae.

"We do not accept the accusations made against us by Ramos Horta, Mari Alkatari and Lu-Olo that we are linked with the TNI. Prove it! If they can't prove the allegations then we will take them to court - both nationally and internationally," said Aitahan Matak. According to the CPD-RDTL activist, the party does not have any links with Indonesia. For that reason, he said, he wanted Ramos Horta, Xanana Gusmao and Sergio de Mello [leader of UNTAET] – who had good ties with Indonesia – to invite Indonesian President Gus Dur to visit Timor Lorosae to answer these allegations. "I want Ramos Horta and Mari Alkatari to withdraw their allegations [against CPD-RDTL] and issue an apology in both the print and electronic media," said Aitahan.
Matak. CPD-RDTL also urged Xanana Gusmao, Mari Alkatari and Sergio de Mello to disband all political parties in the country. “Develop the country first and then later we can establish political parties,” said Aithan Matak (Suara Timor Lorosae, 30 March 2001).

For a country that was colonised for so many years, and for a generation who experienced successive wars, such public accusations and attacks were looked at with concern. The conflicts which led to divisions, were being interpreted and likened to the events preceding the 1975 civil war, the Indonesian military invasion, and those surrounding the 1999 referendum. In those events, in which many people were captured, tortured and killed (Amnesty International 2000), disputes and divisions among leaders preceded each conflict. There is a saying among the East Timorese to underline the bizarre character of war and the gap between leaders and ordinary people:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>East Timorese saying</th>
<th>English translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Funu halo-halo</td>
<td>The war made</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aman ho oan</td>
<td>Fathers and children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maun ho Alin</td>
<td>Elder and younger siblings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oho fali malu</td>
<td>kill each other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ema-boot sira ne diak</td>
<td>It is good for the leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sira nian liras naruk</td>
<td>Their wings are long</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sira hakat luan</td>
<td>Their steps are large</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sira bele semo</td>
<td>They can fly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sira bele halai</td>
<td>They can run</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bainhira funu mosu</td>
<td>If there is war</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>East Timorese saying</th>
<th>English translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maihe ami nebe kiik</td>
<td>Yet, we the small people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ami nebe kiak</td>
<td>We, the poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funu, ami mak terus</td>
<td>Should there be war, we suffer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ami mak susar</td>
<td>We are impoverished</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Ami mak mate        | We are the one who die.  

Doubts about the existing political process were so high and distrust of the political leaders was equally so. Not surprisingly, when UNTAET prepared

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20 This was a popular saying that is often voiced in the streets of Dili to show disappointment over the political leadership. During the CNRT Congress in August 2000, this saying was popular and was used as a cynical gesture to criticise the so-called political leaders by the participants from the districts.
to hold an election for the Constitutional Assembly (CA) in August 2001, many East Timorese looked at the plan with suspicion. They preferred not to have any such an election because they thought it could bring war. Nevertheless, the election proceeded peacefully. Although the East Timorese accepted the election as a mechanism that needed to be exercised to cope with the political developments in the new country, they remained suspicious of the political process. Describing the CA using a metaphor, António Guterres said:

Hanesan uma ida karik,  
Ita nia rain  
tenki iha kuarto atu tau kama,  
kama ema atu toba,  
mas tenki iha kadeira,  
atu ema tur ho mos  
meza atu tau ai-han

As if it is a house  
Our country  
Needs a bedroom to place a bed  
The bed is for people to sleep on  
But it (also) needs chairs  
For people to sit on  

Comparing a parliament with a house was common among the East Timorese. A house, in this sense, needs rooms and things to place inside. It needs people to arrange and clean the house and decide what is needed to make it beautiful. So does the country. It needs regulations and people to do the work. The members of parliament are those given the job to perform these tasks. However, comparing a house with a nation here should not be confused with the attitude of political leaders both inside and outside the parliament. This is to say that although the East Timorese saw that political developments were taking place, it was premature to claim that ‘democracy’ existed. It simply did not work in their terms. For them, the political

21 An Australian based newspaper, The Canberra Times, carried the following story in July 2001, or a month before the election, that “Rural Timorese ... have little understanding of [the] political processes. Many of them are wary of political parties and elections, which, as a result of the 1975 civil war and the 1999 post-plebiscite devastation, they associate with violence” (The Canberra Times, 7 July 2001).

22 I owe this discussion to people like António Guterres, Luis Gonzaga and various discussions with members of Yayasan HAK in Dili during fieldwork. Interestingly, according to the leader of PST, Avelino Coelho, the failure to implement peace, harmony and democracy confirmed Karl Marx’s thesis that there was a need for revolution – in a positive sense – to take place in East Timor. Only then changes can be brought to the country peace and democracy can be guaranteed (Pers. Comm. Avelino Coelho, Dili March 2000).
developments in the country were heading towards a conflict that threatened democracy.

IV. Democracy and the Change of Perceptions on National Unity

The word ‘democracy’ was not a popular term during the period of Portuguese colonisation although it was familiar to a small educated group of elite East Timorese in the 1960s and 1970s. When Indonesia occupied the territory, the term was introduced as a system delineating a clear separation of power among the state organs. It was taught and translated as a form of power sharing in which the power of the government resides with the people and is exercised by those elected to the parliament. The word ‘democracy’ was introduced within the context of Indonesian politics, linked therefore to the aegis of Pancasila (lit., Sanskrit for panca ‘five’ and sila ‘principles’), the Indonesian state ideology. It was also translated loosely as a system which ensures that the “power of the state comes from the people, is exercised by the people and in turn is delivered to the people”. Locally, this understanding was well grasped by the East Timorese, and since the country had gone through political upheavals, corrupt administrations and a tightly controlled system in the past, democracy provided a sense of participation and accountability. Contemporary school age students comprehended the meaning of democracy in this sense.

Although most East Timorese might have heard of ‘democracy’, for most of the ordinary people in the villages, the term is identified with haksolok no dame (happiness and peace). During the struggle against Indonesia, the East Timorese were repeatedly exposed to the word. This time, it was the leaders

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23 The word and concept of ‘democracy’ introduced to East Timor following the resurrection of anti-colonial sentiment in Africa, particularly among the former Portuguese colonies in the late 1960s. Nevertheless only a few members of the East Timorese political elite were aware of the term. The fall of Oliveira de Salazar’s dictatorial regime in Portugal provided a chance for the terms to be popularised in that territory. I am indebted to Avelino Coelho, the leader of Socialist Party of Timor, for discussion on this topic.
of the struggle who called for democracy to be implemented, stating that
Indonesia was violating the fundamental rights of the people and that once
independence was achieved, there would be democracy. Ordinary East
Timorese kept these words in mind for years, and independence for them
carried with it an expectation of achieving peace and harmony.\textsuperscript{24} When the
UN administered the territory between September 1999 and May 2002, the
term was popularised intensively and all decisions and policies were
projected as democratic in character.\textsuperscript{25}

It was not easy to convince a people on the value of ‘democracy’ whose lives
were shattered by the events of colonial oppression, local civil war and
foreign imposed chaos, plus the 1999 pandemonium. The 1975 civil war was
also still fresh in the minds of many. While the introduction of ‘democracy’
was adjusted to suit local understandings, the political events during that
period failed to convince the people (see \textit{The Canberra Times}, 7 July 2001).
Likewise, division and the potential for conflict among local political leaders
and their followers during the period of my fieldwork also contributed to this
suspicion. In a discussion held in March 2000 by the DSMPTT, several
participants complained about the possibility of ensuing war among the
political factions as occurred in 1975 and 1999, should an election be held.
This came as a result of the increasingly volatile political situation at the time,
factional friction among the ‘old’ parties and sporadic fighting between
supporters of CNRT and CPD-RDTL in some districts, particularly in the lead

\textsuperscript{24} For example, in my conversation with villagers in Aileu, Viqueque, Watolari, Hatolia,
Ermera and Liquiça in 2000, they recalled that during the struggle, guerrilla leaders preached
the need for peace and harmony among the people and promised that both were aims that an
Independent East Timor wanted to achieve. As Abito dos Santos recalled, “during the
struggle, we lived only in the mountains to look after our gardens and cattle. Often, our
brothers (guerrillas) came over and called us for briefing on the enemy’s tactics. Among the
topic discussed were how to have ‘democracy’ in our country. We did not know what the
word ‘democracy’ was, but we thought it was for the good of our nation” (Pers. Comm.
Fatubessi, Liquiça, June 2000).

\textsuperscript{25} For example, the Constitutional Assembly election on 30 August 2001 was seen widely in
East Timor the outside world as a lesson for democracy in the new country. See Media
up to the CA election in August 2000. Questioning the reason for holding an
election a very short time after the one in August 1999 was not a surprising
phenomenon.26 A former UNAMET officer reasoned that:

... confusion and division over the coming election [was widespread
among the population. He went on], it is beginning to look as if, ... the
chance to develop a truly representative and inclusive government
has been squandered (The Canberra Times, 7 July 2001).

Indeed, disappointment and psychological shock experienced by the East
Timorese continued to haunt them during that period despite discussions of
campaigns for reconciliation among the East Timorese. The same newspaper
reported,

A UN source says, 'You are looking at a situation where there is not
the same enthusiasm as there was in 1999, when all the people came
to register and cast their ballots. And now the confusion is [that the]
people are asking, 'Why do we have to vote again? We already
voted.' [The UN personnel went on] ... they don't understand the
political process ... At a recent seminar organised by the human-rights
organisation Yayasan Hak, many participants reported widespread
confusion about the election and the civic-education campaign itself
(The Canberra Times, 7 July 2001).

For the East Timorese, the split of political parties, the emergence of new ones
and the resurgence of uncontrolled former guerrilla fighters recalled the
sharp differences in 1975 and 1999. To them, elections meant nothing since
conflict and divisions were to be expected in the end (Pers. Comm. António
Guterres, 20 August, 2000).

As my informants asked me on separate occasions, "do we need another
election? We fear there will be another war - we fear we will have to flee
again ... [the slogan] National Unity is not longer worth [mentioning]" (ami
tauk mak funu fali - ami tauk mak ita halai fali ... Unidade nacional ne kala la folin

26 Many East Timorese believed, at that time, that they did not need an election since they had
participated in the election of 30 August 1999. Many, as António Guterres said, were afraid
that the East Timorese might have to experience another war as they did in 1974-1975 (Pers.
This statement can be interpreted in three ways. First, as the last phrase states, National Unity, a slogan embraced in the past seemed to carry no weight in the context of the changing political atmosphere of the time. Secondly, the widespread violence by militias and the military after the 1999 referendum led to real fear that another election might eventuate in similar violence. Third, those East Timorese and political activists who fled their homes during the 1999 chaos and who had only recently returned from their hiding places or refugee camps were unwilling to tolerate anything that would disrupt their lives again (Inbaraj, 2002). As a result, doubts about the political process remained, as its was believed that clashes of interest might surface at any time.

Thus, a discourse over the conflict rather than democracy took place at the height of the introduction of ‘democracy’. In such a situation, the population was sensitive when it came to ‘political threats’ among their leaders. Differences, insults through the media, verbal accusations among leaders and street battles among gangs affiliated with certain competing political groups were treated with fear and distrust (Suara Timor Lorosae, 9-10 December 2000).27

Although not questioning the concept of ‘democracy’, people feel the absence of it in daily political life. Democracy seemed to facilitate disintegration, conflict and war and, in turn, the destruction of their lives. People’s perception of national unity had changed. In other words, the sense of togetherness they had developed and lived with during the struggle against Indonesia made no sense to them after so-called freedom had been attained. This places the terms ‘democracy’ and ‘national unity’ as slogans of the past.

27 One thing is certain; for many East Timorese, differences in the post-independence period are seen as a threat to unity and not part of the democratic process, and this happened precisely because of the little experience the East Timorese had with democracy.
Instead of strengthening *nacionalismo*, the political developments during the post 1999 referendum period recalled similar characteristics of past conflicts. For passive political activists or ordinary people such as those featured in this chapter, who had invested much for the country to gain freedom, national unity had disappeared. Their concentration became focused on how to save their own lives. The sacrifices invested, patience, working with the clandestine movement, supporting the resistance and the loss of property, appeared to have been in vain. The expected peace had been distorted and prevented from happening by those regarded as pioneers of freedom, the political leaders. What they had seen and continued to see was the spread of new political and social divisions.

V. Differences and Divisions Prevail

The change in perceptions of nationalism – from unity to division – characterised the events surrounding the political dynamics within the East Timorese political community. Indeed, internal contradictions and conflict among the East Timorese political leadership marred the period between the 1999 referendum and 2002 when UNTAET transferred the power to the East Timorese. These political developments took place outside the context of international politics that underlay the local political transition during that period. The presence of UNTAET was one thing, the political dynamics within the East Timorese political community was another.

Locally, people's perception of national unity was influenced very much by their involvement and experience throughout the times of wars and struggle to attain independence. It was an experience which shaped their vision about national unity; that *nacionalismo* during the struggle could overcome any internal differences that might occur in the future. Thus, peace and harmony were achievable, in their view, when political independence was achieved. It
was a \textit{conditio sine qua non}, a mindset that they had anxiously waited for during the resistance years.

However, the political events – seen as a democratic change by some people – in the post 1999 referendum period altered these perceptions. With Indonesia gone and no enemy to face together, as my East Timorese informants had always lamented, “we, the East Timorese are now facing each other. It would be better to continue to unite together and develop our country [and] not fight for position or to become leaders” \textit{(Ita Timor ho Timor maka fila ba malu. Tuir lo-los ita hamutuk nafatin atu hadia ita nia rain, la-los atu hadau malu fatin ho hakarak atu sai boot)}

Many East Timorese recognised that the principles of the struggle, to ‘unite and resist’ were ignored due to selfishness and ambition for power among political groups and their leaders. The post-independence period showed the differences and divided the East Timorese into factions. As a result, people’s view of national unity or nationalism also changed because, in their eyes, it was disappearing and no longer bound them together as a people. The sense of \textit{imagining} that was hailed through the commitment to fight for freedom began to fade. In the words of one informant “the sense of national unity no longer exists – once, we fought and suffered together and intended to improve our lives but all those were only words from the mouth. There is no action about it. Now, we are beginning to split” \textit{(Pers. Comm. Aniceto Neves, Yayasan HAK, November 2000)}. 

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Chapter 7

The Generation Gap and Conflict over the Choice of Language

I. Introduction

The change of perception about unity has not been caused by political division alone but also by social chaos and uncertainty about factionalism within the once nationalist group. In addition, other politically oriented social conflicts existed alongside the political developments thus encouraging further segmentation and giving rise to open conflict. Indeed, apart from political differences, polarisation of social groups became increasingly visible in the months after the referendum. Despite steps taken to alleviate these problems, reconciliation has not been successful.

This chapter examines (1) the institutionalisation of newly created gaps which have emerged as tensions among different political groups intensified, (2) their contribution to the formation of further divisions and (3) how this resulted in the formation of antagonistic divisions within society. The most common division was the generation gap; a division of social and political groups into ‘old’ versus ‘new’ generational categories. Such division also influenced the political decisions of the state. Conflicts of interest emerged on issues such as leadership (seniors must take the lead, the younger generation must wait); differences of skin colour (the right to be in power: malae-mestiço/rai-nain); residential status (exiles/home-stayers), educational qualifications (graduate/non-graduates) and language competence (the ability to communicate in Portuguese or English versus Tetum or Bahasa Indonesia).
II. The Setting: The Children of Yesterday

On May 15, 2000, the Dili Sports Hall or, as it is called in Indonesian, *Gedung Matahari Terbit* (The Rising Sun Hall), was packed with FRETILIN supporters. After operating clandestinely, domestically and abroad for twenty-four years, it was the first time the largest political party held an open conference on East Timor soil. Among the invited guests were UNTAET authorities, leaders of Mozambique's largest political party, FRELIMO (*Frente de Libertação de Moçambique*) and leaders of other East Timor political parties.1 Supporters of FRETILIN from all over the country were well represented. Various guest speakers took their turn to deliver speeches and congratulate the party for its commitment and persistence during the years of struggle against Indonesia. Indeed, the euphoria of freedom resulting from the referendum on 30 August 1999 was still visible. Every speaker easily stirred the crowd and invited choruses of approval whenever nationalist slogans were pronounced: Viva FRETILIN, Viva Timor Lorosae, Viva independence and so on.2

When Xanana Gusmão, the leader of independence and a former member of CCF, made his remarks at the opening ceremony, he was almost openly weeping when calling upon the names of his comrades who had died during the struggle against Indonesia. He stood up, addressed the crowd, cited nationalistic slogans and retold the experience of the armed struggle, of which he later became the supreme leader. He did not stop short of mentioning the names of his former comrades who opposed the faction he belonged to and were killed following the earlier CCF conference after the

1 FRETILIN leaders such as Mari Alkatiri, Ana Pessoa and Gregorio José da Conceição Ferreira de Sousa spent all their time in exile in Mozambique. Others leaders like José Luís Guterres and Rocke Rodrigues also spent some time in Mozambique as guests of FRELIMO. Thus, it is not surprising that members of FRELIMO were also invited to the Conference.

2 In reference to Chapter 4, there is a belief among certain sections within East Timorese community that only FRETILIN fought the war against Indonesia despite the fact that structural changes within the resistance had taken place from the early 1980s leading to the establishment of a more accommodative nationalist umbrella such as CNRT.

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Hudi Laran ordeal. As for the latter, Xanana Gusmão insisted that their names should be mentioned because "they also had the noble intention in the struggle to liberate the country but met their fate because of internal political disagreements". The differences in the past that led to the killings among the guerrillas in the bush, Xanana insisted, occurred because of political immaturity, disillusionment, and frustration amid military pressure from Indonesian troops. Such differences should be reconciled and the lia-los (lit., true-words) or the history behind such deaths should be revealed to the public. This was a direct reference to the killings following the Hudi Laran 'incident' in the early 1980s when internal fighting among FRETILIN members heightened.

Having referred to the sacrifices of his 'generation', Xanana Gusmão began criticising the political adversaries of CNRT, accusing them of trying to manipulate the 'facts' of history. This sudden shift of emphasis in his speech was made in response to a statement by a member of CPD-RDTL, a week before. Cristiano da Costa, the CPD-RDTL spokesperson, had questioned the

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Plate 7.1: Participants at FRETILIN's Conference, 15-20 May 2000 (Photo: Author).

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Among the names cited were Nicolau Lobato (first leader of the resistance) and other guerrilla commanders such as Vicente Reis (nom de guerre, Sahe), Man Lear, Hamish Bassarewan, Juvinal Inacio and Domingos Ribeiro, though not all of these died as a direct result of internal conflict among members of FRETILIN.

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legitimacy of both CNRT and FRETILIN, arguing that the former was no longer eligible to carry out its mission and that the latter was no longer adhering to the principles underlying the birth of FRETILIN. CPD-RDTL insisted that CNRT no longer represented the East Timorese after it accomplished its task in the 1999 referendum.

Interestingly, on this occasion, CNRT leader Xanana Gusmão, despite his differences with FRETILIN, attended in his capacity as a former member of CCF. Apart from Xanana Gusmão, other FRETILIN leaders such as Lu-Olo, Mari Alkatiri and José Luis Guterres also made similar references to the same critics in their speeches. Despite their conflicting views (since they belonged to CNRT and FRETILIN) they seemed to present a uniform ‘aggressive defence’ not only towards their critics but also against other ‘hostile groups’ in the political scene. This included the youth and activists who had spoken out vehemently against the leaders of the generation of 1975. The three politicians argued that the critics of the resistance and of FRETILIN arose out of limited understanding. ‘Young people’ knew very little of the reasons behind the unilateral proclamation of independence of East Timor in 1975. José Luis Guterres said,

Most of the young people do not understand what has happened in the past and the reason behind the 28 November 1975 proclamation of independence. They should be told the real story of the past. [He went on]... it was merely a strategy held to anticipate the Indonesian army’s imminent invasion that took place ten days later, on 7 December 1975.

Thus, in the eyes of this ‘old generation’ of FRETILIN, the 1975 proclamation of independence was a symbolic and unilateral political act performed to anticipate Indonesia’s military invasion ten days later. It was a political decision taken by their ‘generation’ for political reasons and long-term

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4 Reference can be made to the local newspaper Suara Timor Lorosae, 28-29 April 2000. Cristiano da Costa, the spokesperson of CPD-RDTL had spoken at length and said that only his organisation (CPD-RDTL) had the means to represent the people for it continued to adhere to the principles of FRETILIN.
strategy. Therefore, it should not be seen as representing the true wishes of the nation, thus offering a democratic way out. Independence had therefore to be re-declared. To recognise the declaration of independence of 28 November 1975, according to Guterres, would violate the results of the 1999 referendum in which all East Timorese – not only FRETILIN – participated and chose to be independent.5

Indeed, this May 15 meeting was a special occasion, the first ever-public reunion of the party in the country. The occasion was used to reunite almost all ‘veterans’, of the 1975 generation, and the party’s younger supporters throughout the territory. It was more than a nostalgic meeting; it was a meeting to consolidate the older generation who had organised, fought and led the struggle against Indonesia for 24 years. In his speech, Xanana Gusmão argued that many people, especially the younger generation, did not understand the history of the struggle and they were trying to make a fuss over it. He said, “What do the kids born overnight know [of our history]) (labarik sira foin mouris houri-seik né hatene saida?).6

While not undermining the political weight of such a statement, reference to Cristiano da Costa, his compatriot António Aitahan Matak7 and ‘young people’ underlined the existing tensions between ‘rival’ generations – old and new – which were already common. Thus, in the words of the above

5 José Luis Guterres, former Portugal-based president of diasporic FRETILIN, speaking at the opening ceremony of FRETILIN Conference in Dili, 5 May 2000. He seemed to contradict FRETILIN, which after winning the Constituent Assembly election in August 2001, decided to ‘reinstate’ the flag, national anthem and the date of Independence – 28 November 1975 – in the new Constitution of East Timor.
6 Public speech without text by Xanana Gusmão at the opening ceremony of the conference (Conferência Geral de Quadros da FRETILIN 15-20 de Maio de 2000). In the closing ceremony of the Conference Xanana prepared a written speech (Notes, the author).
7 Being members of CPD-RDTL, a group that received no attention because of its ‘extreme political view’ (Sergio de Mello in LUSA July 2002), Cristiano da Costa and António Aitahan Matak were often referred to as radicals, a term that they objected to being applied to them and their organisation. I have explained before, members of the organisation saw themselves as victims of the political process. Political authorities in East Timor falsely accused them of being ‘troublemakers’ (Pers. Comm. with Cristiano da Costa, September 2000).
mentioned political leaders, ignorance, inability to read the circumstances and lack of understanding by the labarik fonsae (lit., kids just rising) or the youth was at the heart of this gap. The youth contrasted with the more able, knowledgeable and experienced 'older generation'.

Interestingly, Xanana Gusmão's and his colleagues' reactions, apart from attacking the criticism made against the organisations they led and thus their 'generation', also attacked the quality and personal character of their critics. In defending CNRT and FRETILIN against, and indeed categorising, the attack as an act by the labarik fonsae 'children', the traditional phrase which was used emphasised the 'elder generation's' superiority and drew a line separating the 'old generation' and the 'young generation'. Thus, while accentuating the political leaders' perspective, the argument represented a deeply entrenched feeling among the older generation that being elders, they

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possessed more knowledge than the younger generation. As people of a certain category, they were ‘superior’ to others.  

III. Metaphorical Classification

While the political leaders’ statements might be blamed for inciting new divisions, they were only reflecting the established stereotypes already common to that society. The emphasis on one generation’s role was an interesting topic of debate during the transition period. Questions regarding who was to blame for past crimes, who was the right person/institution to govern and who had the ability to lead the country, were sources of inter-generational debate. Not surprisingly, every speaker would emphasise – indeed justify – the role of his/her ‘generation’ in speeches, when the generation they belonged to came under scrutiny. The young were even referred to as a ‘threat’ by their elders, if one took into account the customary line of thinking in societies like East Timor.

As in many Eastern Indonesian societies (Traube 1986; Fox 1989; McWilliam 1989; Therik 1995), social categorisation in East Timor finds its roots in local culture. Individual classifications such as tuan/foinsae ‘old/young’, emaboot/labarik ‘adult/kid’, or kaben-nain/klosan ‘married/single’, and institutional classifications such as uma-kiik/uma-boot ‘younger-house/old-house’ and maun/alin ‘elder-brother/younger-brother’ are used as the basis of such classifications. Tuan, uma-boot, maun and kaben-nain constitute the ‘senior’, ‘mature people’ the ‘older generation’ and, in the political context, the ‘leaders’ category, whereas foinsae, labarik, klosan and alin constitute the ‘junior’ ‘younger generation’ and ‘immature’ category. João Martins noted

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8 For example, reference to labarik (lit., children/kids) points to an established gap which distinguishes ‘elder’ and ‘young’ categories: elders are considered to possess more knowledge than younger people and adults possess better understanding than kids, consequently establishing elder or adult superiority over the younger generation.

9 The term ‘klosan’ has been popularly used to refer to ‘youth’ in general in Tetum Praça or Tetum Dili, as opposed to Tetum Therik but some recent writers have translated it as ‘unmarried youth’, therefore narrowing the scope of the term (see for example, Hull 2001).
that traditionally a Liurai (king), Lia-nain (Head of Legal Affairs), Dato (Village Head) and those who were supposed to be in the political structure of the reino (people, kingdom) belonged to the katuas (elder) category. Such personalities, as in almost all East Timorese societies, had to come from a certain group regarded as having royal ‘blood’, or from among the elite circle and within the traditional political structure (Martins [Undated]: 14-16). Being situated in that specific group, the elders, the leaders, the royal clan and the elite have a privileged social status over those known to be otherwise. Terms like labarik (lit., child), foinsae (lit., just rising) or oan (lit., children) belong to the category of junior, immature persons who do not have the capacity to perform social duties, let alone political tasks (Pers. Comm. Domingos Maia 23 May 2000).

Generally, among the East Timorese, the concept ‘young’/‘old’ is loosely defined, where ‘old’ is always identified with a married man, adult or someone who falls into the older age category, while ‘young’ generally refers to an unmarried man, a teenager or mane-foinsae (lit., boy-just rising) or a young man. To the Mambai of Ermera, for example, an adult is someone who is considered old enough to work/cultivate a piece of land handed over to him by his lineage or parents (Pers. Comm. Domingos Maia, 23 May 2001), or old enough to be able to fulfil his social duties. Nevertheless, such a definition does not suggest that a person automatically belongs to the ‘old generation’ for there are still other generations above him even though he can be categorised as ‘old’ in reference to more recent generations. Parallel to the ‘old/young’ category in the kinship system among Austronesian societies (Fox 1995), the traditional definition of ‘old/young’ depends on the order of precedence or the relative position of a person within existing age groups. Such a classification does not apply only to the individual but also to groups of people or institutions such as lineage house and clan groups. Figure 7.1 shows that the common traditional classification of ‘old/young’ is defined on the basis of precedence, thus A is ‘older’ in relation to B, but B is ‘older’ to A1,
A2, A3 and A4. On the other hand, A4 is ‘young’ in relation to A3 and the latter is ‘younger’ to A2, despite A2 being ‘young’ when compared with A1 and so on.

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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Old</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Young/old</td>
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<tr>
<td>A1</td>
<td>Old</td>
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<tr>
<td>A2</td>
<td>Young/old</td>
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<tr>
<td>A3</td>
<td>Old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A4</td>
<td>Young/old</td>
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Figure 7.1: Loose definition of old and young. Fox (1989) describes this relation as ‘recursive asymmetry’ in his paper “Category and Complement: Binary Ideologies and The Organisation of Dualism in Eastern Indonesia”.

In East Timor, such culturally based categories have been translated and introduced into the socio-politico context to suit political interests. In the latter case, an ‘old/young’ generation is defined by the periods in which political events took place. Thus, the old generation refers to the generation of 1974-1975 and before, including some later periods which, for political reasons, are associated with the older generation. The period 1974-1975 is taken as the separation point because of its clear political significance in the modern history of East Timor. The generation of this period see themselves as actors in the history of East Timor which distinguishes them from the post-1975 generation. Consequently, in social life, stereotypes are coined to label and distinguish both generations and associate them with whatever categories are deemed socially appropriate. In addition, ‘new’ and ‘old’ do not apply only to individuals but also to political institutions. The following are some common classifications in the political context.

10 The 1974-175 period is also commonly perceived by the East Timorese as the turning point of several important events in the political history of that country. It marks the end of Portuguese colonisation, followed by a brief civil war and by the invasion and subsequent annexation of East Timor by the Indonesian military.
In terms of institutional categories, certain political parties which were established in 1974-1975 are classified as *tuan* (lit., old, traditional, historical) and those established after that period are called *foun* (lit., new, recent, latest). *Tuan* political parties are identified with the old generation although their members include young people.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political Parties</th>
<th>Year of Establishment</th>
<th>Generation Category</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P. Democrático Cristão</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>New</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partido Democrático</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>New</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARENTIL</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>New</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P. Nacionalista</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>New</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P. Democrático Maubere</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>New</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P. Sosial Democrático</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>New</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>União Democrático Cristão/PDC</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>New</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P. do Povo de Timor</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>New</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P. Sosialista Timorence Timorense</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>New</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partido Liberal</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>New</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>União Democrático Timorese (UDT)</td>
<td>1974</td>
<td>Old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apodeti Pro-Referendo</td>
<td>1974 re-emerged in 2000</td>
<td>Old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRETILIN</td>
<td>1974</td>
<td>Old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KOTA</td>
<td>1975</td>
<td>Old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P. Trabalhista Timorese</td>
<td>1974</td>
<td>Old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASDT</td>
<td>1974 re-emerged in 2001</td>
<td>Old</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7.1: Names and categories of political parties (Source: Compiled by the Author).

Likewise, *foun* political parties are identified with young, fresh-minded and young-spirited people although their members are not necessarily limited to the younger generation. UDT, FRETILIN, ASDT, *Trabalhista*, Apodeti and KOTA belong to the *tuan* category and the rest belong to the *foun* category.

In terms of generation classification, two opposing groups can be constructed. One employs terms like *maun-boot* (lit., elder-sibling/brother), *maun-abut* (lit.,
root-sibling/brother) or brothers of the source, and *katsuas* (lit., elder man/men) to represent 'maturity' or 'ability to govern'. ¹¹ In the political structure of the struggle, the term *maun-boot* was always used to refer to Xanana Gusmão since he was considered to have been the leader of the resistance and the *primus* (eldest) among the *pares* (equals) in the struggle. During my fieldwork, the term was used in parallel with *maun-abut*, a term employed to identify resistance members, members of the underground or resistance leaders in general. *Abut* is identified with people who were part of the resistance struggle both in the clandestine and guerrilla movements. ¹² These are people of the 'root', the true activists and the real fighters. Whoever falls within this category, regardless of his/her age group, commands respect in society. ¹³ Thus, *maun-abut* have high esteem because of their role in the 'struggle'. They constitute members of the armed fighters, the clandestine movement, the *estafeta* (Portuguese for courier) and deserve to be called *maun-abut*, for they gave their lives to fight the enemy. Recently, the terms *maun-boot* and *maun-abut* have been extended to include politicians as well. In a more expanded understanding, these terms are employed to name people of the old generation, the elite and the people in power. To a certain extent, these terms are also identified with Timorese diaspora who returned to East Timor after the referendum, have been educated in western countries (i.e. not Indonesia) and are closely associated with the political elite.

Thus, the 'old', the 'elite' and the political leaders are identified with people in power. They belong not only to a generation that came to prominence in the wake of Portugal's unfinished decolonisation in 1974, but also to a much later generation who enjoyed certain social and political privileges due to

¹¹ The same category also apply in gendered terms, where women is equally qualified for their role in the struggle; for example *mana boot* (lit., big sister) and *bin-abut* (lit., sister roots).

¹² It is worth noting that the latter term is confusing since many members of the clandestine movements belonged to the younger generation

¹³ It is also worth noting that many young people joined the resistance and the guerrillas in the jungle to fight against Indonesia. On 12 November 1991, when Indonesian troops fired shots at a demonstration in Dili and killed around 200 people, many young people fled the towns and cities to join the resistance. They too fall into the category of *maun-abut* and *bin-abut*.
their association with the struggle, their traditionally revered social status, their ability to speak foreign languages and their close association with the elite. This group continues to maintain a strong political presence at all levels and is keen to assert its existence in the political arena. The ‘ability to govern’ on the part of the elder generation is thus contrasted with the incapacity of the unqualified ‘younger generation’, thus establishing a gap between the two groups. Despite the complex association of various groups with either old or new generation, the period 1974-1975 is commonly agreed as the line of separation between these two generations.

IV. Youth: The New Generation

Public statements made by politicians in addressing the ‘generation gap’ were of no surprise to East Timorese. When UNTAET began working in East Timor after the 1999 referendum, political discourse in East Timor encouraged a power struggle among political groups and also a push for change from the people at the grassroots level. The ‘grassroots’ including the youth, civil society and ordinary people in general. Various post-1975 political groups, which fought alongside the resistance, also began to align themselves with the new political developments. Indeed this was not a new phenomenon.

Those who were considered to be from the younger generation had begun to assert their position in the struggle for independence as early as 1970 and as late as the 1980s. Concrete forms of trust in the youth were established after different youth-based clandestine groups directly identified themselves with the independence cause. Such young groups began to gain prominence in the late 1980s. Gregorio Saldanha, one of the youth leaders, who was captured in the aftermath of the Santa Cruz massacre in 1991 and sentenced to life in prison by an Indonesian court, later released after the 1999 referendum, was

profiled in a local weekly bulletin in Dili. His history was described in the following way:

Conscious that the struggle against Indonesia was a long waged war, he decided to continue his studies. He graduated from the Kristus Almasih [Christ the Saviour] High School in Dili, in 1987. Then he became intensively involved in the clandestine movement, in charge of mobilising the masses. To unify the youth’s struggle, along with some friends, he set up OJECTIL in 1987. The aim was to assist other existing fronts (in the struggle) from the urban centres down to the rural areas. [He went on] “because of that activity, I was detained by SGI [Indonesian Intelligence Service] for six months in 1987 [Translation from Indonesian] (Cidadaun, 2001).”

Most youth organisations operated under the banner of resistance to Indonesia’s presence in the territory. They were mobilised largely by other youth in East Timor and by East Timorese students studying in Indonesia. While the first group aimed to mobilise people in urban areas – at the time the resistance was confined to people who lived in the ‘bush’ – the latter group worked mostly outside East Timor, taking advantage of their position as students in Indonesia. Their vision was twofold. One was to bring the struggle to the consciousness of the Indonesian public who had been prevented from having access to information about East Timor. The other intention was to build a bridge between the weakened internal resistance and the diplomatic front outside the country (Lopes 1996). The first wave of these organisations, most of which emerged in the mid-1980s, included:

- Resistencia National dos Estudantes de Timor Leste; the National Body of Students Resistance (RENETIL): 16
- Frente da Libertacao Estudantil Clandestina de Timor Leste (FECLETIL); Students Clandestine Front:
- Liga dos Estudantes Patriotas, the League of Patriot Students (LEP):

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16 Fernando de Araujo, who is known as Lasama, led this organisation. He was a student in the Linguistic Department (1985-1991) of the University of Udayana Bali in Denpasar but later was captured and imprisoned in 1991 in Cipinang prison in Jakarta for his political activities. He was released in 1998, seven years after his arrest.

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- Organisasi da Juventude Catolica de Timor Leste: East Timor Catholic Youth Organisation (OJECTIL) which later changed its name into:
- Organização dos Jovens e Estudantes de Timor-Leste, East Timor Youth Organisation (OJETIL):
- FITUN (literally, ‘star’ or Frente Iha Timor Unidos Nafatin): United Front in East Timor and:
- Organisasi Popular Juventude Lorico Ass’wain Timor Leste, Lourico Ass’wain Youths organisation (OPJLATIL):

The second wave of such groups, which emerged from early 1990s and onwards, were:

- Naroman: Shining:
- Yayasan HAK (Hak stands for Law, Human Rights and Justice), a local human rights NGO which worked particularly to provide legal assistance to East Timorese accused of ‘rebelling’ against Indonesia:
- Dewan Solidaritas Mahasiswa Timor Timur, East Timor University (DSMPTT) - Students Solidarity Council (established several months prior to the referendum in 1999 by students of Universitas Timor Timur (UNTIM):
- Moris Dame (Peaceful Life) in Jakarta.

Soon after the referendum, and without any central coordination, this youth movement was organised into three broad coalitions. First, a number of youth organisations such as RENETIL, OJETIL, OPJLATIL, Naroman, and others formed an umbrella organisation called Juventude Lorico Asswain (lit., Lorico Youth Warriors).

Some of these groups remain linked to political organisations. OJETIL, for example, was the youth wing of FRETILIN, and adhered to the party’s political platform. It openly supported FRETILIN and it also saw itself as the vanguard of FRETILIN and would do anything to defend the party (OJETIL 2000). There were other women’s groups which also affiliated themselves with political parties such as FRETILIN. These included Organização Popular Mulher Timor (OPMT), East Timor Women’s Organisation, which was founded in 1974.
The next group consisted of local NGOs. Most of their members were university students and graduates from Indonesian universities, and their work involved issues like advocacy, legal aid, gender, women rights and capacity building. Such organisations included the well-known Yayasan Hak (Legal Aid and Advocacy), Fokupers (Gender), Etwave (Women and Children Rights) and Sahe Institute for Liberation (SIL). These organisations, which continued to operate, distanced themselves from practical politics but sought to influence political decisions. Their members participated actively in various debates and discussions. They often challenged decisions made by the UNTAET and local political leaders. The director of Yayasan HAK, for example, was appointed to sit on the first National Council during the transition to Independence (2000-2001). He was later appointed head of East Timor’s first Commission for Truth, Reception and Reconciliation (CTRR) in 2002. SIL, however, leant more towards FRETILIN and its former director, Aderito de Jesus Soares, ran and was elected to represent FRETILIN in East Timor’s first Constituent Assembly, in 2001.

The final group encompassed students and youth groups for the defence of the younger generation’s rights. In the wake of mounting pressure from the ‘older’ generation, these groups led campaigns through gatherings and meetings to challenge policies which were considered to be less favourable to the interests of youth. Such organisations included groups like the DSMPTT and its women’s branch, Grupo Feto Foinsa Timor Lorosae (GFFTL), both of which, during the pre-ballot campaign in 1999, sent about one thousand members to conduct a ‘door-to-door’ campaign in support of independence. These groups were self-funded and worked closely with student solidarity groups in other countries, including Australia.17

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17 My long association with these politically active groups during my fieldwork helped me to understand their disaffection with and reaction towards the perceived pressure from the older generation.
V. Generational Confrontation

- Background

It cannot be denied that leaders of the elite or older generation continue to command respect among various sections within the community, including the youth. Reference to maun-boot and maun-abut are also references to political personalities which, while explaining the distinction between the elder and the younger generations, also signal respect by the young towards their elders.

Nevertheless, opposition to the elite of the old generation continued from the labarik houriseik,18 (children born overnight) or those who grew up following the political developments in 1975. Signs of dissatisfaction were detected as soon as the Indonesian military departed from East Timor in 1999. Interestingly, this younger generation saw itself as limited to those who were educated in Indonesia and East Timor during the 'integration' period or, to borrow Aditjondro’s term, the young ‘home-grown’ activists (Aditjondro 2001: 17). They comprised people who were involved in the physical struggle against Indonesia and forfeited most of their youthful years to work with the resistance. Most of the young activists belong to the age group between seventeen and forty who, despite being politically active, feel marginalized by the political process. Thus, the term maun-abut, although still a symbol of recognition for the ‘living heroes’ of the struggle, tends to represent a group of people or institutions rather than the interests of individuals. Arguably, when it comes to generational categories and political status, even those youths who are regarded as maun-abut associate themselves with their age group and the policies that correspond to their generation’s interests, or the interests of those identified as, and belonging to, the younger generation.

18 Speech by Xanana Gusmão, 15-20 May 2000. In the closing ceremony of the Conference Xanana prepared a written speech. A copy is with the author.
Feelings of alienation

The ‘generation gap’ became visible in the early months following the August 1999 referendum when open confrontation began to surface in debates, discussions and the media. Aditjondro (2001) argues that many of the young East Timorese who lived in towns during the Indonesian occupation and “faced the Indonesian troops in unarmed, non-violent civil disobedience actions in the cities of Timor Loro Sae and Indonesia, have felt themselves alienated ... by their own leaders” (Aditjondro 2001: 13). The youth felt that a gap was being created, that there was a clear-cut division between them and the older generation. For example:

After the war [post-1999], maun-boot, [the big brothers] would not spare time to meet us, the youth. Now, they would only talk to those who had weapons [guerrillas] and those who call themselves politicians. Once, when we were still struggling, the big brothers would look for us; [they would] ask us to organize our friends to hold demonstrations. Every day, they would have time to us, to talk to us, yet there is no such time for us [anymore] (Pers. Comm. Marcos Amaral, 28 July 2000).19

There are a number of ways to explain why the feeling of being alienated occurred soon after independence. First, it is known that Xanana Gusmão was imprisoned in Jakarta during the referendum in August 1999 and was released only a month later, when the results of the referendum were announced. Upon his return to East Timor, Xanana Gusmão identified himself more as a FALINTIL leader than as a leader of the country (Aditjondro 2001: 13). He decided to live in the cantonment of FALINTIL in the District of Aileu, appearing in public in army fatigues and identifying himself more as a military than a political leader. Preference for a certain group by this political leader radically changed the perception of the younger generation, who expected their leader to be more than a specific group’s

19 Amaral was a young activist who graduated from the Gadjah Mada University in Java. He was the leader of RENETIL in Yogyakarta, Central Java, Indonesia.
leader. As a young activist said to me several days after my arrival in Dili: “The old-brothers, having returned to our country, pay more attention to their friends. Was this war waged only by FALINTIL? Now, those of us who fought in the cities, confronting the Indonesian army do not seem to get the same treatment” (Pers. Comm. José Aparicio, 22 January 2002).

Discontent with FALINTIL began to emerge in that period due to the breakdown of discipline among the ranks of FALINTIL who had just come down from their hideouts into the cities. The behaviour of certain members of the guerrilla army caused several incidents of violence, particularly in Dili. Nevertheless, apart from the behaviour of some members of these former guerrilla fighters, disappointment grew due to the perceived ‘neglect’ of the leader – as widely perceived at the time – ignoring many younger activists. Arguably, this gesture left many young East Timorese disillusioned in their march towards nationhood Aditjondro 2001: 13). A former activist who had previously been at the UNTIM lamented:

I suppose leaders belong to all of us. They should pay attention to everyone. Now, they seem to pay attention only to themselves, and not to the small people. There is no youth representation in CNRT. The leaders, crowding among themselves all the time, do not give a chance to the youth to have their say (Pers. Comm. José Aparício, 22 January 2002).

While such expressions of dissatisfaction might not have been heard by the leaders of the older generation, they were so widespread that they often created disappointment regarding these leaders (ema-boot). Indeed the almost lawless situation in the first months of my fieldwork facilitated and indeed

20 This was a common complain - that I found when I first arrived in the early days. Indeed when Xanana Gusmao arrived back in Dili from Darwin after his release from Jakarta, he spent most of his time with the FALINTIL in Remexio, the latter’s cantonment headquarters. The translation is “Maun-Boot sira agora, fila tiha mai ita nia rain, hare’ e mak sira nia maluk deit. Luta ne’e FALINTIL mesak mak halo ka? Agora ita sira hela no mos luta iha cidade hasouru tropa Indonesia ne’e la dun hetan atensaun ida”.

21 See also a report prepared by Kings College, London, (2000) on the future of East Timor’s new army for additional analysis on this issue.
provided the venue for expressions of disappointment, even in an unlawful manner. On 30 April 2000, a fight erupted between a group from Mercado ‘Municipal’ in Dili (a local market) and members of a martial arts group (*Setia Hati Teratai*) in the local soccer stadium. The fight was very serious and panicked spectators and people living near the stadium. Some vehicles (cars and motorbikes) were burnt by the mob from Mercado. When Xanana Gusmão and José Ramos-Horta and their team arrived at the scene accompanied by their Brazilian bodyguards and CivPol, to calm the fight down, some young people defied their call for calm and threw disused hand grenades in the front of the leaders.²² Some shouted, ‘you are no longer our leaders’. Growing disrespect towards the leadership of the struggle became more visible when such criticisms were echoed through the media and when most of these groups adopted a critical stance against decisions made by the political leaders.²³ An example of this can be seen in the unanimous rejection by local NGOs – constituted mostly by the young activists – of the September 2000 promotion of national reconciliation which failed to include justice for the perpetrators of past crimes. It was understood at the time that Xanana Gusmão wanted to pursue a path of direct reconciliation with pro-Indonesian Timorese who were perceived widely as the perpetrators of September 1999 violence, but failed to mention the issue of justice. This protest came firstly from the young activists, most notably local NGOs and politically based groups such as OJETIL. The protest seemed to have the support of the family and sympathisers of victims of 1999 violence. In general, the youth felt disappointed due to the fact that having been fighting together, the leaders seemed to emphasize their own political interests after independence and forgot that the youth also contributed greatly to the struggle.

²² I was present in the sport stadium watching the martial arts display by some youth together with thousands of spectators and witnessed this incident. In the evening Xanana Gusmão made a statement on the local radio –there was no TV at the time– accusing some Indonesian businessmen of financing the perpetrators. These businessmen were ordered to leave the country the next day.

²³ Reference can be made to the local newspaper *Suara Timor Lorosae* and *Timor Post* between July-September 2000.
Awareness of such issues prompted a change of ‘heart’, as the East Timorese put it, on the part of the political leaders who began to pursue a more balanced and conciliatory approach when it came to young people. On 20 August 2000, Xanana resigned from FALINTIL and concentrated on his job as President of CNRT. While the feeling of alienation from Xanana eventually lessened, it did not disappear completely. The issue of leaders favouring one group over another continued to be a dominant topic.

- Alienation from the Elite: Return of the Diaspora

As divisions deepened, the issue of the generation gap was brought to the political surface and the feeling of being marginalized returned to the so-called ‘young generation’s’ agenda. One reason for this was the disappointment the younger generation felt over the allegedly dominant role of the East Timorese diaspora in the political scene.

Following the arrival of INTERFET in September 1999, many diasporic East Timorese returned. Most of the returnees were political activists who had organised demonstrations, rallies and protests against Indonesia abroad. Indeed, their activities outside East Timor contributed significantly to the formation of international opinion and support for East Timor’s struggle against Indonesia. When Xanana Gusmão returned to East Timor after his release from prison in Indonesia, he stopped over in Darwin, Australia, to consolidate his CNRT team who had just fled East Timor in the wake of post-

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24 Most had left East Timor in the wake of the brief civil war in 1974 and on the eve of the Indonesian invasion of the country in 1975. They had therefore been living in countries like Australia, Portugal, Macau and Mozambique for more than twenty-four years.

25 Apart from East Timor political resistance organisations, numbers of International NGOs and Internet websites were set up by international solidarity groups to campaign for East Timor’s Independence. For example, the East Timor Alert Network, apart from campaigning for East Timor in the United States, also provided lists of various websites in support of East Timor in its [http://www.etan.org/resource/websites.htm](http://www.etan.org/resource/websites.htm).
1999 referendum violence. Most of the political activists in the diaspora who had been involved in the struggle attended that meeting. A number of them also returned to East Timor with Xanana Gusmão. This group, although small in number, was well represented in the country's politics and thus became closely identified with the country's political leadership (Aditjondro 2001). Their presence in the top political circles was characteristically distinctive, particularly since they came from abroad, spoke fluent English and Portuguese and, in contrast to home-stayers, interacted easily with foreigners. This include political party leaders such as Mari Alkatiri and José Luis Guterres (FRETILIN), João Carrascalão and Domingos Oliveira (UDT), Vicente Guterres (UDC/PDC) and other formerly exiled leaders such as José Ramos-Horta.

The East Timorese diaspora can be divided into two groups. The first are those categorised as politicians or political activists. Most of this group were politically active while living in exile and had contributed to shaping international opinion about the East Timor struggle. Some of them were involved actively in politics while others were involved in voluntary work such as with NGOs and voluntary organisations. The second group were those who had not been politically active but intended to start up business in East Timor. Some of this group were not necessarily associated with the resistance (Aditjondro 2001: 13-42). Their small number and special privileges acquired through their 'diaspora' status (language skills and education) made this group accessible to business and people in power. Understandably, their association with the political elite, the politicians and Xanana Gusmão in particular, caused some home-stayers, particularly the young activists, to feel marginalized or alienated. They thought that such a dominant presence would marginalize them in the political process. This sense of alienation polarised the division between home-stayers and exiled East Timorese, especially as the former exiled East Timorese assumed positions of political
authority, leading the home-stayers to associate the diasporic East Timorese with those in power, the elite who belonged to the old generation category. 26

There are lots of *Maun-abut* from the diaspora -we have not seen them in the past; now there are lots of them coming [and acting] like leaders. Who will they govern? Will they govern us? 27

This situation was exacerbated further by the employment of a number of recently returned diaspora East Timorese by the UN as international staff who received international salaries. By contrast, home-stayers worked only as low paid employees occupying positions such as drivers, security personnel and cleaners, due to their inability to speak and write in Portuguese or English. The CNRT – indeed the political leaders – were blamed for doing nothing to change this situation, despite protests lodged with them on a daily basis (Pers. Comm. Aniceto Guterres, March 2000). 28

Thus, to the alienated youth and/or home-stayers, the elite, leaders, the *maun-abut* and the older generation – regardless of their different backgrounds – reflected common characteristics. First they were associated very much with the political leadership. Second, they had access to power, and political decisions med to rest in the hands of this group. Third, this group was well off, possessed cars and other means of transportation, especially at a time when everything had been destroyed and the country was still grappling with poverty, when the unemployment rate was high and living standards were so bad. 29

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26 The extent of such a feeling was so strong that it attracted Australian film producers to produce a documentary film entitled, *Starting From Zero* in 2001. The film portrays the experiences of three East Timorese returnees and recounts the challenges they encountered in their homeland after becoming activists for their cause in the diaspora.

27 Discussion with Januario da Silva and Abel dos Santos (activist with SIL), both of whom were strong supporter of FRETILIN, April 2000.

28 Not all ex-exiled East Timorese worked with the United Nations for high salaries. A number of Australian returnees worked voluntarily for CNRT. Although they later worked for the United Nations mission in East Timor, they were considered as locals (Pers. Comm. Emilia Pires, 22 September 2000).

29 While some these ideas might be true, not all East Timorese from the diaspora led a life perceived as elite. In fact, many of them worked for CNRT voluntarily and did not receive any payment from the former resistance body until East Timor became independent.
This inequitable situation provoked dissatisfaction and anger among 'home-grown' activists. Every formal policy from the top down seemed to be associated with the elite. Not surprisingly, during the CNRT congress, when the first open conflict occurred between Mari Alkatiri (FRETILIN), João Carrascalão (UDT), both of whom happened to be East Timorese returnees, and Xanana Gusmão (CNRT), it was quickly dubbed as a conflict incited by those who lived *iha liur* (lit., outside). In fact, membership of both CNRT and FRETILIN included a majority of home-stayers and, in normal circumstances, all political leaders were considered equal. This complex view stereotyped the 'older generation' as policy makers, who wanted to impose their will without consultation and who wanted to be in power and then rejected the involvement of the much younger generation in the political process. Divisions widened when the political leaders decided to adopt Portuguese as the official language.

VI. The Language Policy

East Timor has more than thirteen languages and dialects (Felgas 1956; Lutz 1991; Fox 1997; Hull 1999) classified into either Austronesian or non-Austronesian (Trans Papuan Phylum) language groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Old Generation</th>
<th>Young Generation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maun-Boot/Maun-Abut</td>
<td>Ordinary people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975 Generation</td>
<td>Post 1975 Generation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elite</td>
<td>Non-Elite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diaspora Timorese</td>
<td>Home-stayers/Home-Grown Activists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>Unemployed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members of International Political</td>
<td>Members of Clandestine Organisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speakers of Portuguese and English</td>
<td>Speakers of Tetum and Bahasa Indonesia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7.2: Association of Groups According to Old/New Generations category.
Since East Timor had been colonised by Portugal and Indonesia, the languages of these former colonial masters have been considered as ‘de facto’ languages of the population. Portuguese was used as the official language until 1975 and from 1975 to 1999 Bahasa Indonesia was used as the medium of instruction in all public institutions and schools. Although rough estimates suggest that 80 percent of the population can speak Bahasa Indonesia, fluent speakers might be less than this number. Likewise, although there are no reliable statistics, it is estimated that out of the population of 800,000 only 10 percent (Jones 2000) were literate with perhaps only 0.25 percent who had received a formal Portuguese education (Cox and Carey 1995) during the Portuguese colonisation period. Tetum came to fill the existing gap, particularly since the Catholic Church intensively introduced Tetum as the liturgical language.

According to Fox (1997: 14), while the official promotion of Tetum began in 1885 via the Catholic Church with the introduction of the Catolicismo da doutrina Cristã em Tetum by Sebastião Maria Aparicio da Silva, popularisation of the language coincided with the establishment of Soibada College in 1898. Soibada, a Tetum speaking area, was traditionally linked to the former historical kingdom of Wehali-Wewico, another Tetum-speaking area, in West Timor (Correia 1934). “This college was responsible for training all of mestres-escolas (Portuguese for schoolmasters) who taught throughout East Timor and provided the official staff for the colonial government in Dili” (Fox 1997: 14).

Since Portuguese was banned by the Indonesian administration in 1976, Tetum came to be used as a liturgical language by the Church throughout East Timor, thus giving it a prominent status as the lingua franca of East Timor. This Tetum, which is known as Tetum praça, is a creole of the Tetum

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30 There is no data on the number of speakers of bahasa Indonesia and Portuguese in East Timor. The estimate is based solely on the calculations of various independent surveys in the last ten years.


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that is spoken in Soibada and Viqueque. It belongs to no autochthonous
group and was influenced heavily by Portuguese, and in later days, also by
*bahasa* Indonesia.

Portuguese was not completely abandoned. It was used as the language of
diplomacy and the medium of instruction among the resistance. Indeed, it
became an official language of the resistance and was used to limit the
enemy's (the Indonesian army) access to resistance documents. Apart from
that, the continuous support the Portuguese government gave to the
resistance added to the strength of this language in the eyes of the older
generation. In the first CNRT conference in Peniche, Portugal in 1998,
attended by many diasporic East Timorese, the former resistance body voted
Portuguese the official language of an independent East Timor. After the
referendum, the same institution quickly re-proposed Portuguese as the
official language. José Ramos Horta, the Vice-President of CNRT and Foreign
Minister of the United Nations' Transitional Government, declared, at a
meeting among the Portuguese speaking countries in Mozambique, in July
2000, that East Timor would adopt Portuguese as its official language.32 Such
a decision was given little publication in East Timor at the time despite rising
dissatisfaction among youth groups who felt ignored in the decision making
process. This official decision was made when CNRT held its Congress in
August 2000 (CNRT 2000). With the exception of the Socialist Party of Timor,
FRETILIN along with almost all the major political parties in East Timor
supported the idea (Alkatiri 2000). Various arguments then emerged in
support of this decision.

To the older generation East Timorese, Portuguese is still considered not only
a language of tradition by virtue of East Timor's long association (over 450
years) with Portugal but as the language which facilitates relations between

the East Timorese and God. This refers to the fact that, according to this generation, it was through Portuguese that the East Timorese were introduced to Catholicism and the word of God. Thus, Portuguese occupies a much higher position compared to the other languages, especially Bahasa Indonesia. Indeed, many members of the older generation are proud to be associated with the language and this is often demonstrated by communicating in public using Portuguese, something that was considered rare during the Indonesian period. João Nunes even claimed that when the Portuguese arrived in East Timor with the cross of Jesus Christ, the liurai (kings) felt honoured and promised to honour three symbols that were associated with Portugal namely, God, flag and the Portuguese language.

Indeed such nostalgic ‘allegations’ continued to be repeated over and over again along with academic arguments which emphasised that East Timor should adopt Portuguese since other foreign languages might threaten the survival of local languages and cultures. Dr. Geoffrey Hull, an academic from Australia with a long interest in Tetum, for various reasons has favoured Portuguese as the official language. Speaking at the CNRT Congress in August 2000, he argued that Portuguese, apart from its historical standing, had influenced Tetum for centuries and, therefore, the two languages were very closely related as many Portuguese words have been adopted and incorporated into Tetum structure (Hull 2000: 3-4). In order to preserve Tetum from extinction, Hull (2000) argues that it would be better to avoid adopting English, as many youth have demanded, because:

> English [is commonly seen] as a killer, an imperialistic language which in world history has the worse record of driving other languages to extinction than any other ... In the modern context, the association of English with technological superiority gives it a definite and unfair edge over languages that are vehicles of technologically unsophisticated cultures (Hull 2000: 6).

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33 João Nunes, speech delivered as the discussion about the choice of language at Gedung Matahari Terbit, 2 February 2000.  
34 João Nunes, ibid.
Hull (2000) then suggested that the lower prestige or 'snob value' of Portuguese vis-à-vis English meant it would be less able to threaten Tetum and its language order. He also added that “[b]ecause of several historico-cultural factors, the Portuguese language has always harmonized better with indigenous languages than English” (Hull 2000: 7-8). The historian Geoffrey Gunn (2000), who has written on the colonial history of East Timor, echoed this view. He argued that Tetum with Portuguese would be best adopted as both official and national languages, rather than pairing Tetum with English or Tetum with Bahasa Indonesia (Gunn 2000: 20-11), should they be given official status.

Such arguments were in line with the ‘official’ policy of CNRT and supported what was perceived as the idea of local ‘elite’ politicians. José Ramos-Horta explained on political grounds that it is important for East Timor to have its own language, and since Tetum did not meet the criteria as a scientific language, Portuguese should be adopted as the official language given the historical considerations and its proximity to Tetum. Apart from that, since East Timor shared an island with the Bahasa speaking people of West Timor – the language of around two hundred million people – the latter might submerge the culture and indeed eradicate the identity of the East Timorese should East Timor adopt Bahasa Indonesia.35

Xanana Gusmão, despite taking a rather conciliatory approach, also showed his preference for Portuguese. In a discussion with students from the former Universitas Timor Timur who were members of DSMPTT, he argued that Tetum needed to be developed into a written language first and therefore needed time. In the meantime, Portuguese should be used as the language of

35 José Ramos Horta always quotes this reason when making statements or when invited to deliver a public lecture. I heard this when I spoke to him in 1998 in Sydney at ETRA’s office.
Gusmão reasoned that most people of his generation did not speak English, and if the youths insisted on using that language, the older generation would be left out and marginalised. The interesting part of this argument is that, while asserting a conciliatory approach and taking into account the aspirations of the young people, it was the older generations’ perspective and interests that were privileged. A student reacted despondently saying:

[The] big-brothers speak softly [appease] to us, but prefer to use Portuguese as the official language. If this is the decision we, the youth, are the ones who continue to be disadvantaged because we only speak Indonesian. It can’t be like that. In the past, we all fought, not only those who spoke Portuguese, in the war for independence.

The confrontation continued. I recorded numerous discussions, seminar debates and media interviews that were conducted during my fieldwork, and questions of language always surfaced. Nevertheless, as political developments unfolded, the non-elite version of the argument faded away into the unknown and Portuguese was endorsed unchallenged. Not surprisingly, linguists such as Geoffrey Hull (2000) and anthropologist such as Aditjondro (2001) have noted how ‘language’ has become a source of conflict between the two generations and that, while Portuguese was accepted as the language of resistance during the Indonesian occupation:

... when East Timor won its freedom, a conflict between the older generation and the younger generation soon came to the fore. All Timorese were at one on the question of founding a new state; but they differed on questions of language and culture (Hull 2000: 3).

Let me turn to this language confrontation which implies conflict between two generations.

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36 The Portuguese government has responded to this gesture by sending a number of language teachers from Portugal since mid 2000. These have been sent to various sub-districts in East Timor.
37 Notes from a discussion between Xanana Gusmão and former Universitas Timor Timur, now Universidade Nacional de Timor Leste (UNATIL) on 11 February 2000.
VII. Confrontation Over Language

Indeed, the decision to use Portuguese as the official language sparked protests by young people, resulting in debates to discuss the language options. The response was mixed. When I first arrived in East Timor, I was astonished by the fact that for political reasons, youth groups associated with FRETILIN, such as OJETIL, supported the decision taken by its main party that Portuguese become the official language. What came as no surprise was the fact that individual members of that organisation expressed their preference for Tetum over Portuguese in private conversations. Indeed, they were not Portuguese speakers and would use Tetum among themselves in daily conversation. Other groups, such as RENETIL, the Students Solidarity Council, local NGOs and other youth-based groups preferred to use Tetum:

We do not speak Portuguese. We studied Bahasa, think and write in Indonesian. It is the old people who speak Portuguese, but we do not know it at all. Who will govern this country [in the future], the old people or the future generation? Therefore, the youth should be consulted before deciding what the national language should be (Pers. Comm. Teresa Maria de Carvalho, 24 April 2000).39

I sensed that the youth in general, including those working in various institutions and in government, rejected the idea of Portuguese and wanted to install Tetum as the official language. The decision to use Portuguese was seen more as an elite, thus an older generation-oriented, policy which ignored those who did not speak Portuguese.40

39 Carvalho was the leader of Young Women (Feto-Foinsae) branch of DSMPTT (Student Solidarity Council). She often organised meetings and invited crowds – mostly young people – to discuss the issues confronting young people. In a gesture to put forward her ideas at the national level, she ran as an independent candidate in the August 2001 Constituent Assembly election. However she failed to win a seat in that body.

40 I had the privilege to work with various groups and find out their opinion. Aderito de Jesus Soares, the director of SIL and a member of East Timor’s first Constituent Assembly, strongly reacted to this decision by rejecting Portuguese arguing that he had no time to learn it (Pers. Comm. 12 September, 2000).
Fear and anger among the youth, particularly those who did not speak Portuguese was expressed in their challenge to that decision. Earlier, around January-April 2000, a number of influential students and lecturers from UNTIM held discussions on how to overcome the language challenges when Portuguese was tipped to be the official language. Interestingly, although they did not speak English, their sympathy for this language was so strong that many preferred English to Portuguese. There were a number of reasons to this, most of which were the classic arguments based on the usefulness of English in economic, political and international negotiations. This initiative was short-lived due to lack of funding. They tried to lobby institutions from English speaking countries to fund the teaching of English. Some of the funding bodies backed down from their earlier support arguing that they did not want to confront the decision of the East Timorese leaders to promote Portuguese instead of English.

A number of the most influential and leading youth groups in the country, namely RENETIL, members of local NGOs like Yayasan HAK, and SIL with its inclination towards FRETILIN, defied this decision. RENETIL, for example, contended that should Portuguese be introduced it would marginalize the young Timorese. Portuguese did not reflect people's identity. Miguel Manutelo, the General Secretary of RENETIL, argued that the *katuas* (lit., the old people) ignored the fact that the younger generation did not speak Portuguese and that the decision was made to favour 'their generation' rather

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41 José António (Zé-to), Vicente Faria, João Noronha, three East Timorese students, initiated the idea and tried to convince me of the need to establish an institution to teach English. They presented a number of advantages of using English rather than Portuguese and wanted to push forward with the idea. They told me that they had even talked to the Australian Embassy and that it was ready to provide funding (Pers. Comm. with José António, Vicente Faria and João Noronha, 04 February 2000).

42 I was told that the Australian Mission in Dili had been approached and was willing to fund an institution. But it set the condition that the initiative came from the East Timorese and that it would not enter into conflict with the government, or the East Timorese resistance body (Pers. Comm. José Antonio, 04 April 2000).

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than people of 'his generation' \((klosan, joinsae, geração fourn)\). In order to challenge this, they insisted that the East Timorese be consulted about their preference on language through a referendum. Not surprisingly, organisations such as RENETIL began printing and publishing monthly bulletins in Tetum, called \(NEON\ METIN\) (Lit., Trustee), and some former students and graduates from Indonesian universities who called themselves \(Kdadalak\) Group also published a weekly bulletin in Tetum known as \(LALENOK\) (Lit., The Mirror).

Yayasan HAK and SIL, defied the campaign for Portuguese by conducting training and civic education in various towns and rural areas in East Timor using Tetum and \(Bahasa\) Indonesia. They even translated and published books written in English about East Timor into \(Bahasa\) Indonesia. They also continued to work with democratic groups in Indonesia to publish books critical of the Indonesian government and institutions such as the World Bank in \(Bahasa\) Indonesia. Yayasan HAK later published a weekly bulletin in \(Bahasa\) Indonesia called \(Cidadaun\) (lit., from Portuguese \(Cidadiio\) or citizen).

Indeed, in order to attract the attention of FRETILIN leaders, SIL translated a book on FRETILIN, written by Dr Helen Hill, from English into Indonesian in order to invite a wider readership. One of the common arguments rejecting Portuguese, as stated by a university student, is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tetum Expression</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Povu Koalia Tetum</td>
<td>The people speak Tetum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Klosan koalia Tetum</td>
<td>The Youth speak Tetum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karau-Atan,</td>
<td>(animal) Herders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katuas fán modo</td>
<td>(vegetable) Sellers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ferik sira servico iha natar</td>
<td>Old ladies who work in the rice-fields</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotu-hotu koalia Tetum</td>
<td>All speak Tetum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotu la hatene Português</td>
<td>None speak Portuguese</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


\(^{44}\) Noted Indonesian academic and activist Dr. George Junus Aditjondro wrote two such books: \(Menyonsong Matahari Terbit di Puncak Ramelau\) (2000), and \(East Timor at the Crossroads\) (2001).

\(^{45}\) Notes from discussions between Xanana Gusmão and former Universitas Timor Timur on 11 February 2000.
Other rejections to the promulgation of Portuguese as the official language came from the DSMPTT. On 28 July 2000, following its Congress, it called for Tetum to be adopted as the official and national language of the country.46 This organisation had branches throughout East Timor and, following the 1999 referendum, set up schools in the villages to fill the vacuum left by the Indonesian administration. Most of its members were students from UNTIM, which was established during the Indonesian period. I had the privilege to visit several schools in a number of villages and met some of the students. I could see how strong was the influence of these young people in the villages, as was their opinion about language.

After the DSMPTT’s congress, a meeting was called among the klosan (lit., single) or foinsae (lit., just rising) ‘youth’, which was attended by almost one thousand students. The meeting was held in the Dili Sports Hall (GMT), the place where FRETILIN held its first Congress in May the same year. Political leaders such as Xanana Gusmão, José Ramos Horta and Father Filomeno Jacob, a Catholic Jesuit priest and the then Head of the Education Section of CNRT, were also invited. However, with the exception of the Head of Education Section of UNTAET, not one of these people turned up.47 The organiser, Teresa Maria de Carvalho, president of Grupo Feto Foinsae Timor Lorosae (Group of Young Women of Timor Lorosae), lamented loudly in poetic verses through microphone, followed by rapturous applause by the crowd, the following words:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Boot sira ne’e} & \quad \text{These leaders} \\
\text{Nebe foti} & \quad \text{Whom we respect} \\
\text{Hanai sira} & \quad \text{Whom we revered (so much)} \\
\text{Nebe uluk temi sira nia naran} & \quad \text{Whose names we used to mention}
\end{align*}
\]

46 See final report of the First Congress of DSMPTT (Student Solidarity Council), 28 July 2000.
47 I had the privilege to be invited to that meeting as a former lecturer of these University students and was asked to become the translator of the whole session.
Have left us
Have abandoned us
Do not want to approach us, although we invite (them to come)

to explain their intentions (to us)
(they) Make decisions to suit their interest
(they) Forget us,
the youth who gave their bodies and blood
To suffer unto death

In the past, they needed us
In the past, they wanted us
Now, they discard us
(they) Do not even mention our names.

The feeling neglect ran high. The failure to accept invitations was seen by those attending as an attempt to marginalize, ignore and pressure the young people. What was important from this meeting was that the participants insisted that a referendum should be held to ask the people whether they preferred Portuguese or Tetum as the official language of East Timor, suggesting a deeply entrenched disappointment in the elite, older generation and, to a certain extent, the matenek (lit., literate). In the CNRT Congress on 20-30 August 2000, the leaders – Xanana Gusmão and José Ramos-Horta – were interrupted whenever questions about language arose, saying that the issue should be discussed at the political level and not be the subject of discussion in the Congress.48

Frustration was expressed against Portuguese and English speakers. Revulsion against Portuguese speakers, the elite and the East Timorese diaspora was also common. Inez Almeida, one of the returnees who left East

48 Let me reiterate that during the Congress, the author worked as translator and had the chance to record a number of discussions (Field Notes, August 2000).
Timor when still a teenager and whose experience featured in the documentary “Starting from Zero” told me the following in English:

We are subject to insults and harassment by being ‘outsiders’. We were told that being ‘outsiders’ we suffered nothing compared to home-stayers. People even shouted at us saying, “we have been suffering throughout the years of struggle and now you the ‘diapora’ with your Portuguese and English ability come back to get the fruits of the struggle and kick us out of the political process” (Pers. Comm. Inez Almeida, 5 April, 2000).

This language issue further entrenched despair on the part of the already deeply ‘marginalised’ non-Portuguese and non-English speakers. Feeling ignored, they would characterise themselves as being weak, small, poor, uneducated compared to the strong, elite, wealthy and educated people.

VIII. Beik-Matenek: Language Competence

In August 2000, I attended the conference of another traditional political party, the UDT, in the former CNRT compound. I went there without being invited and equipped with my pen and camera acted almost like a journalist. What I saw was astonishing. The UDT leadership, most of whom were either returned East Timorese diaspora or older generation home-stayers, were present. During the struggle against Indonesia, the party based itself outside the country. Not surprisingly, its leaders comprised mostly Timorese diaspora. The Congress was divided into several workshops. In the sensibilização política (lit., Portuguese Political Socialisation) workshop, which I attended, people used words such as Nai (lit., great, most) ‘your honour’ or Senhor (Portuguese for Mister, Sir) to address katuas (lit., old people). For the young people, words such as ano (from bai’no)49 or alin (lit., young brother) or oan (lit., children) were often used. Such terms were used as if they were

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49 Bai’no is a title used traditionally to address people with certain political ranks below the rank of liurai (lit., king) ‘traditional ruler’. It is commonly used in daily conversations to address much younger people who are nevertheless considered to retain high social or political status.

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designated for that conference, for these terminologies command respect and reflect reverence to the addressee. Polarisation of participants into categories, while underlining both sensitivity and respect, also separated the two generations. Thus, the recounting of stories of the past, the sacrifices the ‘martyrs’ of the party and their contribution to defending the country, highlighted superiority. The use of nai, senhor or katuas also emphasised the past and stressed the importance of the experience of the older generation as compared to the ‘overnight’ kids or labarik join mouris houriseik (children of yesterday). Most of the katuas spoke in Portuguese which was then translated into Tetum, whereas the ano would present their opinion in Tetum and this was translated into Portuguese. It was a bilingual event and indeed a simultaneous encounter between two generations with polarised characteristics such as old/new, experienced/non-experienced, superior/inferior, martyrs/non-martyrs and so on.

Coincidentally, in that compound was the headquarters of Juventude Lorico Asswain (lit., the Lorikeet Warriors) organisation. This was a place where political activists, particularly young people who were not necessarily affiliated with any political parties, met to discuss various issues including political developments. Witnessing the ceremonial nature of the conference, young activists felt uneasy about moving around their headquarters as if they were limited by the presence of the congress.

A young activist uttered the following phrase to me: “What are these people doing here? (saida maka ema sira né halo). Then, he went on, “all the – so-called – literate people are now coming to do various things here; in fact, it is because of them that all the illiterate people died” (matenek sira agora mai halo oin-oin, sira nia hal-halo mak beik mate hotu). The sentiment was commonly echoed in discussions and debates throughout East Timor at the time and was

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50 João Carrascalão, President of UDT, speech without text in the first UDT Congress, August 2000.
used to refer to political leaders and diaspora who left the country during war against Indonesia. It also referred to the *mestiços* who constituted the majority of the Timorese diaspora. Such phrases were often used to accuse the political leaders, the East Timorese diaspora, who, they thought, belonged to the elite, the *mestiços* or power-hunters. This activist went on, “luckily, there were illiterate people to fight the war; had there not been the illiterate people there would have been no war [against Indonesia]” (sorti beik halo funu; beik laiha karik funu laiha tanba matenek sira liras naruk be halai hotu tiha).

The ‘literate’ people were able to flee the country for they possessed liras naruk (lit., wide wings) or money, a metaphor used to refer to the Timorese diaspora as wealthier citizens, the elite who had access to power and money and who could easily escape if there was trouble. He reasoned that throughout the years of war, the literate (*matenek*) used to make nonsense statements. For example, the *matenek* would say, “Indonesia is a big country, it has all the power to destroy us; we should not fight this enemy because we are weak”. Consequently, only the illiterate (beik) were left to fight, whereas the *matenek* preferred to live with the situation, thus subscribing to and, indeed gaining something out of, colonialism.51 In the view of this informant, it was the ignorant (beik) that should be given priority, rather than the *matenek*, in the new country.

This cynical and contemptuous critic was rather emotional, but this was a common feeling in the streets of Dili and East Timor during my fieldwork. Although binary categories such as *beik/matenek* are not totally adequate symbols to label different groups, the relevance to this discussion is that *matenek* ‘literate’ also addresses the concept of the ‘older generation’, whereas anything seen in opposition to this category belonged to the ‘young’ category – home-stayers, illiterate and the marginalized groups. Such a feeling was deeply entrenched since the issue of *beik* versus *matenek* represented also the

51 Pers. Comm. Otavio da Conceição, Dili 5 August 2000, a member of Juventude Lourico Asswain (Youth Organisation Umbrella) who was from Lospalos, a Fataluku speaking group.
older, elite, diaspora, foreign speaking people as compared to young, non-elite, home-stayers, speakers of Bahasa Indonesia and Tetum.

This ‘language competence’ gap came as the result of a network of various issues associated with the leaders’ policies and marginalized groups. The gap remained wide and, as such, it gave room for the association of individuals and groups into the most common existing categories, katuas versus foinsae (old versus young). One young man to whom I spoke elaborated eloquently the following phrases in Tetum Praça.

_Houri uluk parente, ida mos ami_
When we were one, (you) counted on me

_Hetan seluk parente, ami laek ona_
When you found the others, we were no longer relatives

He went further:

_Matak ami nian_
Raw (fruit, food,) belongs to ‘us’ (exclusive ‘us’)

_Tasak ita hotu nian_
(Whereas) Ripe belongs to all of ‘us’ (inclusive ‘us’)52

The first phrase delineated the feeling of being left behind and ignored following the encounter with the _maun/biin boo._ The words _houri uluk_ (lit., once upon a time, before now) refer to time in the past. _Parente_ is a Portuguese word for ‘relative’ while _ida mos ami_ (lit., we were one) denotes that we were one single family. The words _hetan seluk parente_ (lit., found other relatives) refer to the fact that after other new friends were found, the old friends were neglected, _ami laek ona_ (lit., ‘we were no longer relatives’).

The second phrase denotes the fact that in times of struggle (‘when independence was still far away’, ‘when everything was still raw’), only ‘we’ (the Timorese who lived in East Timor) fought in the front line to conquer the enemy. However, when independence had been achieved (when the fruit has

ripened), everyone claimed to be part of the struggle. In a way the two phrases gloss the feeling of being left out after the struggle against the Indonesian army. Thus, both phrases exemplify the sense of frustration which, as had been the case with previous experience, can lead to division, polarisation of group identity and finally, political confrontation.

IX. Closing Remarks

- From Insider/Outsider to Centre and Periphery

During the Indonesian occupation, a dichotomy of 'outside/insider' was established to distinguish Indonesians from East Timorese. In this case, the former was seen as the one which came to occupy, subdue and colonise the country, whereas the latter was depicted as rain-nain (lit., owners of land) the oppressed and the colonised. Indeed, the insider/outsider dichotomy was politicised in such a way regardless of the divisions that existed within the Timorese society itself.

The period after the 1999 referendum, however, witnessed different social behaviour on the part of the political actors. When the former central-actors, the Indonesian army and its apparatus, left East Timor new conflict surfaced. Post-colonial theorists (Gledhill et al., 1988; Chambers 1988). suggest that once the common enemy has gone, class formation is inevitable and conflicts of interest are common characteristics of a new state. Generally, state formation involves the creation of class-based production, distribution, circulation, and consumption patterns (Gailey and Patterson 1985). Within each of these class-based groups, there are at least two major groups: the elite and non-elite. Although the situation in East Timor does not reflect Gailey's approach, post-independent East Timor saw the polarisation of its society into groups emphasizing social gaps, generation gaps and other forms of division.
The process of nation building in the post-colonial period is not a smooth one: “The societies incorporated into a state [often] do not entirely share the social, political, economic, and cultural forms of the ruling class or dominant society” (Gailey, cited in Gledhill et al 1988: 78). As a consequence, there will be a process of subordination that then gives rise to the domination of one class over others. This will be exacerbated when decision-making regarding the fate of the nation falls into the hands of the dominant class. This process of ‘peripherization’ (Khan 1981: 9) of the weak by the dominant class is often implemented through deliberate policies by the latter. As discussed, the new generation, classified as the non-elite, found it difficult and unacceptable to cope with the decisions that were taken at the higher level, a space occupied by the older generation. As a result, gaps between these groups occurred and established a ‘centre/periphery’ dichotomy. It should be emphasised that centre in this context does not imply a geographical centre but a political centre focusing on a dominant party and a coalition of an age category group with its associates.

- The Spread of the Branches

For the East Timorese, such generation and social gaps reflect divisions within society. In the post-referendum period, new political parties and groups emerged and re-emerged in the new country, each with different agendas, pursuing self-interested policies. In the past, there was one common objective of the struggle to oust the enemy. When the enemy was gone, East Timor became a state of its own. Consequently, interests were also varied and these prompted existing groups to go their own way in the pursuit of their social and political interests.

There was a sense of frustration among the youth who saw themselves as being ignored by the leadership of the resistance. Favouring Portuguese as
the official language of the country is an example of this manifestation. On my second fieldtrip to East Timor in August 2001, this division seemed to have worsened by accusations that East Timorese graduates from Indonesia, the home-stayers, did not have the intellectual capacity to compete with their compatriots from the diaspora (Hardiastuti et al., 2001). Following this, those who felt humiliated by such statements expressed their frustration and disappointment towards the elite and the older generation.

53 In article 13 (Part I) the new Constitution of East Timor, both Portuguese and Tetum are promulgated as official languages for the new country. However, as Tetum remains undeveloped as a written or scientific language, most young East Timorese see this gesture as only an 'old generation' lip service to appease growing frustration among the youths. The article reads as follows: Section 13 (Official languages) point 1. Tetum and Portuguese shall be the official languages in the Democratic Republic of East Timor.
Chapter 8

Firaku and Kaladi: Polarisation of Identity and Divisions

I. Introduction

This chapter analyses another form of stereotyping, which bases itself on supposed social differences between eastern – firaku – and western – kaladi – East Timorese. The use of these stereotypical labels has become a potential source of conflict in East Timor and has been used by some sections in society to claim political leverage; to assert their position in both social and political life in the post-1999 period.

This chapter is divided into several parts. The first part provides a brief overview of the nature and origin of these stereotypes and explains how they have been used to polarise East Timor society into east and west. The second part deals with the relationship between these divisions post-1999 and how this development has contributed to the shaping of people’s perceptions of nacionalismo. Finally, I present some case studies as a means to substantiate the arguments presented.

II. The Setting: Nature and Origins of Stereotyped-based Conflict

- Nature and Origin

When first arriving in Dili for fieldwork, roughly three months after the vote for independence, I began to hear rumours about conflicts involving the East Timorese of different political perspectives. However, when hearing of a street fight between firaku and kaladi a few days after my arrival, I paid little...
attention as the same sort of street battles and friction had been common before my departure to Australia for study. Gradually, I began to comprehend the concern of friends that the firaku/kaladi issue had become politicised such that, as Cirilo José Cristovão told me, it threatened unidade nacional (national unity) (Pers. Comm. 28 December 1999).

In fact, this conflict was not a new phenomenon in East Timor. It began to attract public attention in the 1940s (Pers. Comm. Tomas Corrêia, 10 November 2000), yet the geographical remoteness of this rivalry received little attention in the literature of that period. Looking through some of the old colonial literature, one can hardly find the two terms, let alone hints about geographically based confrontation. Colonial historiography only referred to intra-kingdom wars as types of conflict found commonly on the island (For example, Corrêia 1934; Sá 1961; Almeida 1994; Gunn 1999). The significance of both stereotypes in East Timorese politics, however, is now due to the influence they have on the relationship between contemporary eastern and western East Timorese since these distinctions have been widely accepted among the East Timorese.

- Meaning and Affiliation

The terms firaku and kaladi refer to a geographical division between eastern and western East Timorese. I say geographical division, because the two stereotypes symbolically divide the people of East Timor on the basis of geography distinctions and not on the basis of their ethnicity or linguistic differences. Although not all East Timorese want to be identified with either stereotype the popularity of these terms is so common that they are generally accepted in society. Some writers regard both stereotypes as given names of

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1 Tomas Corrêia passed away in 2001. He was a noble from Vemassi and held important posts during the Portuguese and Indonesian administrations. He was the mayor – chefe do Posto (Portuguese) and bupati (Indonesian) – in different districts of East Timor and was appointed the head of the Department of Tourism during the Indonesian period.
the two major subgroups in East Timor (Smith 2001: 3), without recognising the variety and distinction within each of the two geographically divided subgroups and the nature of such terminologies. Likewise, although the composition of people residing in these areas was unknown, Smith (2000: 3-4) estimated that the eastern firaku accounts for 30 percent of the population and the western kaladi around 70 percent, including 20 percent of the people in the enclave of Oecussi. Other estimates suggest that the eastern population comprises 40 percent, and the western East Timorese 60 percent (Pers. Comm. Prof. James Fox, November 2002). To the locals, the terms firaku and kaladi not only symbolise but also separate loromonu (lit., sunset) or western East Timorese from lorosae (lit., sunrise) or eastern East Timorese.

There are two common versions of the origins of the two terms. First, locals maintain that the words – firaku and kaladi – possess their own ai-knanoik (lit., tree and knanoik song) or story, although these stories vary from one group of people to another and from place to place (Pers. Comm. Tomas Corrêia, 10 November 2000). The most commonly held view among the East Timorese is that the stereotypes were initially used by the Portuguese to refer to the attitudes of the eastern and western East Timorese. Thus, both terms might have their derivations in Portuguese words calado (lit., silent, quiet) and vira o cu (lit., to turn their backsides [to the speaker]). The Portuguese used the word calado to refer to the people from the west because of their slow, quiet, taciturn attitudes. In contrast, the eastern people are associated with the term vira o cu because of their temperamental attitude and stubbornness. As a group they would not hesitate to turn their backs – or backsides – to their masters when called to observe instructions. According to this version, both

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2 This figure is contestable. While it is true that the post-1999 period saw the movement of people from the eastern region to the west for economic reasons (for example, employment, travel to West Timor to purchase merchandise goods), this ‘temporary migration’ should not be used to determine the composition of people in the two geographical areas.

3 In this context however, the use of the term lorosae to refer to firaku is not related to the name “Timor Lorosae”, the Tetum version for East Timor.
words have been adopted by the East Timorese whereby *calado* is pronounced *kaladi*, and the term *vira o cu* pronounced *firaku*.

Another explanation is based on an interpretation of local terms. Thus, in Makassae, the word *firaku* is a combination of the words *fi* (lit., we, us) and *raku* (lit., relatives, family) or our friends, an expression that is used to refer to relatives or, lately, to refer to those who speak Makassae when people of this speech group address each other beyond their language speaking area. Some people also argue that the term *kaladi* might be derived from a common term, *keladi*, used widely in eastern Indonesia and among the Austronesian speaking people for a kind of taro that grows such as those areas inhabited by the Mambai, Kemak and Bunak. The groups are identified as ‘hillbillies’, by those who live in the coastal areas.

Both stereotypes were popularised in Dili. Residents of the city recalled the origins of both terminologies back in the 1940s. According to Tomas Corrêia, both terms became popular ‘in the early days’, when the Makassae-speaking people who were the original inhabitants of the districts of Baucau and Viqueque (eastern part) together with the Bunak speaking people from the district of Bobonaro (western part) who began occupying a traditional market (bássar) in Dili (Pers. Comm. Tomas Corrêia, Vemassi 10 November 2000). Known locally as entrepreneurs and merchants – as Tomas recalled – these people travelled to Dili, lived in the slum areas, occupied designated market places and controlled small-scale business retailing in the city. Dili itself is a

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4 The Indonesian word *keladi* or *buah-keladi* refers to a kind of taro that can be found in the rain forests, particularly the mountains of East Timor.

5 It is interesting that when the East Timorese speak of the past, they do not often speak of the date or time. Instead, they speak of the time when they came across the ‘issue’ in question for the very first time.

6 This refers to a location in the centre of Dili, which since the Portuguese colonial period has been set up as a traditional market place. It is also known as Mercado (Portuguese for market) and was traditionally the centre for small retailers until the Indonesian period. A market was re-established there between 1999 and 2001 under the UNTAET but was later dissolved due to overcrowding and constant fighting involving *firaku* versus *kaladi* and other politically motivated gang fighting.
Mambai area and the centre of an old political domain Mota-Ain (lit., Foot of River), which the Portuguese claimed as their capital when they were forced out of Lifau (now the enclave of Oecussi) in 1769. The increasing influence of this area may have followed Portuguese colonial policy change in 1912 (see Chapter 2). In addition, its position as the capital and home to colonial civil servants in the following years, attracted indigenous merchants to come and occupy uninhabited areas in Dili. Subsequently, these migrants controlled transactions in the local market, including the selling of fruits, vegetables, and other items.

When cockfighting was introduced in public during that period in Dili, I was told, it was the people who belonged to the two linguistic groups (Makassae and Bunak) who were seen as actively involved, alongside a few locals, in this almost daily activity. They occupied and settled in various suburbs in Dili. ‘Market’ competition between the two groups – the lorosae (eastern) and the loromonu (western) as they were then called – became obvious and often incited quarrels, street battles and killings between them. The absence of law...

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7 While it no longer exists, the Portuguese government built a special cockfighting arena in the old Mercado (market) in the 1950s. I had a chance to visit the place in the early 1970s when I was young with some of my uncles who visited the place regularly for betting.
enforcement at the time – which concentrated more on protecting the colonial government’s interest – turned this rivalry into a kind of tradition. It was natural in later days that people who moved from the districts to Dili tended to associate themselves with either group, depending on the geographical area – loromonu or lorosae – from which they originated. Arguably, these stereotypes, which were unknown in the early days, became popular among later urban migrants from both sides. Geographically, the districts associated with the western stereotype include, Dili, Aileu, Ainaro, Same, Ermera, Bobonaro, Suai and Liquiça and Oecussi. The second cultural stereotype was initially identified with the Makassae, who inhabit areas of Baucau and parts of Viqueque, but was later used to refer to the eastern people in general. This also includes the eastern districts of Manatuto and Baucau, as well as all of Viqueque and, Lospalos (Lautem).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kaladi – Western</th>
<th>Firaku – Eastern</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dili</td>
<td>Manatuto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aileu</td>
<td>Baucau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ainaro</td>
<td>Lospalos</td>
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<tr>
<td>Same</td>
<td>Viqueque</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ermera,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bobonaro,</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Suai,</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Liquiça and,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oecussi, known also as Ambeno</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8.1: The Districts associated with firaku and kaladi stereotypes.

Contemporary political rivalry among different groups in East Timor embraces these geographical stereotypes, or the symbolic divisions, to advance their political interests. Before discussing the nature of the conflict in detail, it would be worth explaining how East Timorese use social typecasts – often in binary forms – to polarise people and events.

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8 I am indebted to Luis Gonzaga, Mateus Soares, Cirilo José Cristovão, Rui Perreira, Oscar da Silva and Aniceto Neves for discussions on this topic while conducting my fieldwork.
III. Geographical Polarisation and Political Interpretation

In East Timor, the tradition of labelling social facts in binary terms is widely practised and commonly applied to categorise objects that are either cultural or political in character (see Hicks 1976; Traube 1986). Likewise, despite being found mostly in the interpretation of cultural concepts, particular expressions are used widely as symbols of communication among contemporary East Timorese. Indeed, expressions that represent divisions of political identity as notions of dualism have long been a characteristic of daily life.

Since the period of Portuguese colonisation, terms like mutin (lit., white) to represent Europeans as clever, rich and civilised, and metan (lit., black, dark) to symbolise ignorant, poor, and uncivilised have been popularly expressed to distinguish ‘natives’ from foreigners. In conversations, the East Timorese refer to ‘dark’ or ‘black’ in a derogative way – in contrast to ‘light’ or ‘white’ – and see these words as a representation of the lack of achievement on their side.¹

¹ People often express their frustration in public over the ‘backwardness’ that characterises their society, arguing that the only thing the East Timorese can do is ‘fight among them’. Phrases like ‘Timor nune mak labele sai diak’ (lit., [East] Timorese can do no good) clearly reflects this disappointment.
Coining terms in the form of dual categories is also used to classify people or objects. The Mambai, for example, see themselves as ‘hillbillies’ because they wear only sarong and hence are different from the ‘coastal’ people, who include “those of their own members who have put on trousers” (Traube 1986: 49) and who are clever and regularly exposed to outside contacts. Among the common names in Mambai used derogatively is maubere (see also Kammen 2003).10 This expression was adopted as a political slogan by FRETILIN to express opposition to the Portuguese, malae, colonialista (foreigners, colonialists).11 In political terms, these stereotypes distinguish symbolically between the East Timorese as ‘insiders’ and the colonial governments as ‘outsiders’.

During Indonesia’s occupation of the territory, traditional forms of thinking continued to be used as the basis for political thought and political expression. Expressions were used largely to label the East Timorese and Indonesians, variously as ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’. The East Timorese saw themselves as ‘insider’ (rai-nain [lit., owner of land]) and their enemy as emaliur (lit., outside people, stranger) or pendatang (Indonesian for ‘outsiders’). These dyadic expressions came at the height of intensive resistance against Indonesia, a time the East Timorese were overwhelmed by the feeling of dissatisfaction and discontentment.

These political expressions provided nationalist ideals for the ‘illiterate’ (beik) as well as the educated (matenek) people to understand who they should

10 Douglas Kammen, in reference to his discussion with Nugroho Katjasungkana, an Indonesian activist working in East Timor, mentioned another term asulear, which finds its derivation in the Portuguese word auxiliar, a reference to forced labourers unable to pay tax during Portugal colonial regime (Kammen 2003). Asulear, like maubere, is also a derogative expression of the East Timorese during the colonial times. Among the Mambai of Ermera Asu is literally translated as ‘dog’ and lear refers to ‘crowd’.

11 The Portuguese used this name to refer to the common/ordinary people. The nationalists in the 1970s saw such a term, apart from their derogative meaning, as an insult to the East Timorese at large. Not surprisingly, this term was adopted as an icon to represent the oppressed and ordinary by FRETILIN, and indeed attracted huge numbers of supporters throughout the territory during that time. After independence, a University was established in Dili and was named Asulear (University for ordinary people).
support politically (Pers. Comm. Juvenicio Martins, September 2000). Further, they have been developed into stereotypes that separate antagonistic political groups following years of ‘resistance’ to ‘occupation’.

Plate 8.2: Graffiti carrying political slogans in Manatuto (Photo: Author)

After the referendum, this insider/outsider stereotype slowly faded away with the departure of the common enemy (Indonesia) and the emergence of various East Timorese political factions. During my fieldwork, these stereotypes were used to characterise new elements within the local political scene representing either allies (parallel) or antagonistic (binary) groups. For example, party A was dubbed as ‘old’ and party B as ‘new’, a comparison between parties established in 1975 and in the post-1999 period. Likewise, party C, for example, was seen as belonging to the firaku and party D was categorised as kaladi.

This custom of articulating dual categories is not limited to description of people but also events and geographical representations. The East Timorese have traditionally categorised their island in binary terms (see Figure 8.1). The island is distinguished between North and South, with the former known as tasi-feto (lit., female sea) and the latter as tasi-mane (lit., male sea). Tasi-feto is
known as the calm, North Sea whereas *tasi-mane* is identified with the large wild waves of the uncompromising South Timor Sea.

As well, the Eastern tip of East Timor is referred to as *rai-ulun* (lit., earth head) and the Western part *rai-ikun* (lit., earth tail). The naming of these geographical areas is often used to describe the physical appearance of an object or person on the basis of the area where they belong. For example, *lorosae* is also categorised as a livestock area due to the long tradition of cattle (buffalo) breeding by people in this part of East Timor.

\[
\begin{array}{c|c|c}
\text{Tasi-Feto} & \text{Rai-Ikun} & \text{Rai-Ulun} \\
\hline
& & \\
\text{Tasi-Mane} & & \\
\end{array}
\]

*Figure 8.1: Territorial Designation (Often used as Geographical Labels)*

*Loromonu* is often referred to as a cultivable area due to the variety of agriculture products produced here. A person who comes from these areas is identified with; *firaku* or *kaladi*, *tasi-feto* or *tasi-mane*, *lorosae* or *loromonu*, and *rai-ulun* or *rai-ikun*. In the last few years of the Indonesian occupation, along with the revival of ethnic competition, general expressions like *firaku/kaladi* or *lorosae/loromonu* came to characterise factional divisions within the East Timorese political community. Indeed, these stereotypes became permanent divisions.

The importance of these polarised distinctions also attracted the attention of academics from the mid-1980s onwards (Traube 1986; Aditjondro 2000; Fox 2000: 23-24). These academics noted – although each with differing
interpretations – the application of both terminologies amongst East Timorese. Nevertheless, no attempts were made to explain how these stereotypes evolved.

Aditjondro (2000) defined such cultural stereotypes on the basis of the attitude of the people. He argued that while kaladi were characteristically identified with ignorance, slowness and reserve, firaku represented the complete reverse; identified with highly temperamental people who were prone to rough manners and were determined in their actions (Aditjondro 2000: 14). Fox (2000) also distinguished on the basis of behavioural characteristics, “talkative Easterners (firaku) and more taciturn Westerners (kaladi)” (Fox 2000: 23; see also Smith 2001). Locally, the term kaladi is also paralleled with the ‘calm’ female sea. The term firaku is associated with the rough and wild waves of the male sea although generally both people are characterised in different ways, depending on who interprets them. A firaku would proudly refer to his/her group as brave, talkative, superior, critical and quick actioned and refer to his/her kaladi countrymen as foul, inferior, uncritical and slow mannered. The kaladi, on the contrary, would see themselves as cautious, respectful and polite people who are more accommodating and always guided by considered action. The kaladi would look at firaku as being self-centred, arrogant, not accommodating towards
others and hard to deal with. Having delved into the origins, names, the nature of firaku and kaladi and the ways in which such were politicised in East Timor, I will now discuss how these stereotypes were linked to political developments in East Timor.

IV. Stereotypical Differences

On New Year’s eve 1999, three months after the referendum, a fight between two groups of young people erupted in the resort area of areia branca, a place where the Indonesian government had erected a giant statue of Jesus Christ, second only in size to a similar one in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.  

The fight started, as usual, from a minor quarrel between two young men and spread quickly. The dispute was a personal matter between the men, one of whom was originally from Baucau (Makassae/ firaku) and the other from Bobonaro (Bunak/ kaladi), but then became politicised. Central to the dispute was the issue of ‘sacrifice’ made during the war against Indonesia. The firaku youths claimed it was their people who fought most during the war against Indonesia whereas the kaladi did not participate and tended to mind their own private business. Fighting broke out and a man standing next to me insisted that the kaladi fought back in retaliation for the disrespect shown by their countrymen from lorosae (lit., sunrise): “The kaladi side felt offended because the sacrifices they made during the war were not recognised by their countryman, the firaku” (Pers. Comm. unnamed witness in areia branca, Dili, 31 August 1999). The issue escalated, with the involvement of friends of the two individuals. The areia branca fight was then manipulated as if it had

12 This is a traditional recreational area, which attracts locals and young people at the weekends and holidays. During my fieldwork, international staff working for UNTAET visited the area during the weekends and holidays, sun bathing and swimming, while locals sat on the fences and around the beach, engaged in conversation with each other. I was present at the time, along with friends enjoying the sunset and exploring life, as my friends would say, after the 1999 mayhem. It was the first Christmas in the post-September 1999 violence and Dili residents wanted to take their afternoon out to avoid the city’s hot and dusty weather.
occurred between eastern and western East Timorese. Not surprisingly, in the following days, the fighting continued sporadically from one place to another in Dili. While INTERFET dispersed the areia branca's fracas, it marked the renewal of a tension that had been going on between these two groups for a long time.

Plate 8.3: The Old Market in Dili built by the Portuguese, known as Mercado Lama during the Indonesian period. The building was destroyed during militia rampage in September 1999. (Photo: http://www.mapn.ca/timor.html).

As a ‘returnee’ who had lived outside East Timor for more than two years, I had no idea of the real extent of such sporadic fights in different parts of Dili and East Timor in the early months of my fieldwork. During the Indonesian period, I remembered that low-scale fighting between people on the basis of both stereotypes had occurred every now and then, but that the army curfew had successfully submerged disputes of this kind.

13 I recorded this dispute on the spot on the afternoon of 31 December 1999 when I went with another friend of mine. We were shocked to see such a ‘brutal’ encounter using knives and sticks between the two groups. We managed to escape unharmed, but learnt later that the International Forces who were on the UN mission to the territory had intervened and dispersed the groups.
On 2 January 2000, two days after the brawl in areia branca, another fight took place in the Mercado in central Dili. People from Baucau and Viqueque control most of the small retail kiosks. Those from Baucau comprise people from the sub-district of Laga, from which two people were allegedly killed when the kaladi retaliated against what had happened in areia branca. The tension between the two groups simmered for the next two weeks, until 19 January 2000. Another battle between the two groups broke out on a much larger scale in Bairro Pite, a suburb in west Dili. This area is known as a traditional ghetto of the Mambai and the Bunak speaking people, both of which are categorised as kaladi. Crowds of people were involved in this brawl. While no one was killed because of the intervention of UN CivPol, there were a number of causalities on both sides. The story was a repetition of the previous two encounters. The young people of Bobonaro could not tolerate the insult from Laga that loromonu people did not participate in the fight against Indonesia during the 24-year struggle. The fight involved swords and machetes. Interestingly, some former members of FALINTIL were also involved; joining with the firaku youths, but the International Forces stopped the fighting. During this period, the firaku-kaladi dispute became a ‘hot’ issue and was exacerbated further by the use of these categories for political reasons by certain self-proclaimed leaders. The situation was so tense that friends reminded me not to go out alone in dark areas because:

The problem between kaladi and firaku is so serious. If we go out at night, we are afraid because we could be caught by people who would ask whether we are lorosae [easterners] or loromonu [westerners]. If it happens that someone from lorosae asks the question and you say you are from loromonu [or vice versa], those guys would not hesitate to stab you.14

This traditional rivalry, which began in a market in central Dili in the 1940s, was therefore accepted as an existing state of affairs that had never subsided through a succession of different political regimes (Japanese, Portuguese,

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14 Personal Communication with an informant who asked to remain anonymous on this issue, Dili 10 January 2000).
Indonesian and the UN) and was then used as a basis to forge political alliance among members of each group.

During the Indonesian period and the intensified antagonism between pro- and anti-independence supporters, the meaning of firaku and kaladi became linked to the actual political situation. Reference to certain geographical areas or political personalities split society. People tended to identify themselves more with their groups of origin and to link themselves to certain political groups in voicing concerns, grievances and dissatisfaction. For example, a firaku would think that his or her group fought most during the war against Indonesia because guerrillas were more active in the east and because the last four commanders of FALINTIL were easterners.\(^{15}\) A kaladi would think that the revolution in 1975 took place because of the role of people like Xavier do Amaral and Nicolau Lobato. After the referendum, conflict continued on another level. While East Timor had achieved its political goal and repelled its common enemy, the revival of ethnic rivalry flourished. Recalling unidade nacional, the East Timorese believe that overcoming the ‘common enemy’ left not only a blank space behind, but also cracks in the ‘bond’ that united all East Timorese during the struggle for independence (Pers. Comm. Juvencio Martins Dili, September 2000). This ‘uncertainty’ coincided with the downturn in the economy, the rise in unemployment and the destruction of infrastructure, which characterised the post 1999 referendum period (Fernandes 2001).\(^{16}\) The latter situation prompted new competition in both the economy and politics, in addition to the clash of interests among competing

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\(^{15}\) During the last three years of resistance, the armed struggle was divided into four areas or military zones. The four commanders were Taur Matan Ruak (Baucau), Lere Anan Timor (Lospalos), Falur Rate Laek (Viqueque) and Ular Ryhyk (Viqueque). This has been used as a basis to claim that only people from the eastern part of East Timor fought most during the war.

\(^{16}\) According to a report released on 13 May 2002 by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), as reported by BBC, East Timor ranks among the world’s 20 poorest countries, alongside Rwanda, Angola, Bangladesh and Mozambique. Among its findings: average life expectancy is 57 years, more than 50% out of the population is illiterate, Per-capita GDP is $478, half of the population earn less than US $55 cents a day and 55 percent of infants are underweight. Quoted in <http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/world/asia-pacific/newsid_1986000/1986333.stm>.
political groups which then used the existing differences to attract support. Indeed, a large-scale conflict emanating from this symbolic geographical division remained a threat to the stability of the country as a whole, particularly with the involvement of former combatants, who retained authority and commanded respect among their linguistic groups. In seminars, discussions and debates about conflict in Dili, expressions of dissatisfaction over this deeply entrenched division were common (see Fernandes 2001). It was believed that the difference would not go away easily. Smith (2001) cautiously observes that, “500 years of Portuguese colonialism and 24 years of suffering under Indonesian rule appear to have created a robust nationalism, but ethnicity cannot be entirely discounted as political division in the future” (Smith 2001:3). Indeed, this was the case post-1999 referendum.

UNTAET, however has referred to fighting between firaku-kaladi as gang-based crimes and often played down its significance. For example, referring to the interview of an UNTAET staff member with the The Irish Times, The Sydney Morning Herald (an Australian newspaper) reported the following in its January 20, 2000 edition:

Dili has two youth gangs, the Firaco on the east side and the Kaladi on the west. Before liberation, Indonesian repression and a night curfew kept rivalry in check. Now the youths chase around on motorcycles. “What city in the world doesn’t have gang fights?” a UN worker said. “You could even call it normal. But if there’s no work soon, it could get out of hand”.

While the UN worker might be excused for his/her ignorance of the nature of this long-standing dispute, the clash between firaku and kaladi quickly spread during that period and became the object of discussion throughout East

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17 Disappointed by the increasing number of crimes, a judge told me: We are still in the early phase of our Independence. If the political leaders agree to obey the law and uphold democracy, things will be good. However, if they become self-centred and adopt an inward looking approach, instead of national unity, and become involved in gang fighting, this nation will end up nowhere (Pers. Comm. Rui Perreira 24 July 2000).

Timor. Worse still, the fact that existing stereotypes distinguished the East Timorese into two groups created a sense of tension and rivalry. The division of Dili into different areas of residence by these groups is the most vivid example.

V. Dili: The Centre of Geographically Based Conflict

After the destruction in September 1999, hundreds, if not thousands of people, either returned or moved in Dili and begun to occupy ‘abandoned’ houses (Amnesty International 2000).

This added to the existing traditional villages of Dili and also formed new ghettos known as firaku and kaladi areas. For example, in areas such as Delta in the west of Dili (Komoro), houses belonging to former Indonesian expatriates were occupied by people from the eastern part of East Timor (Districts of Baucau, Viqueque and Lospalos) and it subsequently became known as a firaku area. Similarly, areas such as Quintal Boot (lit., Great Garden) and Quintal Quik (lit., Small Garden) in central Dili, which used to be home to the Portuguese state owned company, Sociedade Agrícola Patria e Trabalho (SAPT), were occupied by firaku. Areas such as Manleuana, Bairo Pite and Bebonuk in the west of Dili were inhabited mostly by people from the west and thus became known as kaladi areas. Areas such as Becora and Kuluhum (east Dili), Lahane and Kaikoli (central Dili) and Bebora, and Komoro (west Dili) are now inhabited by both groups (see Table 8.2).

Fighting between both groups in the streets of Dili occurred regularly during 2000. I recorded seven such events during my first three months in Dili and countless more thereafter. The presence of ethnically-based ghettos in Dili contributed to the existing conflict elsewhere. This was manifested either in individual disputes or in conflicts on the basis of political differences. Some firaku experienced heavy reprisals in western areas such Ermera, Bobonaro

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and Liquiça, all on the basis of the disputes that occurred in Dili. Likewise, the \textit{kaladi-firaku} stereotyped divisions frequently led members of ghettos to fight and challenge each other in the streets.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kaladi</th>
<th>Firaku</th>
<th>Both</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manleuana</td>
<td>Delta</td>
<td>Becora, Kuluhun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bairo Pite</td>
<td>Quintal Boot</td>
<td>Ku Kuluhun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bebonuk</td>
<td>Quintal Kiik</td>
<td>Caicoli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manumeta-Rai-hun</td>
<td>Komoro Mota Ulun</td>
<td>Bebora, Comoro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Vila Verde</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8.2: Division of settlements in Dili into \textit{firaku}/\textit{kaladi}, in 1999-2002. Note that not all settlements are listed here.

\textit{- Firaku-Kaladi and the concept of leadership.}

The concept of leadership is a source of competing claims and a source of dispute. The leaders of the country, who once were united in the fight against Indonesia, tend to advance their ethnic origins when issues of self-interest are at stake. With the exception of national leaders such as Xanana Gusmão and José Ramos-Horta, who often presented themselves as ‘unified figures’, other so-called leaders frequently identified themselves with either \textit{firaku} and \textit{kaladi}. Thus, apart from identifying themselves with party ideology, political leaders in East Timor, in many instances, tended to associate themselves with the existing stereotypes, \textit{firaku} and \textit{kaladi}.

Indeed, appearing in public with particular attributes of either \textit{firaku} or \textit{kaladi} is not a new phenomenon. People have tended to associate themselves with their own community believing that by doing so they could easily attract supporters. Different political leaders often discussed, behind doors, issues such as whether ‘the country should be governed by a certain group, \textit{firaku} or \textit{kaladi}’.\footnote{Confidential communication with a political activist who prefers to remain anonymous, Dili, March 2000.} Others, although agreeing that a broader range of nationalistic
approaches were essential for the new nation, continued to emphasise their
group’s interest when speaking to their own people. Abel Guterres of Baucau
noted, and resented, the fact that many of his friends thought that it was
important that the *firaku* be given priority in the country’s leadership because
of their ‘significant’ contribution to the struggle.\(^{20}\) There is indeed a strong
sentiment that *firaku* fought most in the war against Indonesia by virtue of
their association with the war zone, the eastern side of East Timor. While
refraining from mentioning names, Guterres acknowledged that even within
the diasporic community in Australia and Portugal, people of both parts of
East Timor have the tendency to propose that their own geographical group
is superior to others. Not surprisingly, even among these communities
outside East Timor, quarrels often occurred over the concept of leadership.

Similarly, the *kaladi* often see themselves as a vanguard in relation to West
Timor by virtue of their location along the border. While many perceive that
the *Bunak*, as *kaladi*, have some kinship link with people in West Timor, cross
border raids had taken place for a long time and cross border stealing was
common. After 1999, the western part of the border was inhabited by pro-
Indonesian militias which made the *Bunak* subject to regular harassment.
*Bunak* presence along the border with Indonesia was taken to represent the
*kaladi* in general, particularly when disputes with *firaku* surfaced. The *kaladi*
argued that without the strong resistance by their group, militias could easily
penetrate East Timor and take over the country. Thus, according to these
people, the *kaladi* should be respected, and deserved to participate in the
decision-making issues regarding the fate of the country.\(^{21}\)

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\(^{20}\) Abel Guterres was appointed the general consular to Sydney, Australia in 2002. He was
formerly a resident of Melbourne and a leader of East Timor the Independence movement in

\(^{21}\) This view was uttered by Agapito Cardoso and Vitorino Cardoso. Agapito is originally from
Suai and Victorino is from Bobonaro, the two districts which are located along the border with
Interestingly, when observing East Timor's first Constituent Assembly Election in August 2001, I had a chance to talk to Manuel Tilman, an East Timorese, who was originally from Ainaro (kaladi). He presented a different view. He played down the geographical stereotype and argued that the eastern people include the districts of Baucau, Viqueque and Lospalos, whereas, the western people include only the districts of Bobonaro, Suai and Maliana. In his mind, the central-land people are the Mambai speaking group (Ermera, Ainaro, Suai, Dili and Same) and the district of Liquiça (Tokodede speaking people) and Manatuto (Galole speaking people) (Pers. Comm. 27 August 2001). The Mambai, Tilman argued, preferred to be 'accommodative', and not as 'aggressive' as their counterparts. Tilman referred to Ainaro, which falls within the kaladi category, not in terms of its stereotypical affiliation but from a purely political outlook. Being located in the central part of East Timor, he argued, the Mambai have nothing to do with the enmity between east and west since that rivalry is merely Makassae versus Bunak business. Instead, the Mambai should be positioned 'neutral', thus excluding this group from the popular 'eastern versus western' rivalry. Tilman said that since there is hostility between the eastern and western people, the only people who should assume the leadership of the country should come from the central part of East Timor, the Mambai. Manuel's idea, however, failed to gain public acceptance and people continue to regard the Mambai as kaladi.

Many people still refer to the fact that the first prominent leaders of the East Timor struggle were of Mambai origin, and therefore belonged to the kaladi category. People such as Francisco Xavier do Amaral (former President of FRETILIN and the short-lived RDTL), Nicolau dos Reis Lobato (Former

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22 The Mambai, Tilman said, would play down the significance of contradictory statements as non-nationalist. Manuel Tilman is a lawyer who lived in Portugal and Macau during the years of struggle. In August 2001, he ran in the election as a representative for KOTA, a feudal-oriented political party, which eventually gained two seats in the parliament.

23 This statement was made during a discussion held in Ginásio (Former Gedung KONI) – during the debate among political parties and individual candidates, organised by Universidade Nacional de Timor Leste, Dili, 27 August 2001.
Defence Minister, Vice President of FRETILIN and then Commander of FALINTIL) and his brother Rogério Lobato (former Defence Minister of RDTL), currently Minister of the Interior were of Mambai origin and therefore kaladi. Xavier is a noble from the kingdom of Turiscai, a district of Ainaro, whereas Nicolau and Rogério are nobles from Maubara in the district of Liquiça. The Mambai – indeed the kaladi – claim that had there not been these leaders, there would have not been the idea of a Timorese nation.24

There are names from the eastern region (firaku) in the resistance, such as Vicente ‘Sahe’ Reis (a former member of FRETILIN Central Committee), a noble from Bucoli, and David Alex from Laga, both areas being parts of Baucau, and Kilik Waegae, a noble from Viqueque, who was the former chief of staff of FALINTIL in the early 1980s. However, these firaku figures occupied less prominent positions in the party and in the resistance; thus they were subordinates to their countrymen from the kaladi group.25

While at the national level such ranks have not been the subject of dispute, there is a strong sentiment among the political elite that people of their geographical group, either firaku or kaladi, should assume the leadership of the country. Discussions about who should govern the country received little attention at the grassroots level, not because of the nature of the issue but because of the fear of renewed conflict. Nevertheless, in political circles, discussion among groups was intense and allowed for mutual accusations.

24 Often such ‘accusations’ refer also to the fact that the previous nationalist wars such as ‘Cailaco’ (1719-1769) and ‘Manufahi’ (1894-1912) took place in the Mambai area (see Chapters 2 and 3).
25 Conveniently overlooked, is the fact that more prominent guerrilla leaders, who came to the scene in late 1970s such as Xanana (Laleia), Konis Santana (Lospalos), Mauhudu (Bauncau) and Ma’huno (Laleia), are all firaku.
Sacrifices in War: Basis of Superiority

Who contributed most to the war? This is a question that has been a source of dispute not only at the political elite level but also in the villages, markets and other public spheres, as the *area branca* fight indicated. Claims about political 'sacrifices' made during the war and the emphasis on ethnicity or east/west polarity often generate conflict among contemporary East Timorese. On trips to different districts during the time of my fieldwork, I sensed the animosity between some sections in the society against each other, although many preferred peace over conflict. In conversations, people would refer uncritically to the fact that the war for independence was conducted in the east. The *kaladi* fought little during the war. The *firaku* said that since 1975, most of the war was concentrated in the east. "Lots of our brothers [reference to the guerrillas] died and were buried there".

To understand the bases of this question, it is worth briefly considering local history. When the Indonesian invasion of East Timor took place in 1975, the FRETILIN led resistance moved to reside in the eastern part of East Timor. It remains unclear as to why the decision to move east, instead of west, was adopted; however, the truth is that throughout the years of struggle against Indonesia, the bulk of the resistance remained in the *firaku* area. Thus, the war against Indonesia was directed from the East after the invasion took place in 1975. It is thus popularly known as *funu-fatin iha lorosae*, 'war zone is the east'. In later years, it was explained that the decision to concentrate more in the eastern part of East Timor was merely a strategic decision because of its tactical mountainous terrain which suited guerrilla warfare. Thus, the western area was designated more as a 'resort' for the guerrillas who were on

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26 Discussion with an informant who preferred to remain anonymous. His Tetum version was "*luta ida ba Independencia, halo liu iha lorosae. Ema loromonu la-dun funu. Hours 1975, funu concentra liu iha Lorosae. Maun-alin sira barak mak mate iha neba, no barak mak hakoi iha neba"."
sick leave. The other side was made the military operation zone (Pers. Comm Commander Sabika, 26 August 2001).

While this does not mean that there was no resistance in the western part of East Timor (see Dunn 1996), the commonly held view among the later generation is that the resistance was conducted only in the eastern part of the country. A former FALINTIL commander, Sabika (*nom de guerre*), who was of Baucau origin, argued that resistance in the western part of East Timor continued, although at a lower level. A number of platoons, he said, continued to maintain their symbolic presence in the western part of East Timor but sent most of their troops to fight in the east. 27 Indeed, Xanana Gusmão explains that in 1980-1982 he travelled from the eastern tip of the island to as far as the border with Indonesia, to reconstruct and reform the almost dismantled resistance body. There he found some groups isolated and demoralised, but he successfully renewed the resistance struggle throughout East Timor (Gusmão 1998).

It is thus not surprising that most of the second generation of guerrilla commanders were originally from the eastern part of East Timor. 28 In the 1990s, almost all first rank guerrilla commanders were eastern East Timorese, including Taur Matan Ruak (Baucau), who replaced Xanana Gusmão when the latter was captured by the Indonesian army in 1991, David Alex from Baucau, Lere Anan Timor from Lospalos, Falur Rate Laek and Virgilio dos Anjos (*Ular Ryhyk*, snake or Cobra) from Viqueque. Two previous commanders who replaced Xanana Gusmão before the rise of Taur Matan Ruak – Nino Konis Santana (Lospalos) and Ma Hunu (Laleia) – were also *firaku*. The commanders from the western part of East Timor occupied only

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27 This conversation took place several months after I concluded my fieldwork, when I visited East Timor to observe the election of the Constituent Assembly. Commander Sabika, at the time, had been promoted as a high-ranking officer with the new East Timor Defence Force (Pers. Comm. Commander Sabika (*nom de guerre*), Dili 26 August 2001).

28 As I have discussed this elsewhere in this thesis, the first of these, most prominently, Francisco Xavier do Amaral and Nicolau Lobato, were of Mambai origin.
the second rank in the resistance. Being an operation-designated zone, the war was concentrated and directed from the eastern part of Timor.

It is the position of the war zone and the ‘origins’ of this second generation of Timorese resistance leaders that have been exploited by some firaku, arguing that only their people fought most during the war, whereas the kaladi had a good life and did not engage in the war.\footnote{I recall my discussions with various young political activists during my fieldwork. In various conferences, youth leaders tried to play down such a dispute claiming them to be rumours from ‘irresponsible’ people. Publicly, indeed, most think that the issue should be buried as it could serve as a source of ‘future’ conflict among the East Timorese. However, it should be acknowledged that such a sentiment exists and still features in the untold street battles to this date.} There was a strong sentiment among the firaku that since the home base of the resistance had been in the east, it was the people of this group who should command the country. This was often used to make fun of those considered to be from the western part of the country.

\begin{tabular}{lcl}
    Uluk funu nia laran & During the war  \\
    Funu halao liu iha lorosae & The resistance took place in the east  \\
    Firaku mak funu liu & The firaku fought most  \\
    Loromonu sira moris diak & The western people led a good life  \\
    La halo funu & (They) did not engage in the war  \\
    Buat hotu diak & Everything was good (there)  \\
    Sira la terus & They did not endure suffering.\footnote{I was told this joke by Paulo Amaral, a staunch supporter of FRETILIN who is from Viqueque, an area identified as firaku (Pers. Comm. March 2000).}  
\end{tabular}

I was told that after the Constituent Assembly election in August 2001, which FRETILIN won, members of the party argued that the composition of representatives in the Assembly should be balanced between eastern and western East Timorese in order to avoid friction. Nevertheless, in a meeting at FRETILIN headquarters in Dili following the election, the youth from Baucau insisted that more ‘positions’ should be given to their ‘people’ in the second Transitional Cabinet (2001-2002), since more than 80 percent of the population in that area were strong supporters of independence and voted in
support of the party. Their view was that only firaku should assume the leadership of an independent East Timor since this group fought most in that war (Pers. Comm. Unnamed informant, July 2001). This issue was not well-shared among the kaladi. In several visits since my fieldwork, I have heard stories about fighting between the youths of the two groups. In 2001, a stand off between firaku and kaladi in Manumeta Rai-Hun (Asgor) in the West of Dili led to the killing of a firaku youth leader in Delta, Komoro. When discussing this with the youths in the area, a young man, who claimed to be kaladi, proudly argued that they killed the firaku man because he often insulted the kaladi as adventurers who were trying to reap the benefits of what the firaku had fought for in the past.

Such fights may sound remote and be seen as ordinary crimes, yet the impact they had on the population often threatened large-scale confrontations, and the emphasis on geographical distinctions (eastern and western) often naturally compelled the ordinary people to take sides. Conflict and division were always imminent. Many East Timorese saw such geographical conflicts, most of which were politically manipulated, as a sign of a breakdown of unidade nacional in the post-1999 period, leading to the degradation of the sense of nationalism as a whole (Pers. Comm. Miguel Manutelo, 15 August 2001).

- Militia Activity: Kaladi as Equivalent to the Militia.

Another issue in the firaku versus kaladi conflict was their role in the paramilitary/ militia in the lead up to the 1999 referendum. The paramilitary groups conducted a campaign of terror throughout the territory. Their objective was to fight for East Timor to remain within Indonesia. Among

31 Confidential conversation, A.J.S - 4 September 2001. A. J. S. asked me not to reveal his identity here fearing repercussions from his countrymen who disagree with him and might use it to question his loyalty to the nation.
these, the fiercest groups were Aitarak (lit., Thorn), Besi Merah Putih (lit., Iron Red and White), Laksaur (Lit., Eagle) and Mahidi (lit., Dead or Alive for Integration) which were responsible for abductions, killings and arson around the country in the weeks leading up to the 1999 referendum and its aftermath (Babo Soares 2000a: 67-68). These paramilitary groups were based in Dili, Liquiça, Suai and Ainaro areas belonging to the kaladi. Interestingly, although there were also militia groups from the eastern part, their actions were considered insignificant compared to Aitarak and Besi Merah Putih. Some writers, in reference to Liquica, argued that most of the militias from this part of East Timor were descendants of plantation labourers, referred to metaphorically as asuliar, whose history can be traced back to the Portuguese period (see Kammen 2003).

Regardless of the origin of this militia, geographical derivation was used as a reason to question the loyalty of the kaladi. Likewise, it has also been used to accuse the ‘westerners’ as siding more with Indonesians than with the resistance. An informant explained what he had heard from people in Baucau:

The militia from the western part killed a lot of people [like] in Maubara, Dili, Same, Ainaro and Suai. There were also militia in the east, but they did not destroy things and did not kill lots of people. The town of Baucau, for example, was not destroyed. If we make comparisons, most of the militia were westerners and they supported Indonesia (Pers. Comm. José Aparício, 29 July 2001).32

This situation adds to the claim that the western people were not nationalists since their participation in the struggle was meagre. Being in the ‘wrong’ position, the kaladi tended to ignore the attacks against them, but would take retaliatory action whenever necessary. A number of deaths of people from Baucau in Bobonaro and Ermera during the time of my fieldwork, although

32 José Aparício mentioned to me that this view is held widely among the people in Baucau and to a certain extent in Dili. What is interesting is that these people were not aware that other parts of eastern East Timor such as Lospalos, Manatuto and Viqueque were also destroyed by the militia in September 1999 violence and people were killed.
seen mostly as criminal acts (*Suara Timor Lorosae*, 20 July 2000), were described locally as retaliation by the *kaladi* (Pers. Comm. Luis Soares, 26 August 2001). Already, before the referendum, a number of the local University students who were originally from Baucau and Viqueque were beaten unconscious and two were killed while undertaking practical fieldwork in Suai.\(^{33}\) Their disappearance was blamed on the pro-Indonesia militia but locals referred to them as *firaku* who were trying to influence the people to vote for integration with Indonesia. They were therefore killed (Pers. Comm. Alipio and Eusebio, 12 November 1999). While this confrontation took place at the village level, it both revived and justified the question of ‘who fought most in the past’, for certain groups.

The tensions and fights between the two groups in Dili was so intense that in a discussion among diasporic East Timorese in Portugal and Australia, an East Timorese returnee expressed frustration about the situation. He sent the following message via the Internet from Dili to his friends abroad, on 8 January 2002.

The situation in Dili, [we] may say, is not good; many people live in fear, lots of problems happen in Dili, political leaders point the finger at each other. Yesterday evening, [I]n bairo Becora, Taibessi, and the orange garden, people burnt houses, one [person was found] dead, [and] many people left their houses and took refuge in the Church of Becora because of fear. Until now, the situation in bairo Becora is not safe. [In] “Bairo Manleuana” on 1 January, 3 people died in fighting between *lorosae* and *loromonu* [my emphasis]. [The] problem occurred because of the old feud between *firaku lorosae* against *caladi loromonu*. If the government does not react quickly enough, in the near future people may kill each other in a much higher number in Dili. Every night we could not sleep because of fear of attacks, we live in fear, in Dili.\(^{34}\)

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\(^{33}\) A further three individuals are now thought to be among these dead. Bernadino Simão, a student from UNTIM, was kidnapped by Mahidi on 11 April and later killed at Kamanasa, Suai by the Indonesian Armed Forces (ABRI) and the paramilitary group Laksau Merah Putih. Another unnamed student was killed by the paramilitary group Mahidi; and Alvaro de Araujo, 25 were killed by paramilitaries in Suai. For further information visit: <http://www.etan.org/et99/april/25-30/25aif108.htm>.

\(^{34}\) See Diaspora Timorese Discussion List.- 08 January 2002, http://joseramelau.tripod.com/diaspora Timorense. The original Tetum version is: *Situasaun iha Dili bele dehan kaitak*
At the political level, the firaku-kaladi rivalry was covered over in such a way so as to avoid further friction, the call for national unity being enunciated repeatedly. Nevertheless, in the streets, in the markets and in general discussion and conversations, such ‘insults’ often instigated quarrels, street battles and resentment among different groups in Dili.35 This situation was made worse by the involvement of former guerrilla groups.

- Geographical-Oriented Conflict and the Return of Jungle Fighters

One of the characteristics of post-conflict societies is the return of jungle fighters to the political arena once the war is finished. In the case of East Timor, many of the old veterans (veteranos) who formed the core leadership in the guerrilla army, were incorporated into the new Defence Force of East Timor, but others were excluded for failing to meet the standards required in the recruitment process. The prolonged war and difficulties faced during the resistance years contributed to the establishment of autonomous fighting groups among the guerrilla forces. Some commanders even became ‘kings’ in their own jurisdiction and among ‘their’ people.36 Consequently, isolated commanders, despite being of low rank, successfully created their own influence among the rural population.

One group whose leader was left out of the political process, and who tried to assert its position in the post 1999 period was known as Sagra da Familia. The

35 See also Cidadeun, a monthly Bulletin issued by Local NGO, Yayasan HAK in Conjunction with The Asia Foundation 22 August 2001. For brief overview visit www.yayasanhak.minihub.org/txt/22/08.html.

36 The nature of the guerrilla army’s hit and run tactics allowed for the establishment of small guerrilla groups which often took initiatives independently and without prior consultation with the ultimate commander (Pers. Comm. Comandante Rocke Kolir, Dili March 2000).

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group was named after the image of the Christian *Holy Family*, which is venerated among devout Catholics. The leader, code-named *Eli Fohorai-Boot* (lit., Eli- the Big Snake), or *L-Sete* (lit., L-Seven), was a veteran who had spent most of the last 24 years fighting the Indonesian army. He claimed to have been given a ‘*fita mean*’ (lit., red ribbon) by the *Holy Family* to whom he prayed for protection during the struggle. *L-Sete*, who is originally from Laga, a Makassae speaking group in the district of Baucau, successfully established this sect-like group based mainly in Laga. Its members consisted mostly of people from his natal area, despite claims that they could be found throughout East Timor. They often travelled to Dili to present their credentials to the public by either releasing statements or parading in the streets. Members were obliged to wear red ribbons, for they believed the ribbon could protect them from enemy capture.37

Around the second week of August 2000, this group held a meeting in Laga and invited a huge crowd to attend. The meeting, attended by UNTAET officials and people from Baucau and other parts of East Timor, took place in a compound. Present was Francisco Xavier do Amaral, the former president of the RDTL, which was proclaimed in 1975, and the current president of ASDT. Xavier also ran as a candidate in the 2002 presidential election. Cultural performances and public petitions preceded the meeting. These petitions were read, most of which involved praise for their leader (*L-Sete*) and deplored the fact that he was ignored by the political elites in Dili. Indeed, he had not been included in the administration nor had he been recruited into the newly established East Timor Defence Force.38 Apart from

37 It is amazing that even after Independence, this group continued to organise violent protests against the government. While finalizing the writing of this thesis, Eli-7 was present when a mob consisting of ex-combatants, constituted by his members, attacked a Police station in Baucau, destroyed the office and injured a number of police (See Portuguese Broadcasting Corporation, *LUSA* 27 November 2002).

38 Several months after UNTAET formally handed over its power to the newly elected East Timor government; Eli-7 was appointed an advisor to the country’s Defence Force. Nevertheless, he allegedly appeared in some confrontations between his supporters and the police, for example, in the attack on local police headquarters in late November 2002.
ritual processions, petitions were read with slogans such as ‘we will die for you; we will do anything to make the elites in Dili respect your struggle’. A number of public meetings were conducted there after my fieldwork, all in veneration of the Sagrada Familia ‘clan’.

_L-sete_ insisted, on various occasions, that he was acting on behalf of former guerrilla members who were ‘neglected’ by the government. Thus, he was adamant that the fate of former FALINTIL fighters needed to be taken seriously by the government, a demand which naturally brought him to prominence since it had the support of formerly ‘ignored’ FALINTIL fighters.

Already on 20 August 2001, in an informal conversation with friends in front of the Santa Cruz Cemetery commemorating the birthday of FALINTIL, de Mello showed his concern and wanted Xanana Gusmão to put a brake on the ‘potentially dangerous activity’ of the group. Although – in my observation – the potential for this group to create disturbances was not a concern, since as an institution, it often proclaimed that it did not want to create disturbances, the preoccupation was with its members who were often involved in _firaku_ and _kaladi_ street battles. These Sagrada Familia members, were known for their temperamental attitude among the Dili residents. In late 2000, _L-Sete_ visited the local court in Dili to ask the whereabouts of his members captured several days before by CivPol following a brawl in the local market in Becora. However, after receiving an explanation from the court officials, _L-Sete_ agreed that his visit was only to ask after their condition, indicating that he respected due process of the court.

39 I attended this event in Laga but did not stay long, as I had to return to Dili in the afternoon (Field notes, 12 August 2000).

40 On 20 August 2001, when returning to East Timor for an Update, I attended the celebration of FALINTIL in the famous Santa Cruz cemetery. While waiting for the parade to arrive, Sergio de Mello had a chat with one of his friends, and discussed, among other things, the activities of _L-sete_. He said, “I want to ask Xanana about _L-sete_ and what he is doing”. It was revealed sometime later that Xanana proposed that _L-sete_ to be sent to study intelligence methods in Portugal. This was agreed to, but with the condition that he would not go until Independence had been proclaimed.
Concerns remained as to the activities of groups such as *Sagrada Familia* that could give rise to other geographically based groups seeking retaliation. In late 2001, some former guerrilla commanders in the western part of East Timor began organising their own groups, arguing that their intention was only to discuss security in their areas. These potential militants were not involved in any retaliatory actions nor had they been involved in any part of the existing conflict. Nevertheless, their presence in that ‘uncertain’ political atmosphere gave the impression of continuing tension among the population.

In addition, some former guerrillas who had not been recruited into the new East Timor Defence Force showed their frustration by setting up their own militia groups on the basis of existing geographical associations. During my fieldwork, a political figure from Laga (Baucau), who was also a former leader of CNRT, recruited most of the people from his area to serve as security for the political body. In the months leading up to the Constituent Assembly in August 2001, the former president of FRETILIN and ASDT, Xavier do Amaral, a political party, amassed hundreds of people, mostly from Aileu and Same (two *kaladi* areas), in his compound for several days in a ‘show of force’. In the months leading to the proclamation of independence of the new nation, *Eli Fohorai Boot*, again amassed hundreds of people in Dili for several weeks to insist on being included in the newly established Defence Force of East Timor.

The emergence of former combatants each with their groups and rumours of split within the army added more to the political uncertainty and confirmed people’s anxiety. *The Far Eastern Economic Review* reported in early 2002 that:

41 One of the simple examples is the revival of Colimau 2000, a former clandestine organisation in the western part of Timor, which presented itself as a sect and is reported to have conducted violent clashes in a number of districts. The government disbanded the group but members continue to mark its presence in a number of districts, particularly Ermera and Bobonaro.
... [Veteran guerrillas who fought for its independence are challenging the authority of the country's new democratic government. In demonstrations across East Timor, hundreds of uniformed men, many armed with knives and machetes and all claiming to be former members of the East Timorese resistance, have been demanding state welfare and official recognition for services rendered during 24 years of armed struggle against Indonesian rule. The demonstrations were organized by Cornelio Gama, a dissident ex-guerrilla commander who goes by his old jungle code-name, L-7. Gama claims he has more than 5,000 supporters in a country of 800,000 people (Dodd 2002).

Rees explained that even after independence, factionalism within the East Timorese political community was undeniable. Reed reasoned that the guerrilla force which turned into the East Timor Defence Force (FDTL) was marred by internal divisions which “emanated from personality

42 Rees wrote, “FALINTIL commanders admitted to the FDTL were [Xanana] Gusmão loyalists. ... a sizable minority had an acrimonious relationship with Gusmão and the FDTL High Command ... [S]ome of these individuals now appear to be finding a political hope with the Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor (FRETILIN), the political party that dominated the August 2001 election and holds a majority in the Constitutional Assembly” (Rees 2002).
clashes, ancient divisions connected to ideology and various forms of allegiance” (Rees 2002: 152). Thus:

... there has been a rise in the number of security groups (involving disaffected former FALINTIL fighters) operating throughout the country. Some of these are politically orientated while others have more criminal motivations ... anti-FDTL groups [are] allegedly on the increase, and FDTL commanders are interfering in the civilian democratic process by making politically charged statements to the press (Rees 2002:153).

Not surprisingly, open conflict seemed likely to continue even after the date of independence, although CNRT itself was dissolved in June 2001, two months before the Constitutional Election that year.

Similarly, the decision by certain political parties to establish their support base in particular areas created further segregation; for instance, there were rumours circulating in East Timor that party A was known as firaku and party B was called kaladi. Thus, ASDT was associated with the Mambai of Aileu by virtue of being the birthplace of Xavier do Amaral, the party’s president’s and the area where most of its supporters came from. CPD-RDTL was dubbed as firaku since most of its high ranking leaders and supporters came from the eastern region, whereas newly formed parties such as PSD and PD were associated with kaladi on the basis of the votes received in the Constitutional Assembly election. Both location and origins were used as the basis of this social differentiation so that, when conflict or disputes emerged, supporters of such groups naturally identified themselves with their designated categories.

Thus, political orientation has emphasized ethnic identification in the expectation of attracting supporters from geographically based groups, a phenomenon which often meant deepening the rivalry between the already geographically divided East Timorese and degrading the sense of national
unity the country had fought hard to obtain. The presence of the UN, while contributing to the independence cause, failed to address these local differences.

VI. The Prevailing Differences

While the post-1999 referendum marked a turning point in the history of colonialism in East Timor, it left much to be solved. Socially-based differences did not disappear. In fact, they continued to serve as the basis of differentiation and, in some instances, led to other politically motivated conflicts as a result of past ordeals. The firaku and kaladi rivalry, which began by distinguishing between the eastern and western East Timorese in Dili on the basis of market competition, was ‘upgraded’ to become a major political division in the new country.

The firaku versus kaladi rivalry that is only one of the factors that characterise the widening of the branches of the tree or differences in the new nation. The use of issues such as ‘sacrifices’ made during the struggle to claim political leverage is another element of this rivalry. In addition, the push to claim positions of political leadership and to claim superiority over other groups indicates that tensions remain, or as the East Timorese put it, the branches continue to be shaken. The question is whether these tensions can be overcome? Only the East Timorese themselves can provide an answer to this question. However, the culturally-based rivalry which has been turned into political antagonism could well continue and, in turn, divide the nation if steps are not taken to bring these politically divided people together.
Chapter 9

Recapping the Thesis

I. General Overview

This thesis is structured in terms of the sequence: Colonialism – Resistance – Independence. It is divided into two parts. Part One outlined the historiography of the East Timorese resistance against colonialism, and of local perceptions of nacionalismo. The second part described the differences that existed before the 1999 referendum and the frictions that developed thereafter.

This thesis has placed the Timorese at the centre of its enquiry and examined events surrounding their struggle for nationhood and their perceptions of these events. The Timorese sense of pride and self-centred importance was emphasised indicating that while acknowledging their past differences, East Timorese believe that their sense of nationhood (nacionalismo) evolved from the time of their ancestors and gathered momentum when outsiders began arriving in East Timor at the beginning of the sixteenth century. The Cailaco war (1719-1769) and later the Manufahi war (1894-1912), which saw the formation of alliances among Timorese political domains (reinos) in order to resist both the crown and, later on, colonial hegemony, stand as symbols of pride and as an historical reminder to contemporary East Timorese. Despite lacking access to written history, East Timorese today remember their society’s past from such understandings and see it as the origins of nacionalismo while at the same time using it as a symbol in their struggle for independence. As East Timorese say, “in the past, our ancestors fought the Portuguese, then they chased out the Dutch and the Japanese, later on they chased out the Portuguese. If they could, we can too.”

The recent struggle against Indonesia, *guerra da libertação*, to borrow Xanana Gusmão’s term, with all its dynamics, conjures up a period when the true sense of East Timorese *nacionalismo* unfolded. This period saw the resuscitation of an ideal of national unity, a notion believed to have been present in Timor’s past, an imaginary sense of peace that had existed before the arrival of outsiders. The East Timorese believe that before the arrival of *malae* (lit., foreigners), their country maintained a peaceful life and the people/kingdoms (*reino*) and their leaders (*liurai*) lived side by side and were ruled by their own law, *ukun no bandu* (lit., to rule and to forbid). Independence is therefore seen as continuity with the past characterised by sacrifices, suffering and a sense of nationhood, unity and bravery; points which constituted important ingredients in the formation of *nacionalismo*, the foundation for freedom.

The second part of this thesis presented the development of changing views about this unity – coupled with the varying understandings of nationhood – which occurred as a result of political uncertainty both before and after the 1999 referendum. Problems with national unity emerged before independence. The events that took place during the Indonesian occupation among resistance fighters cast a shadow over the notion of national unity. Differences among the resistance groups during the struggle (1975-1999), which culminated in the restructuring of resistance in the early 1980s – most notably from MLF to CRRN – did not cease in the post-1999 period. Instead, these differences added to renewed friction, fighting and division among East Timorese, thus contributing to political uncertainty. This situation was exacerbated by the ‘abandonment’ of the former nationalist body (CNRT) by
its stakeholders in 2000, and the rise of the increasingly influential opposition group, CPD-RDTL, which refused to recognise the ongoing political process in the country.

Clearly, however, post-1999 East Timor differs somewhat to the situation of some then previous post-colonial situations where different classes seek to play a more active role in the post-colonial state (See Alavi 1973: 145-148). In East Timor, 'class' formation was based on the role played by different groups during the struggle against the colonial force. Different groups, which once constituted the nationalist pact, have attempted to assert their past role and claim consideration on the basis of their contribution to the struggle. The collective sense of nationhood preached and upheld during the years of struggle seems to have faded away along with the achievement of independence. Indeed, the post-1999 political complexity involved issues such as renewed claims of political legitimacy (for example, who contributed most to the achievements of independence), geographical and generational differences, divisions on the basis of language acquisition as well as other past legacy-related conflict. Post-independence East Timor has witnessed the return of different interest groups, including the Timorese diaspora, those who fought to keep the East Timor issue alive internationally during the years of struggle. In addition, old political parties which were active in the 1970s also returned to the political arena with leaders with different ideological orientations. To this social situation must be added the home-stayers such as former guerrillas, former clandestine activists and new university graduates educated in Indonesia who feel that they have a critical stake in independence. Thus, differentiation is not based only on political orientation, geographical origin, generational allegiance and level of education but also on competition between home-stayers and returnees and on the demand for recognition of individuals and groups in the struggle.
These post-independence developments have divided the East Timorese into factions, and contributed to the evaporation of national unity and the sense of nationalism that East Timor's past had been perceived to be about. This has cast doubt on the ideal of unity that the current generation has striven to reclaim. Contemporary East Timorese question whether this unfolding of events in the post-1999 period is what they had been 'promised' during the time of struggle with Indonesia. The symbolic characterisations of people into outsiders/insiders, young/old, educated/illiterate, *firaku/kaladi* and other dualistic distinctions, have come to represent the country, in the post-independence period.

Questioning the strength of *nacionalismo* was what the post-1999 period was all about. With much distortion of the real meaning of democracy, unfulfilled promises about 'national unity' and continuous friction among political parties, party leaders and their supporters impelled the East Timorese to 'revisit' their grasp of *nacionalismo*. While this development might have been the beginning of new preoccupations in the new country or an 'impermanent pause' in citizens' loyalty to the nation following a long but painstaking adherence to *unidade nacional*, the truth is, that East Timorese were brought to a point where, for many, disillusionment and disappointment predominated. Perceptions that once independent, the country would move towards democracy have been tempered by post-1999 events and this has led to questioning the 'faith' in *nacionalismo*.

II. The Way Forward

This thesis has been concerned with the articulation of an historical process whereby East Timor achieved its independence through collective resistance
to colonialism of various forms.¹ In this 'nationalist play', diverse patterns and motivations of political groups and actors were brought together to conjure up the historical past and what the society was going through. Local representation of political history, constructed by the growth of the sense of nacionalismo until East Timor reached independence and subsequent divisions, categorised the development from hun to rohan. The use of a tree metaphor in this thesis to describe events was inspired by my conversations with Domingos Maia, Juvêncio Martins, Antônio da Costa (Aitahan-Matak) and the late João Nunes and many other informants during the course of my fieldwork. This perception of history reflects a 'logic of representation' that is paralleled among societies that rely on dual modes of representation. This way of thinking offers a local reconstruction of the 'logic' of East Timor's past and present as it has unfolded in the events that have shaped the nations' proud history.

Reflecting on the narratives offered by the late João Nunes and Tomas Corrêia, being a continuous process, the representation of hun and rohan illustrates not only the interpretation of history in a dual mode but also represents an unending continuity between past and present. Placing the evolution of nacionalismo and its dynamics in the centre of inquiry, the East Timorese attempt to highlight not only the dynamics in their history but also the hope and opportunity that could lead to change for the better. It is in this context that the reconstruction of past and present/future, and hun and rohan is perceived as a means to embrace a better future, and an expectation that, in the words of João Nunes, aims to 're-establish and repair the distorted branches', or the divisions among the East Timorese.

¹ It should be underlined here that this is neither an attempt to reconstruct the history of the East Timorese struggle, nor an effort to present an overview of history. While this thesis emphasises historical events on Timor, these events were presented to show how contemporary East Timorese perceive their history.
As the presentation in this thesis covers the period of my fieldwork and the period thereafter, events and people's perceptions of them during that period produced not only frustration but also expectations. Many East Timorese are hopeful that reviving the weakened sense of *nacionalismo* and bringing an end to the hitherto uncontrolled extension of the 'branches' in the new nation, will take place. The call for national unity remains a relevant slogan, even once the new government of East Timor came to office. However, an effort to bring East Timorese from diverse social and political backgrounds to be together and united has, unfortunately, yet to materialise. Thus, post-independence East Timor is not in anyway different from the past, except that it is independent.

After 20 May 2002, the country saw very little progress in terms of, as the East Timorese put it, 'mending the existing differences and divisions'. Issues of justice for past atrocities, problems with former combatants, failure to recognise citizens' role in the struggle and ideological differences, in addition to the lack of recognition of the role played by other nationalist factions, seemed to perpetuate the inherited divergences from the past.

Since the hand over of power by the United Nations to a FRETILIN-led government on 20 May 2002, the country has become independent. However, the new government introduced what is locally termed as non-fashinable, although democratically acceptable, approach; that no party apart from FRETILIN retains the mandate to govern the country. Locally, this democratic sense of administering undermined the expected reintroduction of *unidade nacional*, the preface of a perceived broadly based government. The new government emphasised its exclusiveness through centrally managed control, giving no chance for other factions, which shared the same nationalist vision.

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2 As mentioned in chapter I, this thesis concentrates on the time of my fieldwork (1999-2000) and the period leading up to the first election of the local Constituent Assembly (CA) on 30 August 2001, and until the time when the United Nations handed over its power to the new government of East Timor on 20 May 2002.

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to participate in the reconstruction process. This exclusion, although in a sense democratically appropriate by virtue of FRETILIN’s victory in the Constitutional Assembly’s (CA) election in August 2001, which gave it a mandate to govern, overlooked the traditional expectation of ‘building a united front’. To many, the dream of projecting a common vision, where all interested groups – both winners and losers – embraced an unvarying sense of unity is of importance in the first years of independence, arguing that unidade nacional is the prerequisite for the fledging country to develop. This also suggests the need for a concerted effort to mend differences left over from the past and to bring all politically divided factions into a common consensus. Indeed, many East Timorese want to forget the bitter past, revive the sense of nacionalismo and reconstruct a better life.

The failure to recognise such deficiencies in the new state has led to further claims of neglect and the intention to marginalise others, particularly on the part of groups in power. Since most decisions in the post-independence period were identified with leaders’ power, blame on the ‘old generation’, the ‘elite’ and maun-abut is not a surprise. Such decisions were seen as working to the advantage of specific groups thus undermining the efforts played by nationalist forces in the independence struggle, particularly the younger generation. Indeed, political decisions in the post-independence period often worked against what the young generation had expected.

On the language issue, for example, although a reconciliatory tone was advocated, where Portuguese and Tetum served as the official languages of the country³, and thus accommodated the interests of Tetum speakers, the Tetum language was nevertheless at a disadvantage and those who used it were thus also disadvantaged. At this level, post 20 May 2002 is not about

³ See the Constitution of East Timor.
Little has been done to respond to the crisis of *nacionalismo*, which characterised the internationally acclaimed ‘transitional period’ under UNTAET, the time when my fieldwork took place. The continuous ‘recalcitrant’ stance of CPD-RDTL remained unresolved. This group has, since 20 May 2002, successfully recruited many people in the villages in Ossu and other areas of Baucau and continued to resist the current political process. The dissatisfaction of many former combatants also continued to remain unsettled. In addition, re-emergent millenarian-like groups such as the *Sagrada Familia*, *Colimau 2000* and newly establish groups of former combatants such as in Orsnaco in the district of Ainaro and in other parts of East Timor, have added further to the ‘extension of separate branches’ in the
post-independence period. Issues such as generational gap, elite versus non-elite, diaspora versus home-stayers, differences of language capability remain.

Most strikingly, after my several visits to East Timor in the post-power hand over period, the use of kaladi and firaku as a political tool remained. The perpetuation of arguments that only people who belonged to one category fought most in the struggle than the others remained unchanged. The dream of achieving the state of haksolok no dame (happiness and peace, i.e. democracy), as many had dreamt about during the struggle, seemed unachievable at this point of time. The failure to appreciate past differences and reconstruct new cohesive approaches has made the goal of democracy thus far unattainable. This has cast a shadow over people in general. A Catholic priest of kaladi background expressed his sadness when speaking of the unending accusations between the two groups, in a seminar in Gleno, Ermera, in May 2003:

When I heard our brothers and sisters from lorosae [eastern part of East Timor] saying that only firaku fought in the struggle, my heart is hurt. They did not know that 'we' in the western part of this country also invested a lot for this struggle, and many of 'us' died during the war. During the war, many of our comrades [guerrillas] from the east came to us, we cared for them, and we looked after them very well. Many of our sons were also recruited to be part of the guerrillas although they only occupied the lower ranks. We understood that this war was 'ours' and therefore we allowed many of 'us' to die in combat. I am saddened by the fact that only firaku fought in the war.5

Responding to this crisis, in the year 2003, the government of FRETILIN introduced the so-called Open Government (Governo Aberta), a program

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4 One example is the newly established village of Orsnaco, in the sub-district of Turiscai. This village was established along the slopes of Orsnaco village by former combatants and their families, most of whom felt marginalised by the post-independence political process. After a visit by President Xanana in September, the group agreed to recognise the political process in East Timor but remained defiant in relation to the central government.

5 This view was uttered in Gleno by priest, Domingos Soares (known as Amo Maubere) when giving a talk marking the opening of an Agriculture School (ETICA) in May 2003.
which allowed the government to go to every single sub-district in the country to talk directly to the people and to hear their grievances. However, little progress has been made to reconstruct the perceived sense of a common objective. In September 2003, when the President, Xanana Gusmão, undertook a presidential tour in Ossoroa, a village in the district of Viqueque, a member of CPD-RDTL, in a show of defiance, challenged the president and the Constitution of the new nation, and refused to recognise the ongoing political process.\(^6\)

Indeed, the task of mending the existing gaps by attempting to bring together all divided factions – the branches – into a solid national front remains a work in progress in terms of the historical continuity of the country. These efforts have been unsuccessful due to the lack of understanding of local traditional differences and the failure to recognise the factors behind such differences.

The dream of recalling the past sense of Timor nacionalismo, is not a mere slogan but reflects the need to bring a long-lasting peace to the nation as whole. Such an imagining constitutes the dream of independence, personified in the image of a tree having its branches attached tightly to the fundamental principles of the new nation (unity) and not spreading all around, serving as the breeding ground of further division. Indeed, East Timor is crumbling out of a troubled past, a past where the painful establishment of the sense of nacionalismo encountered both challenges and bitterness. Expectation that the country needs to hold to its main principles of nationhood – the tree that stands strong, unshaken by the troubled winds – remains high to many East Timorese. It might take some years for this hope to materialise, and certainly it forms part of an uncertain process. However, it is likely that the cultural representation of, hun to rohan, (lit., origin and end) will continue to express

\(^6\) This scene was captured in the footage of the Dili TV (TVTL) on 22 of September 2003, when the president toured the villages of Ossoroa and Waguia in the District of Viqueque several days earlier.
the dynamics of the 'symmetrical continuity' towards a better life, a notion that has prevailed in the thinking of different generations East Timorese.
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Aniceto Lopes  
Aniceto Neves  
António Aitahan Matak  
António Guterres  
Avelino Coelho  
Cirilo José Cristovao  
Cristiano da Costa  
Domingos Maia  
Emilia Pires  
Eusebio (French teacher)  
Evaristo Soares  
Feliciano Mau Siri Alvês  
Francisco Cepeda  
Francisco da Silva  
Gregorio Saldanha  
Humberto (Liurai)  
Inez Almeida  
Jacinto Maia  
James J. Fox  
Januario da Silva  
Joaquim da Costa Babo  
Joaquim Fonseca  
João Baptista  
João Noronha  
João Nunes  
José Antonio Lorenzo da Costa  
José Antonio Neves  
José Aparicio  
José Celestino (Jenito) da G. do Carmo  
José Luis Guterres  
José Luis de Oliveira

(loc: Dili, org: Liquiça)
(loc: Canberra, org: Baucau)
(loc: Dili, org: Liquiça)
(loc: Dili, org: Maliana)
(loc: Dili, org: Suai)
(loc: Sydney, org: Baucau)
(loc: Dili, org: Maliana)
(loc: Dili, org: Same)
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