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BRANCHING FROM THE TRUNK:

East Timorese Perceptions of Nationalism in Transition

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PART TWO

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

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.³ 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 2000: 56).

Soon after the announcement of the referendum result, once again, Indonesian military backed militia groups reacted by burning, looting and

³ Indonesia invaded militarily on 7 December 1975 under the covert *operasi komodo* and annexed it formally on 16 July 1976. For in depth analysis see Jolliffe (1978) and Dunn (1996).

killing more than one thousand people, while more than 250,000 people fled,⁴ or were forcefully driven, into Indonesian West Timor⁵ in the aftermath of the referendum.⁶ 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.

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

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

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

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 pátria 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’,⁹ 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

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)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).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 *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

¹³ After the Carnation Revolution in Portugal which overthrew the António de Oliveira Salazar and António de Spínola 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.

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 *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.



Plate 4.1: Members of Yayasan HAK, meeting to discuss programs (Photo: Author).

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.¹⁵ 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.

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 *firaku* 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*, *Mausanak*, *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.

of collaboration.¹⁷ 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.¹⁸ 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

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 power¹⁹ 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).²⁰ 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.²¹ 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 *hun/abut* and *rohan* causes of the contradiction.²²

First and foremost was the accusation by traditional non-FRETILIN political parties (UDT, APODETI, KOTA and Trabalhista) that FRETILIN killed many

²¹ Proponents of this view argue that only FRETILIN fought for independence while other political parties abandoned the resistance and opted to collaborate with the enemy such as Portugal and Indonesia (Pers. Comm. António da Costa, Aitahan Matak, March 2000).

²² This is an interesting issue. Among my various discussions with political activists in Yayasan HAK and SIL, there was a common agreement that the friction during the years of struggle was the cause of existing differences in the post-1999 period. The point is, as we will see later in this chapter, that the existing symbolic differences were rooted very much in individual and group differences among resistance groups in the 1980s.

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).²³ 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.²⁴ 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).²⁵ 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.²⁶ 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

²⁵ I had a chance to talk to João Baptista who was a strong supporter of integration with Indonesia 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-Referendo*, 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".²⁷ 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)

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.

weapons²⁸, 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

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 politicised 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,³¹ 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).³² 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 (CNRN) 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).



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

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.³⁵ 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

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 Gusmão, contends that Kilik Wae Gae was killed by the group in which Xanana was a member.³⁶ The second position maintains that Kilik Wae Gae was killed during combat by the advancing Indonesian forces.³⁷

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).³⁸ 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 (Gusmão 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.³⁹ 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 *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.

³⁹ 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 *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.

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 *mestiços* (Traube 1986).⁴⁰ 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,⁴¹ an issue which continues to be a source of contemporary conflict and division in East Timor politics.

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>> entitled *Dúvidas e Esclarecimentos* (Doubts and Explanations). The then Bishop Carlos Filipe Ximenes Belo made a statement in a Portuguese newspaper *Diário de Notícias* 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).

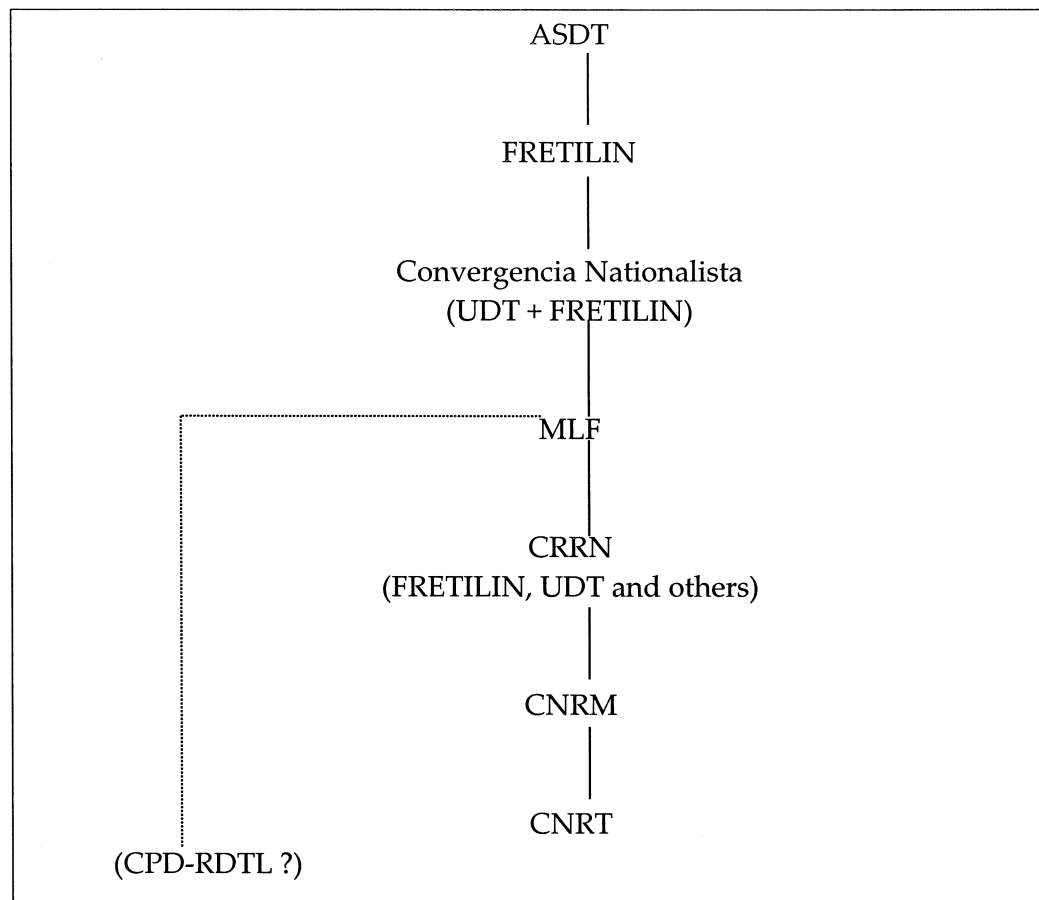


Figure 4.1: The evolution of the resistance. Note that since the change/transformation of MLF into, or establishment of, CRRN, the opponents of this transformation, as shown by the dotted line, were marginalized and only reappeared in the post-1999 as CPD-RDTL.

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 Guterres 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, Abilio 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 Abilio 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

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 censored, 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 *Organisação da Juventude Católica de Timor Leste* (OJECTIL) which later became *Organisação da Juventude de Timor Leste* (OJETIL), *Frente Iha Timor Unidos Nafatin* (FITUN or lit., star) and *Organisação Popular Juventude Lorico 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 Nacional da Resistência Timorese* (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. Juvêncio 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 Democrático* (PSD), *Klibur Oan Timor Ass'wain* (KOTA), *Trabalhista* (the Labour party), *APODETI Pro-Referendo*, *União Democrática Cristã/ Partido Democrático Cristão* (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.

This group included *Conselho Pela Defesa-Republica Democrática de Timor Leste* (CPD-RDTL), *Partido Nacionalista de Timor* (PNT), *Partido Popular de Timor* (PPT) and *Associação Social Democrática 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 Democrático Cristão* (PDC, different from UDC/PDC) and three newcomers, *Partido Democrático 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. Every one 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 Luís Gonzaga (Dili), António Guterres (Ermera), Luís 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 Timorence*) 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 letters 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 Dionísio 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.⁴ 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

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

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 Lázaru 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.⁹ 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

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 MFL 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.

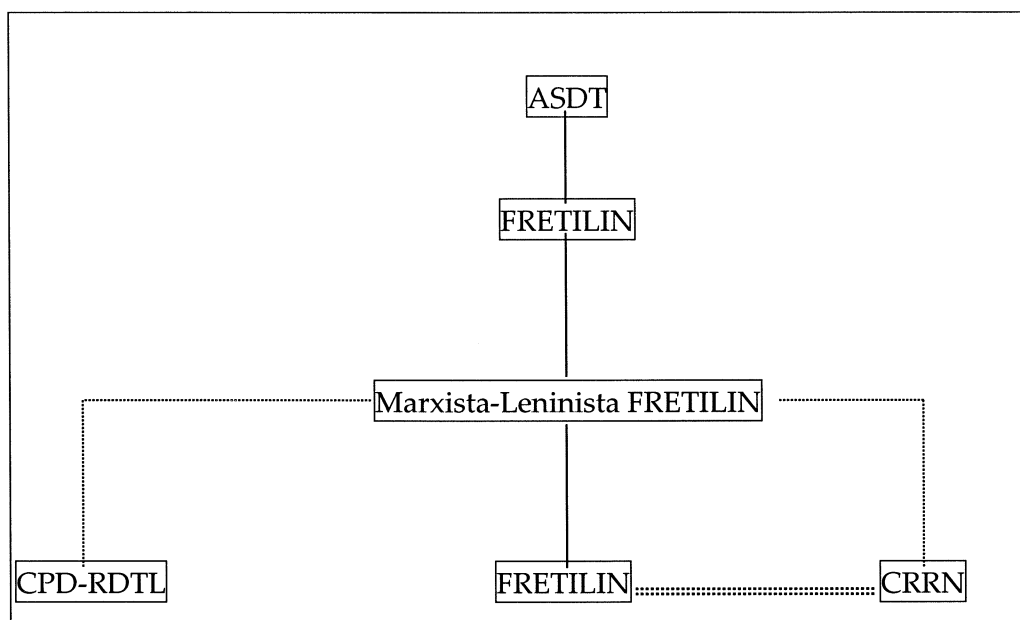


Figure 5.1: The reorganisation/transformation of the resistance body. Solid black lines show direct changes whereas single dotted lines show readjustment or changes into new forms. The double dotted line shows continuing support from FRETILIN to CRRN.

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.



Plate 5.1: Xanana, Huno and Hudo while still in the jungle as guerrillas (Photo: Unknown).

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.

Selected Leaders of Dissent Groups After the Establishment of CRRN		
CRRN	FRETILIN Supporting CRRN	FRETILIN Opposed to CRRN
• José Alexandre Xanana Gusmão • José Ramos-Horta* • Non-FRETILIN political party leaders	• Hudo Ran Kadalak • Ma-Huno • Konis Santana • Lu-Olo • José Luis Guterres* • Mari Alkatiri*	• Alarico Fernandes • Kilik Wae Gae • Mauk Moruk • Olo-Gari • Abilio Araujo* • Rogerio Lobato*

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).

No	Political Party	Leader (Former Residence)	Period
I	FRETILIN	Mari Alkatiri: (Mozambique) Lu-Olo: (East Timor) Abilio Araújo Rogerio Lobato: (Mozambique and Portugal) Jose Luis Guterres: (Mozambique, Portugal and South Africa) Ana Pessoa (Mozambique) Abel 'Larisina' Ximenes: (East Timor)	1974 – Present 1974 – Present 1974 – Now 1974 – Present 1974 – Present 1974 – Present 1974 – Present
II	UDT	João Carrascalão: (Australia) Domingos Oliveira: (Australia) Aleixo Ximenes: (East Timor)	1974 – Present 1974 – Present 1974 – Present
III	APODETI	Frederico Almeida: (East Timor) Laurentino: (East Timor) Vicente Tilman: (East Timor)	1974 – Present 1974 – Present 1974 – Present
IV	Trabalhista	Paulo da Silva: (East Timor)	1974 – Present
V	KOTA	Leão do Amaral: (East Timor) Clementino Amaral: (East Timor, Indonesia)- Manuel Tilman: (Portugal, Macau)	1974 – Present 1974 – Present 1974 – Present

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.

No	Original Political Party	New Political Party	Names of Leaders
I	UDT	Partido Social Democrático de Timor	Mario Carrascalão Leandro Isac Agio Perreira
II	FRETILIN	ASDT	Francisco Xavier-Amaral Feliciano Alvês (Mau-Siri) Cristiano da Costa
III	FRETILIN	Partido Democrático	Fernando Araújo Constâncio Pinto Lucas da Costa
IV	FRETILIN	CPD-RDTL (Movement)	Olo Gári Asswain António da Costa Feliciano Alvês (Mau-Siri) Cristiano da Costa
V	FRETILIN	Partido Socialista	Avelino Coelho
VI	FRETILIN	Partido Nationalista Timor (PNT)	Abilio Araújo Aliança Araújo
VII	FRETILIN	Independent	José Alexandre Gusmão José Ramos-Horta

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 Timorence (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 *República 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.¹² 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

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 – Republica 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.¹³ 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

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-Matak.

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.¹⁵ 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.

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.¹⁶ 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*.

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 Político 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).¹⁹

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

¹⁹ It is very common in East Timor to accuse the old political parties such as UDT, APODETI, KOTA and *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.

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:

²⁰ See *Lalenok Edisaun 18/Tinan I*, 25 September – 2 Oct. 2000, a weekly newspaper bulletin in Tetum, 'Conselho Permanent CNRT/CN Halo Juramento, FRETILIN & UDT la Partisipa'.

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 citizen, 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 had been established just before the May 5th Accord (*Suara Timor Lorosae* 7 November 2001).

publicity in the media.²³ 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.²⁴ 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).²⁵ 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

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.²⁶ '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).²⁷ 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 tatís 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 Nasaun ne'e tenki iha uluk lai (Declaração 28 Novembro 1975) Depois mak fahe partido	So too, (the quest for) Independence This country should be recognised first (Declaration 28 November 1975) Only then, political parties may be set up
Cidadaun 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 The winner would be the government of East Timor (Pers. Comm. Antonio Aitahan Matak, March 1999).

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

twenty four years.²⁸ 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.²⁹ 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

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).

'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.

- 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).³² 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 (*nom de guerre*), and commander Paulino Gama, known by his *nom de guerra*

³² 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.

as Mauk Moruk (Gusmão 1998: 98-9).³³ 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.³⁴ 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.³⁵ 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 Mauk Moruk 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.³⁶ 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.³⁷ 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

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.³⁸ 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).³⁹

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

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.⁴⁰ 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.⁴¹ 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.⁴²

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

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 más 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.⁴³ 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).⁴⁴

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

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 Matak 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, Abilio 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.

⁴⁷ See comments by Sergio Vieira de Mello, UN special representative in East Timor, to Portugal News Agency, *LUSA* on 12 October 2001.

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 Matak, 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 Luis Guterres then assumed the authority for the FRETILIN's external delegation.



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

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.⁴⁹ Abilio Araújo seems to have developed a close relationship with CPD-RDTL.

⁴⁹ I was told that some members of the current CPD-RDTL such as Cristiano da Costa, Feliciano Alvês (Mau-Siri) and Antonio Aitahan Matak also joined PNT in the past (Pers. Comm. José Luis Olivêira 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 *Confêrencia 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 1975.⁵¹ 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.⁵²

- 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

⁵¹ 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.

⁵² 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.

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).

⁵³After 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

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 *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 ida ita la hein*).

This chapter introduces these changes of perception towards *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

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.² 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 Lorico Asswain*, *Organisasão Popular Juventude Lorico 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

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".³ He had always expected that political independence would be an era

³ The Tetum version of António's statement is, "*ita ba tos mos ladiak, ba ku kafe mos ladiak. Tropaz sira hanoin ita ba buka maun alin sira iha ai-laran atu contacto. Ossan laiha tamba servico ladiak*" (Pers. Comm. 25 January 2000).

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.⁴ 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

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.⁵ 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 koaliala 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.

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 Luís 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.

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.

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 refuge 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 fledgling 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

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

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.¹²

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

¹² 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.

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 (see 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.¹³ 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.¹⁴ 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 1999.¹⁵ 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,

¹⁶ During the election of the Constitutional Assembly, I went back to East Timor as an 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>

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.¹⁸ 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.¹⁹ For the ordinary East Timorese and political activists, the political division, conflict and threat of war were understood as

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).



Plate 6.3: CPD-RDTL commemorate the proclamation of independence of 28 November 1975 (Photo: Author).

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:

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 Alkatari'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 Alkatari as 'fake' (Pers. Comm. Cristiano da Costa, January 2000). Alkatari 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 Lorsaе 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:

Funu halo-halo	The war made
Aman ho oan	Fathers and children
Maun ho Alin	Elder and younger siblings
Oho fali malu	kill each other
Ema-boot sira ne diak	It is good for the leaders
Sira nian liras naruk	Their wings are long
Sira hakat luan	Their steps are large
Sira bele semo	They can fly
Sira bele halai	They can run
Bainhira funu mosu	If there is war
Maibe ami nebe kiik	Yet, we the small people
Ami nebe kiak	We, the poor
Funu, ami mak terus	Should there be war, we suffer
Ami mak susar	We are impoverished
Ami mak mate	We are the one who die. ²⁰

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

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.²¹ 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,	As if it is a house
Ita nia rain	Our country
tenki iha kuarto atu tau kama,	Needs a bedroom to place a bed
kama ema atu toba,	The bed is for people to sleep on
mas tenki iha kadeira,	But it (also) needs chairs
atu ema tur ho mos	For people to sit on
meza atu tau ai-han	A table to put the food on (Pers. Comm. Dili 25 January 2000).

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.²² 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.²³ 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

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.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.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 *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

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).

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 Release, UNDP 12 July 2001.

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 out 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. Comm. March 2000).

ida). 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 it 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 *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” (*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 *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” (Pers. Comm. Aniceto Neves, Yayasan HAK, November 2000).

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 Luis Guterres and Roque 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.

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”.³ 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.



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

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

³ Among the names cited were Nicolau Lobato (first leader of the resistance) and other guerrilla commanders such as Vicente Reis (*nom de guerre*, Sahe), Mau 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.

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.⁴ 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

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 foinsae* (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'.



Plate 7.2: Background view of FRETILIN conference, 15-20 May 2000 (Photo: Author).

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 foinsae* '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

possessed more knowledge than the younger generation. As people of a certain category, they were 'superior' to others.⁸

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', *ema-boot/labarik* 'adult/kid', or *kaben-nain/klosan* 'married/single',⁹ 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

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

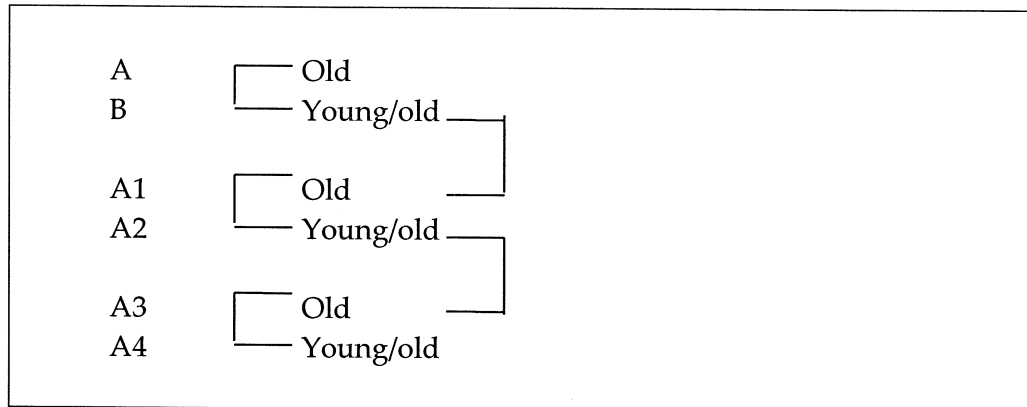


Figure 7.1: Loose definition of old and young. Fox (1989) describes this relation as 'recursive asymmetry' in his paper "Category and Complement: Binary Ideologies and The Organisation of Dualism in Eastern Indonesia".

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.¹⁰ 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 1974-1975 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.

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

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 *katuas* (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.¹⁴ 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

¹⁴ Personal Communication with Juvencio Martins, 12 September 2000, Gregorio Saldanha, 10 November 2000. See also D Nicholson (2001).

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).¹⁵

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

¹⁵ See G. Cunha (2001) 'Kebiasaan Militer Indonesia Membuat Saya Frustrasi' (The Cruelty of Indonesian Military Frustrated me), Interview with Gregorio Saldanha in *Cidadaun III/2001:12*.

¹⁶ Fernando de Araújo, 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.

- *Organização da Juventude Católica 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:
- *Organização 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 'rebellling' 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 *Juvêntude 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, leaned 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 Foinsae 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

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 Lorosae 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).²⁰

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.²¹ 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 Aparicio, 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.²⁴ 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.²⁵ 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-

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>.

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

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.

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

Table 7.2: Association of Groups According to Old/New Generations category.

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.

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,³⁰ 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)³¹ 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 *Catecismo 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 (Corrêia 1934). "This college was responsible for training all of *mestre-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

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.

³¹ Gavin W. Jones (2000) 'East Timor-Education and Human Resource Development' in James Fox and Babo-Soares (eds) (2000).

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

³² Portuguese media, *Diario Notícias*, *Ó Publico* and *Jornadas*, July 2000.

the East Timorese and God. This refers to the fact that, according to this generation, it was through Portuguese 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*.³³ 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.³⁴

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).

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.

instruction.³⁶ 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.³⁷ 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.³⁸

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.

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.

³⁸ Pers. Comm. Lotus, a student of former *Universitas Timor Timur* and member of DSMPTT, 25 August 2001.

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.⁴¹ 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.⁴² 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

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).

than people of 'his generation' (*klosan, foinsae, geração foun*).⁴³ 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.⁴⁴ Yayasan HAK later published a weekly bulletin in *Bahasa* Indonesia called *Cidadaun* (lit., from Portuguese *Cidadão* 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:

Povu Koalia Tetum	The people speak Tetum
Klosan koalia Tetum	The Youth speak Tetum
Karau-Atan,	(animal) Herders
Katuas fán modo	(vegetable) Sellers
Ferik sira servico iha natar	Old ladies who work in the rice-fields
Hotu-hotu koalia Tetum	All speak Tetum
Hotu la hatene Português	None speak Portuguese ⁴⁵

⁴³ Pers. Comm. Miguel Manutelo, General Secretary of RENETIL, during the CNRT's conference on 22 August 2000.

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:

Boot sira ne'e	These leaders
Nebe foti	Whom we respect
Hanai sira	Whom we revered (so much)
Nebe uluk temi sira nia naran	Whose names we used to mention

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.

Ikus mai, soe hela ita, Hadók an husi ita Lakohi besik ita, maski ita bolu	Have left us Have abandoned us Do not want to approach us, although we invite (them to come)
Atu fo-sái sira nia hakarak Halo sasan tuir sira nia hakarak	to explain their intentions (to us) (they) Make decisions to suit their interest
Haluhan tiha ita, foinsae nebe fo isin no ran	(they) Forget us, the youth who gave their bodies and blood
Hodi terus tó mate	To suffer unto death
Uluk sira precisa ita Uluk sira hakarak ita Ikus ne'e sira soe ita La temi tan ita nia naran	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 'diaspora' 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

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.

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.⁵⁰ 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 foin 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

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 of 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 *houru 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

⁵² Pers. Comm with Alipio Baltazar and Eusebio, East Timorese refugees in Darwin, Australia, September 1999.

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.⁵³ 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),¹ 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

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.² 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.³

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., *ai*, 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

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.⁴ 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',⁵ 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 (*báassar*) in Dili (Pers. Comm. Tomas Corrêia, Vemassi 10 November 2000).⁶ 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

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.



Plate 8.1: Traditional Market in Dili in 2000 (Photo: James J. Fox).

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.⁷ 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

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).⁸

<i>Kaladi</i> – Western	<i>Firaku</i> – Eastern
Dili Aileu Ainaro Same Ermera, Bobonaro, Suai, Liquiça and, Oecussi, known also as Ambeno	Manatuto Baucau Lospalos Viqueque

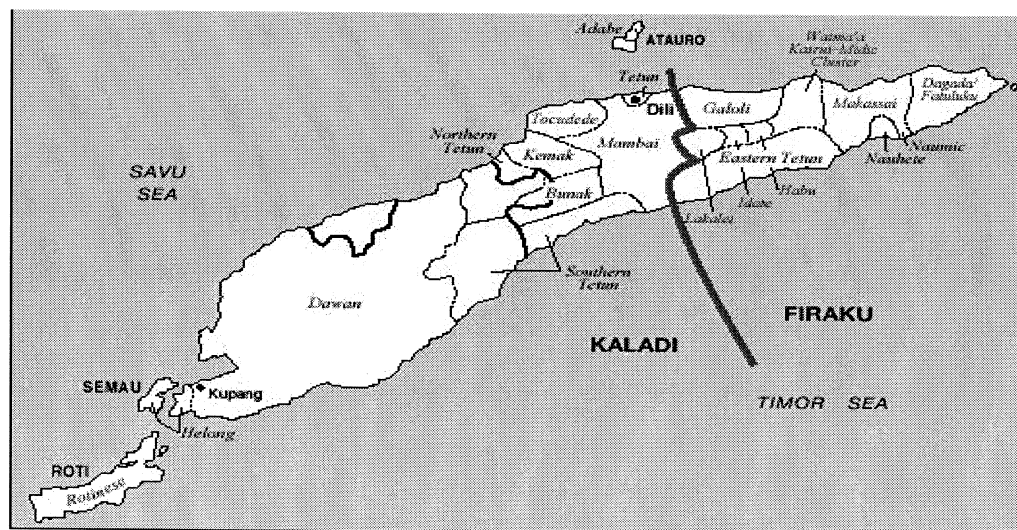
Table 8.1: The Districts associated with *firaku* and *kaladi* stereotypes.

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.

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.



Map 8.1: Districts Associated with *Firaku* and *Kaladi* (Source: Courtesy of Prof. James J. Fox)

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.⁹

⁹ 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 *ema-liur* (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. Juvêncio Martins, September 2000). Further, they have been developed into stereotypes that separate antagonistic political groups following years of 'resistance' to 'occupation'.



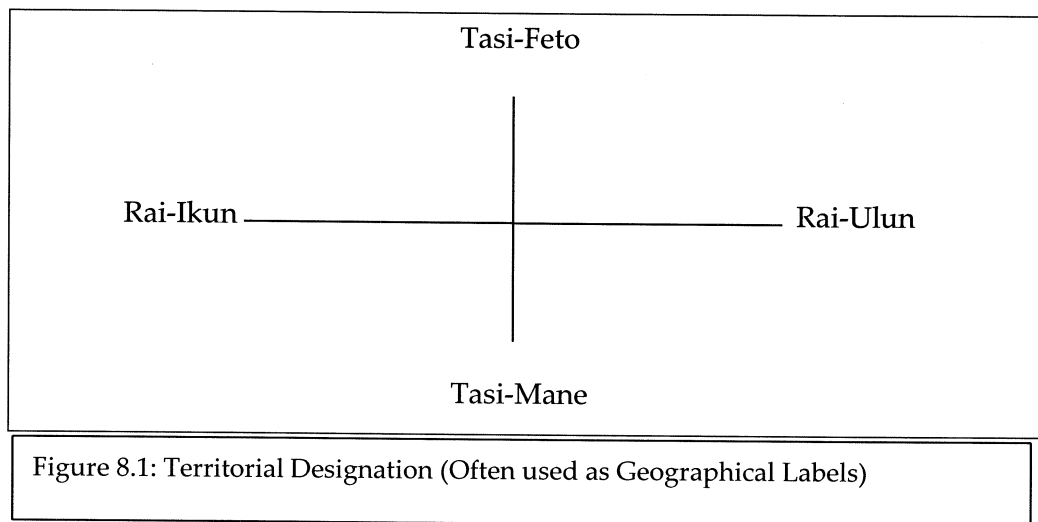
Plate 8.2: Graffiti carrying political slogans in Manatuto (Photo: Author)

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.



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.

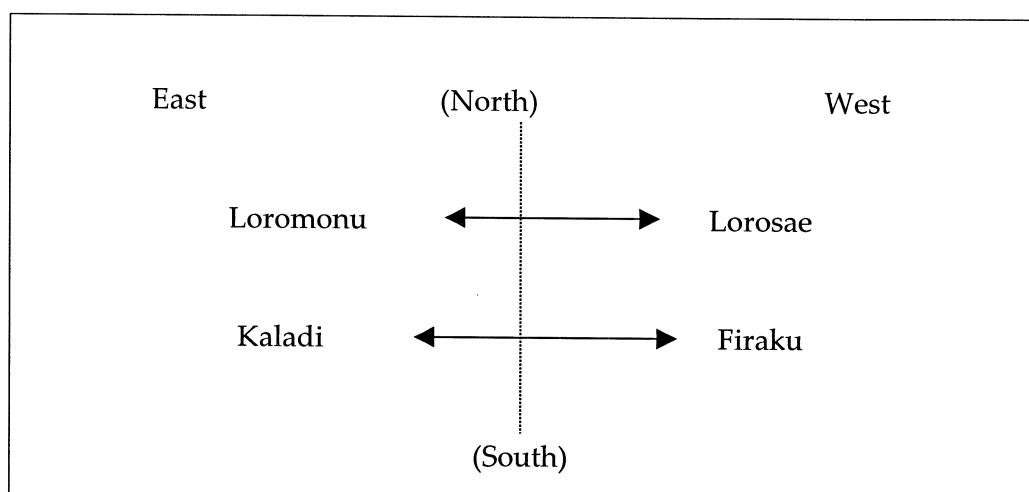


Figure 8.2: Geographically based stereotypes.

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.¹²

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.¹³ 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 out 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 casualties 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,

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. Juvêncio 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

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.¹⁷ 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".¹⁸

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

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).

¹⁸ "Battered Society on the Brink", in *The Sydney Morning Herald*, January 20, 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 Pátria 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

and Liquiça, all on the basis of the disputes that occurred in Dili. Likewise, the *kaladi-firaku* stereotyped divisions frequently led members of ghettos to fight and challenge each other in the streets.

Kaladi	Firaku	Both
Manleuana Bairo Pite Bebonuk Manumeta-Rai-hun	Delta Quintal Boot Quintal Kiik Komoro Mota Ulun	Becora, Kuluhun Caicoli Bebora Comoro Vila Verde

Table 8.2: Division of settlements in Dili into *firaku/kaladi*, in 1999-2002. Note that not all settlements are listed here.

- *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 *firaku* and *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, *firaku* and *kaladi*.

Indeed, appearing in public with particular attributes of either *firaku* or *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, *firaku* or *kaladi*'.¹⁹ Others, although agreeing that a broader range of nationalistic

¹⁹ Confidential communication with a political activist who prefers to remain anonymous, Dili, March 2000.

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

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 Australia (Pers. Comm. Abel Guterres, September 2001).

²¹ This view was uttered by Agapito Cardoso and Vitorino Cardoso. Agapito is originally from Suai and Vitorino is from Bobonaro, the two districts which are located along the border with West Timor (Pers. Comm. 28 March 2000).

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.²² 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.²³ 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

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".²⁶

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

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. Houru 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

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 guerra*), 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.²⁹ 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.

Uluk funu nia laran	During the war
Funu halao liu iha lorosae	The resistance took place in the east
<i>Firaku</i> mak funu liu	The <i>firaku</i> 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. ³⁰

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

²⁹ 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.

³⁰ 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).

support of the party.³¹ 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 refugee 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 *lorosa'e* 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

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 Laksaur 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 Timorese](http://joseramelau.tripod.com/diaspora%20Timorese). The original Tetum version is: *Situasaun iha Dili bele dehan katak*

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 *Sagrada Familia*. The

ladiak, povo barak hela iha tauk nia laran, problema barak akontese iha dili, lideres politiko sira dun malu. [I]ha bairo becora, taibesi sabaraka laran horseik kalan ema sunu uma ho ema ida mate, povo barak maka sai hosi uma ba hela iha igreja becora tamba tauk. To agora situasaun iha bairo becora sei dauk aman. "bairo manleu ana" dia 1 january ema 3 maka mate attack gang loro sa'e ho loro monu. [P]roblema nee bele dehan katak odi malu firaku lorosa'e kontra loro monu se governo la halo reasaun lalais o buat sira nee e neneik ema bele oho malu barak liu tan iha dili laran [firaku vs Loromonu]. Kalan kalan ami la toba tamba tauk ema atu ataca, ami mos tauk loz iha Dili.

³⁵ See also *Cidadaun*, 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).

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'.³⁹ 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.⁴⁰ 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.⁴¹ 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.

... [V]eteran 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).



Plate 8.4: Former FALINTIL members, later to be FDTL (Photo: Unknown).

Rees explained that even after independence, factionalism within the East Timorese political community was undeniable.⁴² 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 oriented 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. Now, we can rule

ourselves" (Pers. Comm. Paulino Monteiro, March 2000). The past remains a point of departure when any discussion of current success (in achieving independence) comes under scrutiny.

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, António 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.² 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- fashionable, 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

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.

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 fledgling 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.

differences, but as many cynically claim, the imposition of political discrimination by those in power.

PRESIDENT XANANA MEETS WITH ISOLATED GROUP

STL-Dili, - On Monday President Xanana Gusmao made a visit to the Sub District of Turiscai, District of Ainaro. President Xanana was accompanied by the Vice President of the National Parliament, Mr Francisco Xavier do Amaral, the Deputy SRSG, Mr Sukehiro Hasegawa, Vice Minister for Development and Environment, Mr Abel Ximenes, and the Commander of the first F-FDTL battalion, Let Col Falur Rate Laek. President Xanana met with Former Combatants of the Orsnaco Base (ACBO) in the mountains of Orsnaco, Turiscai Sub-District.

Before the President's scheduled visit, there were rumours that if President Xanana came to Orsnaco he would be killed, however the reality showed the contrary. There are groups of former combatants and people coming from all corners of Timor-Leste (more than one thousand) to gather at Orsnaco. They are isolating themselves from the rest of the country by setting up their structures and forming their own agriculture cooperatives. According to the group's leader, Marcos da Costa, after Timor-Leste gained its independence they did not get any attention from the Government.

He said, he took the initiative to concentrate people in the Orsnaco Mountains by organising them into agriculture cooperatives for their subsistence. Mr Costa said that his group is not the same as the CPD-RDTL.

Table 9.1 *Suara Timor Lorosae* (19 September 2003) version of Orsnaco after President Xanana visited that location in September 2003.

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 Família*, *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.⁴ 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

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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Personal Communication

Selected names of people – in alphabetical order – with whom the author held various conversations and discussions during fieldwork and cited in the thesis.

Remarks: *loc*: location of interview and *org*: place of origin.

Abel dos Santos	(<i>loc</i> : Dili, <i>org</i> : Liquiça)
Abel Guterres	(<i>loc</i> : Canberra, <i>org</i> : Baucau)
Abito dos Santos	(<i>loc</i> : Dili, <i>org</i> : Liquiça)
Aderito Jesus Soares	(<i>loc</i> : Dili, <i>org</i> : Maliana)
Agapito Cardoso	(<i>loc</i> : Dili, <i>org</i> : Suai)
Alipio Baltazar	(<i>loc</i> : Sydney, <i>org</i> : Baucau)
Aniceto Lopes	(<i>loc</i> : Dili, <i>org</i> : Maliana)
Aniceto Neves	(<i>loc</i> : Dili, <i>org</i> : Same)
António Aitahan Matak	(<i>loc</i> : Dili, <i>org</i> : Ossu Viqueque)
António Guterres	(<i>loc</i> : Dili, <i>org</i> : Ermera)
Avelino Coelho	(<i>loc</i> & <i>org</i> : Dili)
Cirilo José Cristovao	(<i>loc</i> : Dili, <i>org</i> : Lospalos)
Cristiano da Costa	(<i>loc</i> : Dili, <i>org</i> : Baucau)
Domingos Maia	(<i>loc</i> : Dili, <i>org</i> : Letefoho)
Emilia Pires	(<i>loc</i> : Dili, <i>org</i> : Melbourne)
Eusebio (French teacher)	(<i>loc</i> : Sydney, <i>org</i> : Same)
Evaristo Soares	(<i>loc</i> & <i>org</i> : Ermera)
Feliciano Mau Siri Alvês	(<i>loc</i> & <i>org</i> : Dili)
Francisco Cepeda	(<i>loc</i> : Dili, <i>org</i> : Same)
Francisco da Silva	(<i>loc</i> : Dili, <i>org</i> : Viqueque)
Gregorio Saldanha	(<i>loc</i> & <i>org</i> : Dili)
Humberto (<i>Liurai</i>)	(<i>loc</i> & <i>org</i> : Makadiki, Watolari)
Inez Almeida	(<i>loc</i> : Dili, <i>org</i> : Sydney)
Jacinto Maia	(<i>loc</i> : Dili, <i>org</i> : Letefoho-Ermera)
James J. Fox	(<i>loc</i> & <i>org</i> : Canberra)
Januario da Silva	(<i>loc</i> : Dili, <i>org</i> : Baucau)
Joaquim da Costa Babo	(<i>loc</i> : Dili, <i>org</i> : Ermera)
Joaquim Fonseca	(<i>loc</i> : Dili, <i>org</i> : Lospalos)
João Baptista	(<i>loc</i> and <i>org</i> : Lospalos)
João Noronha	(<i>loc</i> : Dili, <i>org</i> : Viqueque)
João Nunes	(<i>loc</i> : Dili, <i>org</i> : Manutasi Ainaro)
José Antonio Lorenzo da Costa	(<i>loc</i> & <i>org</i> : Dili)
José Antonio Neves	(<i>loc</i> and <i>org</i> : Ermera)
José Aparicio	(<i>loc</i> & <i>org</i> : Baucau)
José Celestino (Jenito) da G. do Carmo	(<i>loc</i> : Dili, <i>org</i> : Atsabe)
José Luis Guterres	(<i>loc</i> : Canberra & <i>org</i> : Viqueque)
José Luis de Oliveira	(<i>loc</i> & <i>org</i> : Dili)

José Ramos-Horta	(loc: Sydney, org: Dili)
Julio Alfaro	(loc: Dili, org: Viqueque)
Juvêncio Martins	(loc & org: Dili)
Lázaru (HAK)	(loc: Dili, org: Maliana)
Leão (HAK)	(loc: Dili, org: Maliana)
Luís Gonzaga Soares	(loc: Dili, org: Viqueque)
Luis Soares	(loc and org: Punilala Ermera)
Lu-Olo (Francisco Guterres)	(loc: Dili, org: Ossu-Viqueque)
Manuel Exposto	(loc & org: Dili)
Manuel Tilman	(loc: Dili, org: Ainaro)
Marcos Amaral	(loc: Dili, org: Viqueque)
Mateus Soares	(loc & org: Viqueque)
Mau-Nana Kaer-O-Mate	(loc: Dili, org: Lospalos)
Miguel Manutelo	(loc: Dili, org: Maliana)
Moises (<i>Lia Nain</i>)	(loc & org: Makadiki, Watolari)
Napoleão da Silva	(loc: Dili, org: Holarua-Same)
Nugroho Kacasungkana	(loc: Dili, org: Indonesia)
Nuno Hanjan	(loc: Dili, org: Ermera)
Olandina Cairo	(loc: Dili, org: Ermera)
Olo-Gari Asswain	(loc & org: Baucau)
Oscar da Silva	(loc: Dili, org: Viqueque)
Otávio da Conceição	(loc: Dili, org: Lospalos)
Paulino Monteiro	(loc & org: Ermera)
Paulo Amaral	(loc: Dili, org: Viqueque)
Rui Perreira	(loc: Dili, org: Maliana)
Rui Viana	(loc: Dili, org: Baucau)
Sabika (a Falintil commander)	(loc: Dili, org: Viqueque)
Saturnino de Jesus Soares	(loc: Dili, org: Ermera)
Teresa Maria de Carvalho	(loc: Dili, org: Baucau)
Titi Herawati	(loc: Dili, org: Indonesia)
Tomas Corrêa	(loc & org: Vemasse)
Rocke Kolir (Jacinto Viegas Vicente)	(loc: Dili org: Cailaco)
Ricardo Ribeiro	(loc: Dili, org: Baucau)
Rosa (DSMPTT)	(loc: Dili, org: Dili)
Vasco da Gama (Criado)	(loc: Dili, org: Baucau)
Vicente Faria	(loc: Dili, org: Same)
Vitorino Cardoso	(loc: Dili, org: Maliana)
Victória dos Santos	(loc & org: Liquiça)