TIMORESE NATIONALISM: A BLESSING AND A CURSE

Mr. Oystein Solvang

สถาบันวิทยบริการ
จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

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นายออยสไตน์ ซอลแวง

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By	Mr. Oystein Solvang
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Thesis Advisor	Associate Professor Withaya Sucharithanarugse, Ph.D.

Accepted by the Graduate School, Chulalongkorn University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Master's Degree

…… Dean of the Graduate School
(Assistant Professor M.R. Kalaya Tingsabadh, Ph.D.)

THESIS COMMITTEE

……. Chairman
(Dhiravat na Pombejra, Ph.D.)

……. Thesis Advisor
(Associate Professor Withaya Sucharithanarugse, Ph.D.)

……. Member
(Assistant Professor Theera Nuchpiam, Ph.D.)

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จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

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วิทยานิพนธ์ฉบับนี้ ศึกษาแนวคิดเรื่องชาติและชาตินิยมของติมอร์ตะวันออก งานชิ้นนี้ได้ตั้งสมมติฐานเอาไว้ว่า การผูกขาดอำนาจเป็นผลมาจากลักษณะจำเพาะของลัทธิชาตินิยมของติมอร์ตะวันออก วิธีการที่ใช้ทดสอบสมมติฐานนี้อาศัยแหล่งข้อมูลทุติยภูมิอันได้แก่ หนังสือและบทความที่เกี่ยวกับประวัติการเมืองของติมอร์ตะวันออก รวมทั้งข้อเขียนที่ได้จากอินเตอร์เน็ตทั้งขององค์กรเอกชนและของรัฐบาล ของสหประชาชาติ นักวิชาการ และหนังสือพิมพ์ กรอบความคิดหลักที่สำคัญก็คือทฤษฎีที่ว่าด้วย ลัทธิชาตินิยม ชาติ และอุดมการณ์ ตลอดจนทฤษฎีของ เบเนดิค แอนเดอร์สัน ว่าด้วย “ชุมชนในความคิดคำนึง”

การถูกปกครองโดยอาณานิคมเป็นเวลาหลายศตวรรษ เป็นสิ่งช่วยอธิบายการก่อกำเนิดชุมชนในความคิดคำนึงของติมอร์ตะวันออก แม้ขบวนการต่อต้านของคนติมอร์ปฏิเสธลัทธิอาณานิคม แต่ก็ยังต้องยอมรับความเป็นชุมชนในความคิดคำนึงที่โปรตุเกสได้สร้างขึ้น พรรคชาตินิยมคือเฟรติลิน ได้กำหนดและผูกขาดแนวคิดเรื่องชาตินิยม ลักษณะเฉพาะของลัทธิชาตินิยมติมอร์ รวมทั้งประเด็นเรื่องปวงชนนิยม และความคิดแบบมาร์กซ์ จึงได้รับการพัฒนาขึ้นมา คำแถลงและนโยบายของพรรคชี้ชัดถึงความตั้งใจอันแน่วแน่ที่จะเป็นตัวแทนอันชอบธรรมของประชาชนแต่เพียงผู้เดียว อุดมการณ์อันนี้นำไปสู่สงครามกลางเมืองกับผู้คัดค้านทางการเมือง และการประหารผู้คัดค้านทางการเมืองในช่วงทศวรรษ 1990 ในฐานะที่เป็นพรรคที่ได้อำนาจทางการเมือง เฟรติลินได้กระทำการที่แข็งกร้าวต่อผู้ที่เดินขบวนต่อต้าน ต่อสื่อมวลชน และต่อนักหนังสือพิมพ์ตั้งแต่ได้ปกครองตนเองในปี 2002

โดยสรุปแล้ว สมมติฐานที่ตั้งไว้พิสูจน์ได้บางส่วนเท่านั้น มีสิ่งบ่งชัดว่ารัฐได้ใช้อำนาจเด็ดขาดอันอาจอธิบายได้ว่า เนื่องมาจากลัทธิชาตินิยมติมอร์ แต่การเล่นงานกลุ่มประชาสังคมไม่กี่ครั้งหลังจากได้ปกครองตนเองแล้ว ไม่พอที่จะเหมาเอาว่าเฟรติลินใช้อำนาจนิยม ผลที่น่าสนใจที่สุดของการศึกษานี้อยู่ที่ทฤษฎีที่ระบุถึงลัทธิชาตินิยมของคนติมอร์และชาติติมอร์ งานก่อนๆ ที่มีอยู่ ไม่ได้เชื่อมโยงที่มาของลัทธิชาตินิยมกับขบวนการชาตินิยม ซึ่งในที่สุดได้เข้ามาเป็นรัฐบาลที่ดีลีในทุกวันนี้ ความมุ่งหมายของวิทยานิพนธ์ฉบับนี้ อยู่ที่ความพยายามจะอธิบายแบบวิชาการถึงลักษณะของชาตินิยมของคนติมอร์และแนวคิดว่าด้วยชาติติมอร์

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The concept of the East Timorese nation and nationalism is examined. The work operates with the following hypothesis: Monopolising of power is the outcome of the specific nature of East Timorese nationalism. Methods employed to test this premise, is secondary sources, such as books and articles on East Timor's political history and internet articles by NGOs, government, UN, academics and newspapers. Main elements of the conceptual framework are theories on nationalism, nation and ideologies, as well as Benedict Anderson's theory on 'Imagined Communities'.

Centuries of colonial presence explains the creation of the imagined East Timorese community. The Timorese resistant movement dismisses colonialism but still adopts the Portuguese-created imagined community. The nationalist party Fretilin defines and monopolizes the concept of nationalism. A specific Timorese nationalism combined with both populist and Marxist elements is developed. The manifesto and party policy indicate a determination to be the only legitimate representative of the people. This ideology contributed to civil war against political opponents and execution of political dissidents in the 70s. As the ruling party, Fretilin has taken aggressive actions against demonstrations, media and journalists since autonomy in 2002.

The conclusion only partly verifies the hypothesis. There are specific signs of state authoritarianism which can be explained by the nature of Timorese nationalism. However the few attacks against a civil society only after six years of self governance is not enough to classify Fretilin as authoritarian. The most interesting result of the research is nonetheless a theory based identification of Timorese nationalism and nation. Previous studies have not drawn the line from the roots of nationalism ending up with how the nationalist movement actually behave in the Government offices in Dili today. The ambition of the thesis has been to give an academic explanation of the nature of Timorese nationalism and their notion of a nation.

Field of Studies Southeast Asian Studies Student's signature ……

Academic Year 2004 Advisor's signature ……

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Rationale

1556: The first recorded Portuguese settlers in Timor.
7th of December 1975: Indonesian invasion: Between 60.000 and 100.000 people killed.
10th of December 1996: Nobel Peace Prize to Carlos Belo and Jose Ramos-Horta.
20th of May 2002: Independence.

These dates represent only tiny fragments of the history of East Timor. More than 400 years of brutal oppression and genocide ended with the new millennium. The range of brutality combined with a persistent resistance movement slowly got the attention from the outside world.

On November 2nd 1996, I met Jose Ramos-Horta. The freedom fighter was in Norway to raise awareness on the struggle for independence. I was a reporter for Norwegian Broadcasting Company (NRK) and had only little knowledge about the East Timor conflict. Ramos-Horta was probably used to ignorant journalists, but he delivered his message with professional patience. He knew that the only hope for his cause was breaking the silence Indonesia tried to impose about the problematic region of East Timor. Ramos-Horta appealed for a stronger international pressure against Indonesia and told me that the world is not doing enough to improve the conditions for the Timorese people. One month later, he received the Nobel peace price. Suddenly, the exiled leader did not only have the attention of one Norwegian reporter; people all over the world started to listen. The Nobel peace prize contributed to put East Timor on the international agenda. The international pressure for independence grew strong and culminated with Indonesia's withdrawal from East Timor. Meeting Ramos-Horta also made me pay

attention to the situation in the former Portuguese colony. Ever since that day I have followed the steps towards democracy with curiosity. The infrastructure was totally destroyed after centuries of brutal colonisation and occupation. It seems to be against all odds to stand firm against all these obstacles and still insist on self-determination. I wanted to find out what this stubbornness is about. That is the reason why East Timor caught my attention as a research subject.

1.2 Objectives and Hypothesis

What made it possible for the people to maintain their identity and avoid being pacified by Portugal and Indonesia? Why have the population been so determined to fight for their own independence? Has a glorious and admired national movement moved towards the first stages of state authoritarianism? These research questions are really about Timorese nationalism. The objective of this thesis is to investigate and to decipher the nature of their nationalism. It is not a historical paper and not an attempt to present the troubled past of East Timor. Indeed it is necessary to go back in time to understand present time. Nation building is a process that goes onwards, determined by elements from the past. I will present relevant fragments of the history to analyse the topic.

The hypothesis of this thesis is "*Monopolising of power is the outcome of the specific nature of East Timorese nationalism.*" The purpose of my research is to verify or rule out this assumption, which is directly linked to the title of the thesis; "The Blessing and Curse of Timorese Nationalism". We have to draw the lines beginning from the roots of nationalism, to the formation of a nationalist movement and finally to the formation of a government, in order to analyse and debate the hypothesis. The leaders of the freedom fighters won the first free election in 2001 and formed a transitional government. The Fretilin party shaped Timorese nationalism defined the concept of the East Timor nation and is now in charge of building a nation and a state. This could be the first signs of state authoritarianism or simply a strong government doing what it is supposed to do. There exist no facts to support the idea of East Timor being governed by a dictatorship.

However, the question whether the ruling party has monopolized the power could be significant.

Leading a resistance movement requires different rules from running a democracy. History has shown that the transition from war to peace is not always beautiful. A guerrilla movement may work for the best interests of the people in the jungle but not in the government. I shall discuss whether East Timor has fallen in the same trap. I do not come up with my hypothesis to discredit a people's struggle for a life in peace, or to question their right for self determination. As most concerned people, I admire and respect oppressed people who stand up against injustice. The basic ideas of democracy and human rights have after all reached a global consensus no matter academic background, religious- and political convictions. Nonetheless, this consensus must not become a blindfold against constructive criticism and academically based analysis. The conclusion of my limited work may well be that there are no link between nationalism and power monopoly in East Timor. No matter the outcome, the process of testing the hypothesis by applying relevant theories and historical facts could produce interesting findings. Defining the basis of Timorese nationalism and how it works in practice is after all a field not many scholars have investigated. I will elaborate the lack of academic works later in this chapter.

1.3 Scope of Study

East of the Indian Ocean, West of the Pacific Ocean and north of the Timor Sea is a crocodile shaped island. Timor is located at the eastern extremity of the Indonesian Archipelago, in the Lesser Sunda Group. The island is 480 kilometres long and 100 across at its widest point. Closest neighbours are New Guinea, Indonesia and Australia.

The history of Timor is largely written by Europeans. The first recorded European settlers were Portuguese Dominican friars from Melaka who settled in 1566 on the island of Solor, a part of the Timorese archipelago. Practically, no written records existed before the middle of sixteenth century. The only exception I found was documents published

during the Chinese Ming Dynasty in 1436.[1] The lack of earlier Timorese sources is the reason why all data presented here are from the sixteenth century and onwards to the present time.

Several colonial powers competed in achieving hegemony in this part of the world. Hence, the island of Timor became divided into two separate units; the Dutch ruled in the west and the Portuguese ruled in the east. East Timor covers almost 15.000 square kilometres, including the offshore islands of Atauro and Jaco. Early records indicated a population of 650.000. The traditional religion was animist, though the majority today are Catholics. This is partly due to the colonial influence. Timor has been described as a racial meeting-point or a melting pot of ethnic groups[2], populated by successive waves of migrants, predominantly Malay and Melanesian. Other early immigrants were Arabs, Chinese and Africans.

According to several sources, there are probably 12 to 18 languages, subdivided into various dialects on the whole island. The Atoni (means people of the dry land) are believed to have been the original inhabitants. They populated the central highlands in West Timor and speak a language known as Timorese or Vaiqueno. The Belu migrated later and settled down at the southern coastal plains – most of them in East Timor. Their language, Tetum, has become one of three official languages today. The other official languages after independence are Portuguese and English. Another ethnic group to be mentioned dominated the development of Timor in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The Dutch called them “The Topasses” or “Black Portuguese”. They were of mixed ethnic origin, the off-spring of Portuguese soldiers, sailors and traders who

[1] P Groenveldt: Historical Notes on Indonesia and Malaya Compiled From Chinese Sources, Jakarta, Bhatara, 1960. (original published in Verhandelingen Van het Genootschap Van Kunsten en Wetenschappen, Batavia, 1839)

[2] Correra Mendes: Um Mes Em Timor, quoted in H.G Schulte Nordholt, The Political System of the Atoni of Timor, Verhandelingen van het Taal-, Land,- en Volkenkunde 60 (Martinus Nijhoff, The Haugue, 1971) , page 35.

intermarried with the local women of Solor.[3] More historical data from colonial days, occupation and independence will be presented in chapter two.

1.4 Related Theories

The problems begin here. There is no single definition of nationalism and nation. Scholars do not agree on how to explain these key concepts. Rival scholarly definition makes this field complicated and even confusing. Most of the scholars attempt to make universal definitions but in retrospective view the definitions seem to expire or appear with at least limited value in space. Nationalism was born in the second half of the eighteenth century. The American and French revolutions ignited the ideas of national autonomy, unity and identity. Recently more and more scholars have questioned the validity of the definitions of the classic scholars like Rousseau, Herder, Fichte and Mazzini. The founding fathers of the theories developed a doctrine based on the experience from early western nationalism and nation-building. They saw nationalism as a phenomenon where a group of people gathered together in a single historic territory, with a shared single public culture. These features might have been valid in a western context.

The problem arose after World War II, when a number of new states developed in Asia and Africa. The former colonies did not have a “historic territory.” The new states simply took over what the colonies had put together. There was no Indonesia before the Dutch annexed the groups of islands, nor a “single public culture”. Some scholars even question if Indonesia today constitutes a nation. The experience of new types of states popping up made scholars develop new theories of nationalism and nation. Timor is a rather limited area, isolated from the outside world by the ocean. One might argue that

[3] C.R Boxer: Portuguese Timor: A Rough Island Story, 1515-1960, History today 10(5), May 1960, page 351.

this geographical factor makes Timor different from neighbours like Indonesia and Malaysia. The topography of those two nations makes the cultural diversity huge, and made the process of nation-building more difficult and different from for instance East Timor. On the other hand if Timor is one, logical unit – why has no voice been raised to unify west and east into one nation? Could it be that even the nationalist movement automatically adopted the boundaries defined by the Portuguese and the Dutch? I briefly present these contradictions to illustrate how challenging it is to find a theoretical framework that is useful as comparative tool in a global and even regional context. I will go more in depth about these aspects later.

Another obvious problem is interdisciplinary. Historians, anthropologists, political scientists, sociologists, international relations scholars and others all compete in this field. This wide range of academic disciplines can never agree on how to define nationalism. Each of them can only grasp a limited set of aspects to analyze the complexity of the topic. But even within the same discipline, scholars disagree to a large extent. They argue about the balance between subjective and objective elements. Elements of a nation could be – or not be – a common will, memory, territory, language, loyalty and ethnicity.

The concept of nationalism is hard to define as well. Some equate the term with national sentiment, others with nationalist ideology and others again with nationalist movement. Furthermore, some insist on the cultural aspects of nationalism, others on political aspects and a third group tries to make a synthesis of both aspects. I choose to separate the terms nationalism from ideology in the case of East Timor. I do that to find out whether Timorese nationalism was a result of any political ideology, or a product of certain cultural aspects. By emphasizing on nationalism as an ideology, we rule out other possible non-politically determined factors. Nevertheless, ideology is relevant to understand the political path the national movement Fretilin took. Hence, chapter three will discuss a possible ideological impact.

I have searched for available theories necessary to discuss the hypothesis. The classical works of scholars in this field are interesting to understand the origin of

nationalism. They tried to interpret and explain the erosion of empires and the rise of strong national sentiments and nation-states in Europe in a specific historical epoch. However, the founders of the theories of nationalism and nation could not predict the outcome of colonisation in Asia. I find it empirically problematic basing a thesis about nationalism in East Timor on one single theory. The perspective would be too narrow and I would have to depend too much on one scholar's ideas. I doubt that all relevant aspects of nationalism in East Timor would be covered by such an approach. On the other hand applying a wide range of theories would be equally problematic because there are so many of them! This is after all an academic work on a graduate degree level, and not an attempt to write a comprehensive analysis on nationalism. Hence, I chose a way in the middle. That is to carefully borrow theories where they seem relevant for the case of East Timor. To avoid being too superficial and fragmented, I prioritize the work of one theorist to be able to conduct an academically satisfying analysis.

1.5 Conceptual Framework

Political scientist Benedict Anderson studied the characteristics of nationalism and nation-building in Southeast Asia. His data for the concepts of "Census", "Map" and "Museum" are drawn wholly from the region. His work "Imagined Communites" is one of the few comprehensive comparative studies made to explain what happened after decolonization and up till recent time in Southeast Asia. Anderson defines the nation as "an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign."[4] It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members. Both Renan and Gellner share this notion of nation as invented. *"Nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness: It invents nations where they do not exist."*[5] Gellner look at the nation as something

[4] Benedict Anderson: Imagined Communities, (Verso, London/New York, revised and extended edition, 1991), page 6.

[5] Ernest Gellner: Thought and Change (London, Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1964), page 169.

negative or fabricated or falsified. Anderson's approach is more positive using terms as imagined and creation.

In Anderson's terms, the nation is imagined as limited because each one of them has infinite boundaries. Outside the boundaries we find other nations. It means that no nationalist dream of including the whole planet in their nation. Furthermore the nation is imagined as sovereign because the notion of a nation was born in a time when Enlightenment and Revolutions destroyed the legitimacy of the divinely-ordained, hierarchical dynastic realm.[6] The sovereign state became the wanted outcome of this new desire for freedom. This aspect of the nation is similar to the ideas of the founders of the theories of the theory. Finally, Anderson claims it is imagined as a community because nation is conceived in terms of comradeship or fraternity. This explains why people are willing to die for such limited imaginings.

Another part of my conceptual framework is the ideologies themselves. Anderson emphasizes on the cultural roots of nationalism. He traces the roots to religious imaginings rather than political motivating factors. I shall elaborate on this later. It would leave an incomplete picture of Timorese nationalism to ignore the political aspects. Therefore, a part of my theoretical framework will be the ideologies. Many scholars define nationalism as an ideology. Others find such a definition to be wrong. The diversity of nationalist sentiments around the world is huge and there are not many similar aspects between Adolf Hitler's and Nelson Mandela's nationalism. To understand the rise of Nazism in Germany, we need to study social and historical aspects as well as politics. To discover the nature of Timorese nationalism, it is necessary to analyze ideological factors. Hence I will use the classical ideologies to see if and where East Timor fits in.

[6] Benedict Anderson: Imagined Communities, page 7.

1.6 Methodology

> *"The confusion in the social sciences – it should now be obvious – is wrapped up with the long-continuing controversy about the nature of Science"*[7]

In 1959, C. Wright Mills wrote about the confusion of science. Almost 50 years later, the debate about what "science" is and about research methodology in social science still exists. A reminder of the hypothesis of this thesis; Monopolising of power is the outcome of the specific nature of East Timorese nationalism. The question then is what methodology to use to study the correlation between Timorese nationalism and monopolizing of authority. The chosen approach will be crucial when it comes to testing the hypotheses and conducting an academic debate and even a verifiable conclusion. There is more than one possible approach to the task. It is necessary to discuss the distinction between the main directions of social science in order to define the specific methodology of this thesis.

One option is Positivist social science, by collecting quantitative data or statistics. In the case of East Timor the idea would be to conduct a survey by asking the key players of the nationalist movement, NGOs and UN workers. The advantage of such an approach is obvious; because they are primary sources. Instead of having to interpret other people's interpretations, we could deal with eye witnesses and innovators in the process of shaping nationalism and building a nation. A positivist would argue that this research is "objective", because it implies testing of hypotheses by carefully analyzing numbers from the measures. Positivism tends to reduce people to numbers and the question is whether this way of collecting data is relevant to the actual lives of real people.[8]

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[7] C. Wright Mills: The Sociological Imagination (Oxford University Press, New York, 1959), page 119.

[8] W. Lawrence Neuman: Social Research Methods: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches, (fifth edition, Allyn and Bacon, Boston, 2003), page 71.

Another problem with positivism is to find efficient filters against bias, polemics, hidden agendas and pure misunderstandings. Are the "key players" really the best ones to define the nature of their own nationalism? A political leader has a dream or a vision about how the world should be like and what he or she should do to achieve the defined goals of the organisation or party. History reveals many examples on how the vision and real world collide. The Kremlin communicated ideas of the Soviet Union but the dream of an economic strong "communist paradise" ended with an economic nightmare and a total political collapse. Equally, there was a huge gap between what Khmer Rouge defined as "the best" for the Cambodian people, and what people would define as a good life. Besides, nationalism is much more than political slogans, populist banners and speeches aimed to secure support from the masses. The way nationalism is being legitimized and explicitly communicated are only two of many sources in the process of determining the nature of nationalism. A survey could be a useful supplement to such a study but probably not enough to analyse the topic. Observing in a field trip is certainly something to consider for a more comprehensive academic study than my rather limited contribution.

Interpretive social science is a second choice. This approach focuses on achieving an understanding of how people "create and maintain their social worlds."[9] In the case of East Timor, the researcher could live one year with a dozen of people in the country. He or she would interview, observe, gather qualitative data and by the end acquire an understanding of how they create meaning in everyday life. An anthropologist would embrace this approach, but it could be difficult to decipher Timorese nationalism by such a relativism based research.

A third option is critical social science, an approach that goes beyond what can be observed by living with your respondents or quantitatively measure statistics. Critical social science tries to reveal underlying social structures and conflicts. A critical

[9] W. Lawrence Neuman: Social Research Methods: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches University of Wisconsin at Whitewater, 2003), page 537 (glossary).

researcher would look at a larger social and historical context. This includes factors like Portuguese colonisation, Indonesian occupation combined with underlying indigenous factors that contributed to Timorese nationalism. This approach is popular among activists and researchers who insist on taking an explicit moral value position to create social changes. I find it hard to advocate activism in my research but still find critical social science to be the best available methodology for this thesis. Critical theory is not static but dynamic and adjustable to the world it seeks to explain. This flexible approach is also the basic idea of this study. Chapter two will discuss the value of theories on nationalism based on the case of East Timor. The conclusion must contain suggestions to modify theories in order to fit "map and terrain".

1.7 Method

The chosen methodology indicates use of secondary sources combined with theories. A few scholars have collected a quite extended amount of data concerning the political history of Timor. The sources are up to 500 years old written records from traders and other travellers, and official records from colonial authorities. More recent data are gathered from local intellectuals, politicians, priests, eye witnesses to events, journalists, and UN reports, among others. In addition to a few published books about the political history of East Timor, I have collected some academic articles. My notes and bibliography illustrate these pieces of the puzzle.

Browsing through the book lists in several academic libraries revealed that the "East Timor shelf" is rather small. In fact the history of East Timor is yet to be written. During the colonial period only 14 Portuguese titles were available.[10] The works were mainly written by Portuguese military and administrative officials and fall in the category "general historiographic studies." Most of the current anthropological and historical

[10] Ivo Carneiro de Sousa: Lusotopie, 2001: 185.

knowledge on East Timor was gathered between 1953 and 1975.[11] One single person was responsible for these works. Antonio de Almeida became one of the most powerful figures in Portuguese colonial research and discovered pre-historical archaeological layers and developed the analysis of ethno-linguistic divisions. De Almeida was strongly inspired by the Brazilian author Gilberto's ideas that the Portuguese colonization *promoted "the democratisation of human societies through the mixing of races, interbreeding and miscegenation."*[12] This harmonic race-mix ideology was useful in the colonial propaganda but largely ignored by historians then and certainly now.

I present the Almeida/Gilberto example here instead of in the literature review part to illustrate how insignificant most of the literature from the colonial era is for any scientific research. Pure propaganda from the period of occupation has also reached academic libraries, and moreover they are still on the shelves. A search in the main library of Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok revealed several titles written by Indonesian writers. The books express a rather panegyric picture of the occupiers and describe how grateful the Timorese people are for their presence. For obvious reasons these works are not useful elements here. The only exception would be in a research on how propaganda is used in a context of occupation.

It is difficult to find comprehensive studies on the political history and works scoped on nationalism and nation building history at East Timor. It is even more difficult to find contemporary studies. One obvious reason is the time factor. The formalized process of nation-state building started in 1999. Six years of independence may not be enough time to produce enough works at least about nation-building. In a period of 25 years prior to independence, the Indonesian government and army implemented restrictions and made obstacles to hinder any form of political or academic criticism. Moreover, an almost total lack of infrastructure would have made it difficult to conduct research outside the capital Dili.

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[11] A. Almeida: O Oriente de expressao portuguesa (Lisbon, Fundacao Oriente, 1994).

[12] Gilberto Freyre: O mundo que o portugues criou (Lisbon, Livros do Brazil, 1940), page 46.

Nevertheless, censorship, travel restrictions and bad roads do not explain alone the almost empty East Timor book shelves. Could it be that East Timor represents an academic backwater almost without any intellectual prestige to investigate? Events in the tiny Gaza strip attract a global army of scholars. An island located the eastern extremity of the Indonesian Archipelago has never triggered even remotely the same intellectual curiosity. Obviously an election in the Palestinian territory has more global political, social and symbolic impact than an election in East Timor.

No matter reason; the lack of academic studies makes it difficult to get a complete picture as necessary to contribute to an academic debate. These obstacles represent a method problem because it makes it hard to gather a sufficient amount of data. In an attempt to solve this challenge, I had to search for alternative sources of data to manage my task. I have found some information here, some information there, and put them together as pieces in a puzzle. The alternative source I refer to is Internet. Articles, editorials, fragmented opinions, political statements, UN reports, points of views from and government statements from Dili are all pieces in the puzzle. Internet contains useful information and a methodological problem as well. Enormous amounts of information are presented without the same ethical and professional standard required from academic publications. It is harder to assure reliability in the collected data. This does not rule out Internet as a useful tool, but requires a high degree of critical sense in reviewing the data. In fact, online information is crucial to analyse the first part of my hypothesis: “Monopolising of power (…)” No textbook can provide the same updated picture of how the power works today.

My style of writing is slightly rhetorical and argumentative at times. The purpose is not to entertain but to discuss and emphasize on controversial matters rather than present issues everyone can agree upon. I could chose to disguise my points of view in more neutral intellectual terms, but I find it more honest to use simple terms to express opinions. I want to prove that it is possible for academics to debate in a language people understand rather than using an exclusive and excluding vocabulary. The conclusion chapter will be the shortest chapter in the thesis. I choose to present, discuss and conclude

all the way instead of saving it at the end. The strength and weakness of my work might be the broad approach. For instance the Fretilin manifesto will be presented and discussed in not more than three chapters. I analyse the political program from different angles; presenting other scholar's findings, applying nationalist theories and ideology theories. Hopefully this broad approach is the right approach to analyse the complexity of nationalism.

1.8 Literature Review

A lot have been said and written about East Timor during the past decades. Most of these works emphasize on the sufferings caused by colonisation and occupation. Implicitly or explicitly the writers appeal to the world to put and end to the misery and sympathize strongly with the Timorese people. Scholars, journalists and human rights activists have all taken part in this opinion based research. Only a few works deal with nationalism specifically. This thesis is basically about the nature of Timorese nationalism or more precisely about the link between nationalist sentiments and the balancing of power today. My brief literature review is set to answer the following key questions: What do we already know about the topic? Has anyone else done anything exactly the same? Where does my work fit in with what has already been done?

The origin of Timorese nationalism is not easy to detect. A clearly defined nationalistic platform was formulated as late as 1974. The process was triggered by a coup in Portugal which started the democratic transition in East Timor. Most articles concerning the origin of Timorese nationalist use this year as a starting point. Such a conclusion limits the local nationalist movement to a western, colonial offspring and reduces Timorese thinkers and political leaders to passive receivers of ideas from outside. However some scholars go back several hundred years to trace the origin of their nationalism. Professor of Politics, John G. Taylor oppose the colonial assumption that the Timorese exist only in their encounter with colonialism. History written from a European perspective seems to undermine the impact of local ethnography and anthropology. But

both before and during colonisation a rich tradition of oral history and strong local kingdoms existed. Taylor even claims that Portuguese colonial influence was largely formal![13] For Taylor, this explains why Timorese society was able to resist colonial incorporation for over 400 years and why the people managed to build an independent movement and resist Indonesian incorporation for 25 years.

Journalist Jill Jolliffe indirectly supports Taylor's theory in her book "East Timor – Nationalism & Colonialism". Jolliffe aims to trace the historical roots of modern Timorese nationalism as well. Again the conclusion is that a distinct Timorese culture existed well before European colonisation. Jolliffe points out that the Tetum word "malai", meaning foreigner, has become a concept important to all Timorese, and the theme of the Timorese united against the *malai* is deeply embedded in Timorese history.[14] This distinction between "us" and "them" and its significance for nationalism is not verified in her study. Jolliffe does not present sources or facts supporting the relevance of the symbolic power of the word malai. Nonetheless both Taylor and Jolliffe present a large number of examples of Portuguese failures in pacifying the population because of armed resistance. The colonial history is filled with different strategies of gaining total economic, political and military control over the territory. The Portuguese only partly succeeded in their colonial project. Both books presented in this review explain this lack of colonial success against the indigenous kinship system. The Portuguese did not manage to destroy the power of liurai and suco chiefs.

External and internal events in 1974 leading up to a defined nationalism and formation of political parties will be presented and analyzed more in-depth later. At this point, I will limit the description to an outlook of what we already know about the chosen topic. Fretilin demanded immediate de-colonisation and became the most popular party. Scholars present a rather diverse description of what Fretilin de facto was based on. The

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[13] John G. Taylor: East Timor: The Prize of Freedom (Zed Books, London, 1999), page 1.

[14] Jill Jolliffe: East Timor – Nationalism & Colonialism (University of Queens Press, Queensland, 1978), page 17.

scholars seem not to only disagree with others, but also with themselves! According to John G. Taylor the party quickly transformed from a populist to a genuinely popular party. Fretilin was a nationalist party which promoted the needs of the rural sector and worked for the interests of the rural population. Fretilin was social democratic, with an emphasis on democratic, but did include Marxist elements as well.

Fretilin means Revolutionary Front of East Timor. This fiery name did not indicate a sharp leftward political turn, according to Jolliffe. Quite the contrary; Fretilin tried to communicate a move away from a party type structure and a desire not to restrict the movement to a "particular political philosophy of labour-oriented social democracy". [15] Jolliffe interprets the chosen name as an attempt to attract all Timorese nationalists, no matter political convictions. Other scholars dismiss this interpretation. Clive J. Christie labels Fretilin as a party highly influenced by Marxist ideas. The party was not based on classical Marxism, but rather "reformed Marxism", defined by the political and social ideas of Amilcar Cabral, the revolutionary leader of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde. Cabral defined a broader Marxist theory based on the experience of the anti-colonial struggle in Africa. Benedict Anderson labels the early Fretilin as "left-leaning", [16]without explaining exactly what he means. "Left" is too broad a term to establish a specific political direction. Does left in this case mean social democratic, Marxist, a Khmer Rouge-like ideology or even pure anarchical direction? Malaysian journalist Sonny Inbaraj offers another interpretation and says that Marxist-Leninism has no history in East Timor. Fretilin's sense of social justice sprang from the Catholic Church.[17]

Scholars and other observers present a wide spectrum of definitions of the nature of Timorese nationalism. They have studied the same available data but still come up

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[15] Jill Jolliffe: East Timor, page 64.

[16] Benedict Anderson: The Spectre of Comparisons – Nationalism, Southeast Asia and the World (Verso, 1988), page 132.

[17] Sonny Inbaraj: East Timor – Blood and Tears in ASEAN (Silkworm Books, Chiang Mai, 1997), page 35.

with a diversity of conclusions. After reviewing what has been written about nationalism in East Timor, what do we actually know about the topic? At least the literature gives a valuable insight into a variety of aspects of nationalism. On the other hand, this diversity undoubtedly leaves some confusion. Can a party be both Marxist and non-Marxist? Does Fretilin's emphasis on rural needs really distinguish the party from several ideologies both on the left and the right side of the scale? Is Fretilin a Catholic party? The confusion left by researchers leads me to answer the two last questions of the literature review; has anyone else done anything exactly the same? Where does my work fit in with what has already been done? It would be like giving me too much credit to claim to be the first one to touch this field. After all most of what is written about East Timor the past three decades is to some extent about Timorese nationalism. Topics like injustice, genocide, colonization, occupation all lead up to questions of self determination in terms of nationalism and nation-building. The available literature reveals some flaws when it comes to theoretical basis. The authors discuss nationalism as if the term has one agreef definition. That could explain why no author can even explain what he means by nationalism. Furthermore, it could explain why the authors come up with such a long list of alternative definitions of one single political party. In this context, I would argue that no one has done exactly the same as I am about to do. Using the same available data as other researchers together with a new theoretical approach could be my contribution. My work fits in with what is already done by adding some new elements to already established facts. For instance works by authors like Taylor and Jolliffe present valuable information about the origin and the nature of Timorese nationalism. I could fill in some "blanks" in an attempt to create a better understanding in this complex field.

Up till now I have purposely avoided using the term ideology because I wanted to review literature on East Timor nationalism in a broader context. But indeed the unanswered questions need to be treated by ideology-theories as well. It seems like the Timor-experts I present here fail to define their understanding of ideology. Lack of clearly defined ideological approaches could explain why researchers apparently disagree in defining the basis of Timorese nationalism. I use the term apparently to point out that it could be a quasi disagreement and in fact they have just captured different aspects of

Timorese nationalism. Failing to apply analytical tools may lead to different but also vague conclusions. Nonetheless it is necessary to define the understanding of ideology in order to assure validity as well as reliability. This issue will be addressed in a later chapter. This literature does not cover the whole hypothesis. The "Monopolising of power "- part is not yet mentioned. The reason is simply because no comprehensive work has been published about this issue. Hence, I will not produce any literature review about the governing of East Timor today. However, I intend to present more contemporary data- newspapers, NGO statements and online source - and analyse my findings in a later chapter.

It is almost impossible to stay neutral to the cruelties committed against the people on this small island. No scholar can refuse to take a stand against genocide. A 400 year of Timorese history is filled with brutality and injustice. Observers have drawn parallels to the Nazi Holocaust, the Khmer Rouge and other examples of big scale bloodsheds to describe the horrors at East Timor. The scholar Ivo Carneiro de Sousa confirms my suspicion in his book Lusotopie (2001): *"In many cases, the immediateness of political discourse or the rhetoric of solidarity has filled in for what has not been studied, and interpreted what is not even known."* De Sousa exemplifies this lack of scientific quality by topics like colonization and nationalism.

It is crucial for a scholar to maintain some professional distance to the tragedies in order to analyse the matters. Most of the articles and books I refer to in this thesis are to some extent written with passion and heart. Jill Jolliffe seems to get carried away when she describes the spirit of the first, short lived independence in 1975: *"The day was sunny and the Fretilin men looked handsome in suits."*[18] Joliffe appears as an uncompromising nationalist*: "No matter which argument are employed to support the independence case – cultural, economic, historical – there is no overriding argument, the right of the East Timorese to determine their own destiny."*[19] It is clear Jolliffe does not only support

[18] Jill Jolliffe, East Timor, page 219.

[19] Jill Jolliffe, East Timor, page 304.

Timorese nationalism, but she also strongly sympathises with Fretilin. This sympathy may have led her to weight too lightly their weaknesses. Factional disputes within Fretilin ranks are ignored or at least toned down. The gap between the party's development ambitions and the natural and human resources available is not mentioned in her book.[20]

The analytical problem with such an approach is a tendency to describe the world in terms of black and white. Some colours in-between could be ignored in the process. That could explain some of the confusion concerning what political platform Fretilin is based on. After all the Portuguese colonists and Indonesian occupants represented the bad guys and Timorese resistance represented the good guys. Any hint of communist elements in the era of cold war confused the rather one dimensional picture of good and bad. Is that the reason why some authors insist Fretilin was based on Marxist ideas while others almost frenetically oppose such an idea? Being supportive and patriotic on behalf of an oppressed people is human and honourable. Nonetheless, it will not help answering academic questions like what are the origin and the substance of Timorese nationalism. It could seem cynical and arrogant to indirectly label researches as too emotionally committed. This is certainly not my intention by addressing this issue. The problem is not the quality of their research but the element of time. The most comprehensive works on East Timor were written while people were systematically killed, starved to death and harassed by Indonesian troops. Any academic work would both indirectly and directly reflect what was actually going on. Some distance in time could be crucial to analyse the same issues analysed 30, 20 and 10 years ago. The distance is not an excuse to justify cruelty but provides a better opportunity to see the picture more clearly. The time aspect tells me that no one has done exactly the same as with this thesis. Furthermore, the time aspect makes my work fit in with what is already been done, simply by adding the element of distance in time. I could contribute some analytical distance in order to conduct a neutral debate on the issues.

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[20] R. William Liddle: Jill Joliffe's East Timor: Nationalism and Colonialism: A Review (St. Lucia, Queensland: University of Queensland Press, 1978).

Paying attention to news from East Timor for over a decade and reading academic studies published left some unanswered questions. The motivation for starting this project was to try filling in some of the blanks. Quite many academic works have been written about nationalism in practically every state in Southeast Asia. Scholars have done comparative studies to define similarities and differences in the notion of the nation within the region. One of the few exceptions from these achievements is the case of East Timor. “The blanks” are the question of what is the origin and nature of nationalism in East Timor and whether the process of nation building has led to a monopolizing of power. My expectations from this study are to make a small contribution to analyse these questions. My prospect is to use available data combined with selected theories to come up with some new answers. I do not expect to write a comprehensive work on nationalism in one state. My contribution is too fragmented and most of all too short to make such an achievement. The most of what I can expect is to deliver at least some aspects to highlight the topic.

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CHAPTER II

POLITICAL HISTORY

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 Prelude

East Timor managed to join a small, exclusive group of oppressed people. South Africa, Tibet, Burma and East Timor mobilized world leaders, human rights groups, celebrities and media in their fight for freedom and justice. Concerned people all over the world learned to know the brutality of colonization and occupation. Most observers acknowledged the legitimacy of the struggle for independence and still sympathize with East Timor's efforts to build a nation-state. The outside world believed it was and still is only fair that the population on the tiny enclave, who had been through extreme injustice, finally can get some peace of mind. The undoubted consensus is illustrated by the fact the United Nations for the first time took full responsibility for building a new nation-state. The degree of cruelty cannot alone explain why the Timorese succeeded in starting a nation-building process by the support from the UN. Aceh in Indonesia and Mindanao in the Philippines have for decades refused to be incorporated in their respective states, but they are far from achieving their goal. We have to trace the roots of nationalism to explain the outcome of the political, diplomatic and armed struggle for independence in East Timor.

The link between "fairness" and "independence" and between "freedom" and "nation" is implicit. After all "nation-ness" is the most common universal value in the political life of our time. The most successful revolutions after World War II have all defined themselves in terms of nationalism. From the very beginning, nationalism was a doctrine of popular freedom and sovereignty. The general idea was that people must be liberated from any unwanted external constraint and be able to determine their own

destiny.[1] In the case of East Timor, it was quite obvious that the people wanted to be the master of their own house. For 25 years the nationalist movement fought with guns and verbal arguments to achieve their goal: self determination. The connection between nationalism and legitimacy in international relations is quite clear. Nevertheless, most talks about these terms in the public sphere are shallow and lack theoretical basis.

2.1.2 The Historical Approach

This chapter tries to decipher the nature of Timorese nationalism, in order to explain the process of nation-building at East Timor. Chapter One explained the methodological challenges and shortcomings revealed by searching through available academic studies made on these issues. East Timor experts have an impressive knowledge about historical facts. They have contributed with important books and articles highlighting the history of East Timor. The collected data; written and oral sources and observations make a complex picture of the past. Not surprisingly, most of the studies at least touch the issues of Timorese nationalism. The approach is usually historical and analysis starts from the distant past and ends up in present time. In this A to Z timeframe, facts about the development on nationalism are introduced and discussed in the order they appear in historical time. However this linear strategy alone does not provide any complete theoretical framework or even attempts to define key concepts like *nationalism* and *nation*. As mentioned in chapter one, it is close to impossible to analyze the political history of East Timor without such definitions.

Indeed, even this thesis is to some extent linear, because every phenomenon is triggered by factors determined by time and space. Nonetheless, “history” is not a neutral or even an objective process. In simple terms; understanding of the past is determined by the way we look at it. Theoretical frameworks are the “eyeglasses” we use to make sense of the almost indefinite amount of data of the past. I shall therefore apply some theories

[1] John Hutchinson and Anthony Smith (ed): Nationalism (Oxford Universitypress, 1995), page 4.

in order to answer the basic questions of this thesis. However it is necessary to present parts of the political history of East Timor because I cannot take for granted the reader's specific knowledge about the topic. The problem with this approach is the risk of falling in the same trap as I criticized. It could end up with a series of historical data without any theoretical tools to analyze them. This structural dilemma makes me follow a middle way; first a brief outlook on the political history and second a broader theoretical approach incorporated with data from the case of East Timor. This chapter contains two main components; *an indigenous versus a colonial political system* and *Timorese nationalism*. The chapter is incomplete when it comes to covering the political history of East Timor. It ends with the collapse of the first independent state in 1975 and the following Indonesian occupation Liberation and autonomy will be outlined in a later chapter. This "separation" is made to distinguish the basis of Timorese nationalism from practical experiences and policies made in government today.

2.2 Indigenous Versus Colonial Political System

2.2.1 Sandalwood Trade

Size does not always matter. The population of East Timor has never reached one million. Timor is 480 kilometers long and only 100 kilometers across at its widest point. The crocodile-shaped island could not tempt the outside world with profitable natural resources. The climate can be extreme with a long, destructive rainy season. 3000 meters high mountains are almost inaccessible. Climate and geography explain why many external military operations had limited success and why local resistance managed to survive powerful enemies. Despite the "uninviting" environment, the tiny island was an important link in the trading networks between Java, Sulawesi, India and even China. Timor had something the others wanted and it gave the island a commercial value. Duarte

Barbosa, one of the first Portuguese visitors wrote in 1518: "*There is an abundance of white sandalwood, which the moors of India and Persia value greatly*". [2]

Both van Groeneveldt and Schulte-Nordholt[3] cite early sixteenth-century reports which indicate that the sandalwood production even influenced the structure and development of a political system. The trade shaped and legitimized several coastal kingdoms in the north and the south. Observers from outside visiting during the 16th century described a system where the day's trading could not begin until the king appeared. The traders paid daily taxes to the king. This indicates a political system or political hierarchy heavily relying on commerce. There existed a more complex political organization behind this daily royal business ritual. Taylor claims that *"(…) this needs to be uncovered if we are to understand the basic structures of Timorese society."*[4] I take it a step further when I add that deciphering basic facts about this indigenous political system could be necessary in order to analyze Timorese nationalism.

2.2.2 The Exchange System

The system of exchange is a key concept in order to understand Timorese society. The island had one main king and subordinate rulers called liurais. The liurai had executive power in his territory.[5] Several sources reveal that the lowest level of the political and economic hierarchy, the clan, was ruled by a chief. The chief received tribute and organized martial alliances with other clans. Each clan paid tribute to the

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[2] W. P Groeneveldt: Historical notes on Indonesia and Malaya Compiled from Chinese sources, page 116.

[3] H.G Shulte-Nordholt: The Political System of The Atoni of East Timor, Verhandelingen van het Koninlijl Instituut voor Taal- Land en Volkenkunde, The Hague, 1971 and W.P Groenveldt: Historical Notes on Indonesia and Malaya Compiled from Van het Genootschap Van Kunsten en Wetenschappen, Batavia, 1839.

[4] John G. Taylor: East Timor, page 2.

[5] Groenveldt, 1960

liurai and the liurai paid his share to the ritual king. The exchange of goods, people and even sacred objects cemented the political system. Traders from outside had to deal with this system in order to do business on Timor. Traders did not get any sandalwood or workers without exchanging other goods to the village chiefs.

The lowest level in this exchange system, or the production unit, was the household garden. Families depended on each other in production of e.g. wet-rice cultivation. Goods were exchanged from villages to the chiefs. Families were given land from the chief and had to pay a rent or a *rai teen* in return. The exchange ensured a balance between land and the people who cultivated the land. The system was a guarantee for the size and capacity of the labour force to balance the needs of the local population. This exchange could only work if goods were produced in return for the provision of men and women in the village unit. Villagers worked extra in order to both produce for their own consumption and for providing goods to be exchanged.

The liurai distinguished themselves from the masses, divided into nobility (dato) and workers/slaves (ata/atan). The structuring of political power was dispersed among the territorial chiefs (lurahan) and village chiefs (leo), who were recruited in the superior lineages. They were usually descendants of the founders and their duty was to supervise work and festivals. Not surprisingly, the dominant players in the Timorese political system were the most elevated ones in the tribute and exchange systems. This feudal – like system distinguished privileged from unprivileged people, distinguished those who benefited from exchange and those in debt.

The Portuguese scholar I. Carneiro de Sousa introduces an interesting hypothesis by claiming that it is possible that Timorese hierarchisation was even intensified by Portuguese colonization.[6] The opposite would seem more logical; that a rather violent intruder from an external administrative system would weaken the local administrative system. De Sousa points out that Portuguese colonial history in Timor is based on

[6] I.C de Sousa: Portuguese Colonization & Timorese Nationalism, page 190.

recognition of traditional powers and on seeking unification of the territory's social culture of elitism. To explain this rather controversial point of view, de Sousa says that the Portuguese at least indirectly ruled with the support and the configuration of traditional lineage powers within the Timorese society. A social, juridical and religious Portuguese system coexisted with a traditional Timorese world. . *"(…) this system worked. It would work for a very long time. At the same time, almost paradoxically, it would consolidate colonization and preserve a certain memory and reality of the traditional world of the peoples of Timor."*[7]

De Soursa claims that the balanced coexistence worked in 1769, when the colonial system was established in Dili. It also worked in 1909, through the Decree of 17th of July. The decree indicated that the central government continued to recognize the juridical system of local kingdoms. It was established that a district was governed by a liurai, that a suco was formed by a group of villages governed by a suco and that a leo was governed by a dato. The Portuguese tried to take advantage of, and configure traditional Timorese society. The opposite strategy would be like some other colonies, where the local administrative structure was totally destroyed and replaced by a pure colonial structure. The process of "configuring" or transforming the society was further achieved with the development of a group of mestizos with increasing social and cultural influence. De Sousa's hypotheses that colonization strengthened Timorese hierarchy may give the colonisers more credit than they deserve. De Soursa emphasizes a Portuguese decree to illustrate their willingness to acknowledge some local autonomy. Other historical facts indicate a more complex and diverse relationship between the Portuguese and the Timorese. At least other scholars implicitly contradict his point of view.

[7] I.C de Sousa: Portuguese Colonization & Timorese Nationalism, page 190.

2.2.3 Colonial Failure

John G. Taylor[8] explains the failure by both Portugal and Indonesia to fully penetrate and "defeat" the Timorese, by the unique characteristics of the society in East Timor. The exchange mechanisms were the glue of all political, economic and cultural life.[9] This complex system of exchanging goods and individuals ensured the economic needs of the population. This value system was solid as rock and justified the East Timorese hierarchy. The Portuguese did try to undermine this structure and to introduce a European system of production, but their success was limited. Other cultures have surrendered after such an external pressure, but surprisingly it just appeared to strengthen the Timorese society.

"This conclusion is of fundamental importance in understanding contemporary Timorese society, since it indicates how its indigenous economic, social and cultural systems were able to reproduce themselves intact, despite being subject to foreign control."[10] In other words, the Timorese managed to limit the European attempts at pacification. The colonial power tried to impose their economic, social and cultural system. The Portuguese could not get through the kinship alliances and the indigenous systems reproduced themselves instead of being replaced by colonial systems. De Sousa's focus is that the Portuguese formalized and cemented the local administrative structure. Taylor's focus is that the local administration survived despite Portuguese efforts to destroy it. These two focuses appear as contradictions. Nonetheless they could be compatible and in fact paradoxes instead of contradictions. We need to look at the Portuguese economic motives to govern East Timor in order to elaborate this point of view.

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[8] John G. Taylor is Professor of Politics at South Bank University in London. He is one of the few scholars who have delivered comprehensive works on the political history of Eat Timor. That is why I refer to Taylor several times in this essay.

[9] Taylor, J. G., East Timor: The price of freedom, Zed Books, London 1999. Page 5.

[10] Taylor, J. G., East Timor: The price of freedom, Page 9

Colonisation was marked by two phases. At first, during the mercantile phase, the Portuguese exercised its power through agreements and treaties with the different liurais. The colonizers were represented by small trading posts along the coast. Exercising power through exchange did not give them any territorial control or a trade monopoly. Hence the next step was to attack the interior kingdoms using military force. During this settler phase, The Portuguese managed to gain a trade monopoly and weaken the liurai system. After the Wehale kingdom fell in 1642, the traditional rulers had to change their tactics in order to fight the Portuguese. The liurais tried to survive by setting Dutch, Portuguese and Topasses up against each other. Particularly the Topasses were an ascendant power. The kingdoms were formally abolished but the ideologies legitimizing the traditional political hierarchy lived on.[11]

For instance, in 1719 a number of liurais met in secret and swore a blood oath to revolt against the Portuguese.[12] They intended to ally with the Topasses and later drive them out as well. In the years to come, the liurais conducted several attacks against both the Dutch West Timor and the Portuguese East Timor. The Topasses led the revolt and for the next 50 years Timor was in a state of open warfare.*" The tribes of Bellos could muster about 40.000 warriors, of whom only 3000 were musketeers, and the remaining being armed with swords, spears, bows and arrows. The warriors of Servaio numbered about 25.000 of whom a couple of thousands were equipped with firearms."* [13] Boxer's description of "the Timorese army" illustrates how widespread the strength of the resistance against the Dutch and the Portuguese was. Even with fewer soldiers than the enemy, the Timorese won battles with guerilla-like tactics. One of the strategies was

[11] John G. Taylor: East Timor: The Price of Freedom, Zed Books, London 1999, Page 12.

[12] Jill Jolliffe: East Timor, page 29.

[13] C. R. Boxer: Fidalgo in The Far East, 1550 – 1770, 2nd rev edn, Martinius Nijhoff, The Hague, 1948, page 192 – 193.

attacking from sheltered mountain areas. In 1726 a handful of Timorese managed to encircle 4000 troops.[14]

2.2.4 Colonial Weakness

As a result of this and other battles, the Portuguese gave up trying to control the territory as a whole. The colonial frustration grew and they refused to be defeated by the people they called "the ignorant Pariahs in Asia". But decades of rebellion made the Portuguese resign themselves to limited power, and in 1769 they abandoned Lifau in favour of Dili, a new site in the east of the island. At the time the Portuguese lacked physical and political forces to pursue further expansions on the island.[15]Also the Dutch, after 50 years of Timorese-Topass rebellion, initiated a strict non-interference in the affairs of the Portuguese and Topasses. They resigned themselves to a holding operation. In fact, not until the end of the nineteenth century the Dutch moved to finally assert their power on the island.[16]

The Portuguese, the Topasses and the Timorese were competing for economic and territorial power on East Timor. Timorese and Topasses ended their military alliance after the rebellions in the 18th century. After all, the only thing they seemed to have in common was the urge of resisting the Portuguese. The Topasses strengthened their influence after the collapse of the Wehale kingdom. The decline of the kingdoms' powers made Topasses take over key positions in the indigenous exchange system. By doing that they were able to exercise political influence within the Timorese princedoms.[17] Despite limited resources the Portuguese gradually introduced a European economic system. Maybe because of limited resources they still had to operate trough the medium of

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[14] C. R Boxer: Portuguese Timor: A Rough Island Story, 1515-1960. Page 355.

[15] Jill Jolliffe: East Timor, page 31.

[16] Schulte Nordholt: Atoni, page 181 – 183.

[17] Taylor, J.G: East Timor, page 8.

exchange. The Timorese had to produce more than before for export and that indicates an increased Portuguese hegemony. *"(…) the concrete effects of these changes were limited. What, in other societies, might have produced fundamental structural changes, resulted paradoxically in the strengthening of the basic aspects of Timorese society"*[18]

John Taylor even adds that the Timorese success in maintaining their way of life is unique in a Southeast Asian context. In other words; no other territory within the region had the same internal strength to resist colonial pressure. However Taylor does not conduct any comparative analysis and does not provide any additional sources to back up the idea of a strengthened indigenous system.

2.2.5 Pacification

By the end of the 19th century the Portuguese intensified efforts to undermine the indigenous system of kinship exchange. The goal was to derive more profit out of this outpost in Asia. The brutality increased when the Portuguese brought in more troops. The Melbourne Argus reported August 1912 that 3000 Timorese were killed and 4000 captured. As a result, the Portuguese finally had a chance to react against the exchange system. The colony was divided into new administrative units which undermined the position of the liurai. Administrative power were given to the unit below the kingdom level; the leaders of the sucos. The goal of this pacification program was to end the influence of kinship alliances. Again the Portuguese had limited success. The suco heads would still communicate with the liurais for support. The "pacification" program did not reach the goal of replacing the Timorese political system. Instead the colonial and the local system co-existed.

Again John G. Taylor points out that although the kingdoms were abolished; *"(…) the ideologies legitimizing the traditional political hierarchy and the rituals*

[18] Taylor, J.G: East Timor, page 9.

exchange were perpetuated."[19] Taylor keeps repeating the keyword "exchange-system" when he presents the colonial history. He presents a long list of features or elements of the exchange concept but does not define what exchange de facto is. Nonetheless it is quite obvious that this is actually about identity or unity or a recipe to maintain social order and a common cultural understanding. Indeed it is about cementing a traditional class based society where the privileged stay rich and the unprivileged stay poor without objections. In other cultures, religion may serve the same purpose as exchange did in Timor. Taylor is obviously fascinated, but seems to forget other possible factors which could contribute to this unity.

2.2.6 An Ethnic Melting-Pot

One factor is ethnicity. The old records do not describe any major ethnic clashes. The island has been described as a melting-pot of ethnic groups. [20] The island was a sort of a racial meeting-point and welcomed Malays, Arabs, Chinese and Africans. They "merged" instead of segregating in different ethnic groups. The merger was of course not 100 percent complete and Timor has even today several indigenous groups. Nonetheless, the diversity is limited and has not led to major conflicts. Another relevant factor is language. Not until recent days has language caused tension. Before the Portuguese and the Indonesian rulers, this was not an issue. I would argue that it is a lot easier for a small and homogeneous population to gain unity than a diverse and big population. Look at the neighbors in Indonesia and the still ongoing process in building a nation. Some will say the state is not likely to succeed ever. I do not argue that the Timor expert Taylor is wrong, but just add some factors to explain the strength of indigenous unity and resistance against the colonial powers. And the fact sill remains; centuries of Portuguese rule did not manage to eradicate local socio-political structures in East Timor.

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[19] Taylor, J. G., East Timor, page 12.

[20] Mendes Correa quoted in H. G. Schulte Northolt, The Political System of the Atoni of Timor, 1971, page 23.

What is the difference between Taylor's and de Sousa's "verdict" on the indigenous administrative system versus the colonial impact? Firstly, the two scholars seem to apply two different words to the same phenomenon. Taylor talks about exchange while de Sousa emphasizes hierarchy. I would argue that this is purely a semantic difference. Exchange was a political and economic administration based on the hierarchy from kingdom to villagers. De Sousa defined is as a balanced co-existence while Taylor claims they existed in a rather uneasy truce. De Sousa says Portuguese colonialism in Timor was based on "recognition of traditional powers on seeking unification"[21] while Taylor labels it as attempts of pacification.

2.2.7 de Sousa versus Taylor

In a general perspective it is quite obvious that supporters of colonialism would embrace de Sousa and opponents would take Taylor's side. What "side" should academics take? The colonial history of East Timor is filled with bloodshed and clashes between Portuguese and Timorese. Historical data provides numerous examples of systematic exploitation and killings. Most of the production was made for export and for Portuguese profit. No records I have come across reveal any indication of colonial desire to invest in local infrastructure, education or health. In this picture it is hard to verify a theory based on harmony between Portuguese and Timorese. It is fair to assume that the upholding of exchange/hierarchy was not based on the good will of the colonizer. The 1909 decree indeed recognized important elements of the indigenous administration. But we have to read any historical document in a historical context. For centuries the Portuguese had made several efforts to crush the exchange system and the hierarchy based on kinships. Still the only way to make business was to accept the existence of such a system. In the 18th and 19th century the Portuguese seemed to live with this status quo because the production was limited.

[21] I.C de Sousa Portuguese Colonization & Timorese Nationalism, page 190.

In the 20th century, Portugal demanded more profit from the colony. Hence, a cash crops system was introduced with a clear goal of getting a surplus from the island. The change of policies required extended use of forced labour to increase the production. The same process in integrating colonies more into the world economy happened in many other countries in Asia and Africa. The change of economic demands led to the pacification earlier mentioned. The indigenous exchange system did not assure enough production for Portugal; hence the attacks on the hierarchy were intensified. It is essential to evaluate economic motives in order to analyze the changing Portuguese political and military strategy in East Timor. I doubt that Timor was colonized and kept as a colony for centuries for "cultural exchange" reasons.

2.2.8 The Modern Liurai

Nonetheless, every colonial ruler in Southeast Asia had to deal with local business cultures if they wanted business. So what is so unique about the Timorese system of exchange? One answer is the strength of the indigenous political system at Timor. This political construction may have contributed to the strength of nationalism in East Timor. Even in recent history, the political construction of liurais has been the glue for organizing resistance and for mass mobilizing. On the other hand liurais have been a destabilizing factor and caused diversion and an obstacle to the legitimacy of today's East Timor. This could sound like a contradiction in terms but illustrates the complexity of the hierarchical structures.

Liurais did not receive any special privileges from the dominating Fretilin party. This could be explained by the fact that many of them cooperated with the Portuguese and were rewarded for their support. To "Sponsor" liurais was an attempt from the Portuguese to penetrate the solid local hierarchy. As a response to limited influence in Fretilin, many liurais supported two other parties. Liurais were also refugees in West Timor after independence and are said to be responsible for security threats against the new state. The government of East Timor had to negotiate with liurais to prevent more

instability in 2002. The more I study the political history of East Timor, the more convinced I am that without liurais the outcome would be different.

2.3 Timorese Nationalism

2.3.1 Japanese Invasion

The Timorese tried for hundreds of years to get rid of its oppressor. Japan managed the task in a few days. On February 19th 1942 they landed 1000 troops in Dili and 5000 at Kupang. They were not welcomed as liberators and Timorese joined the allies to fight the Japanese. East Timor paid a high price for two and half years of Japanese occupation. Brutality, war-induced famine and ruthless food expropriation probably took 40.000 lives.[22] Other Southeast Asian colonies were "rewarded" by gradually or more or less instant independence as a result of World War II. The colonial powers were weakened and local nationalist movements strengthened after the war. The infrastructure and the economy in East Timor were in ruins. The people were not rewarded with independence for their effort to fight the Japanese. Instead the Portuguese resumed their administration in Dili. The lack of an earlier decolonization process in East Timor was not a result of a particular "evil East Timor strategy". The reason is simply that the people did not yet develop any visible nationalism. Indeed many Timorese had a strong urge for centuries to kick out the colonial power. But these anti-Portuguese sentiments did not hold the signs of nationalism. People were dissatisfied with colonial presence but did not yet define any alternative to colonial rule. By the end of World War II, neighbours like Indonesia and Malaya developed a strong nationalist framework and this led to their independence.

[22] Jill Jolliffe: East Timor, page 46.

2.3.2 The April Coup

Ironically, external events more or less forced the political elite in Dili to react and to develop nationalism in 1974. On April 25th, the Portuguese Armed Forces Movement (AFM) overthrew the fascist Caetano regime. This was a wake up call for the intellectuals in East Timor. Almost overnight they were allowed to form political movements and parties. The coup took them by surprise. The small, educated indigenous elite had been discussing issues concerning liberation and development since the middle of the 60s. But the ideas were vague without ideological frameworks and without clear goals. Indeed, in late 50s anti-colonial rebellion attacked the Portuguese. The nationalist movements later argued that their ideological roots came from the rebellion, but I have not seen this claim verified.

A sudden shift towards a democratic direction in Portugal opened the gate to decolonization in East Timor. First The Timorese Democratic Union (UDT) was formed and its programme called for self determination within a federation with Portugal. The second party to be established, The Timorese Social Democratic Association (ASDT), called for a gradual independence through reforms. The new party suggested a period of three to eight years to prepare the country for independence. ASDT later changed the name to Fretilin. A third party popped up over night; the Timorese Popular Democratic Association, or Apodeti. The goal for Apodeti was integration with Indonesia. The party never managed to assure support from more than a few Timorese. The three new parties suggested three different scenarios for East Timor; close ties with Portugal, absolute independence and integration with Indonesia. Fretilin's strategy turned out to be the most successful one. After only a few months the party became far the most popular party of the three. The ideological base was defined by the founders in the *manifesto*.

2.3.3 Fretilin's Manifesto

The Revolutionary Front of Independent East Timor (Fretilin) declared itself to be the *only legitimate representative of the people*.[23] This slogan turned out to be more than a pompous manifesto, and even defined the party line even as we see it today. Fretilin was determined to unify different political directions in order to be a strong movement towards independence. I will argue that the goal to build a party as the only legitimate representative of the people also indicates a strong hesitation against cooperation with any other political groupings. The question is whether this attitude has led to an arrogance which is in nature anti democratic. I shall discuss and elaborate this point of view later in this thesis.

Fretilin looked at itself as a forefront movement for independence. It called for a total abolition of colonialism and demanded immediate negotiation with Portugal to achieve the status as an independent state. The manifest called for United Nation to supervise the process of decolonisation until the country achieved full independence. Fretilin's manifesto rejected corruption, racism, exploitation and neo-colonialism. The ideological base expressed in the manifest is "a concept of social democracy". According to the manifest, Fretilin intended to establish cooperatives all over the country. These units would be in charge of all production, distribution and even consumption in the agricultural sector.

The party program suggested an agrarian reform to expropriate every large farm. The land will be "returned to the people and will be used within the cooperative system or by state enterprises." The central cooperative in the capital Dili would have a monopoly on all import and export of products. A second reform covered the education sector. The literacy was at the time extremely high. Fretilin's ambition was to eliminate illiteracy by elimination of the colonialist educational system and then build up a new

[23] Fretilin's manifesto is listed in the appendix of "East Timor – Nationalism & Colonialism", page. 327 – 336.

system. The manifesto does not contain specific ideological or theoretical terms, and is rather vague when it comes to the chosen political platform. Instead the document is filled with practical politics. The manifesto reminds me of an NGO document rather than a paper to define a new political party. It is filled with specific and practical suggestion in order to improve people's lives. The manifesto insists on foreign aid but within an independent context.

At first glance, it is hard to see a specific political framework in the manifesto. The program uses the term *social democratic*, but includes some "light" elements of communism. One of the leaders, Jose Ramos-Horta, supported social democracy defined as "freedom of ideas and expression on the one hand and the mixed economy on the other."[24] The ideology was shaped in the mid 70s. This was the successful era of social democracies in Scandinavia. Countries like Norway and Sweden built up welfare states with a fair distribution of wealth. Fretilin leaders might have been inspired by the result of these politics. Scandinavian countries established co-operatives to organize distribution and sale of agricultural products. Fretilin moved one step forward with the idea of letting the cooperatives be in charge of production as well.

2.3.4 The Leaders

Why did the party emphasize so much the needs of the rural population? The founders of the party came from the small, educated political elite in Dili. Early they realized the need of a wider political base. Leaders moved to the countryside and established regional sub-committees. They worked closely with the poor rural population and created the cooperatives that the manifesto (later) called for. It is quite obvious that the party program was influenced by the experience they adopted in practical party work. That could explain why we do not see any explicit ideology outlined. Fretilin claimed that the colonial structure of the agriculture was based on the needs of the Portuguese and

[24] See Nacroma, 31 August 1974.

did not benefit the population. Most people could not read or write and health care was nearly non existent. The party program explicitly expresses the way to fundamentally change the distribution of wealth.

Some observers described the presence of a fraction of "leftist hardliners" influenced by so called Afro-Marxism. Fretilin did not like to talk about any connection to communism. In an interview in 1975, one of the founders, Nicolau Lobato said*: "I do not know of any communists here, but I cannot read minds"*. The journalists wanted to know whether Fretilin was inspired by populist or socialist ideas*: "We don't know about such names. (…) We are a liberation front which gathers together people of any ideology, who will defend the independence of East Timor"*.[25] Lobato didn't actually deny any communist link, and his reply leaves it up to the journalists present to interpret and read between the lines.

I think it would have been political suicide for Fretilin to be labelled as "communist". After all this was in the middle of the cold war and Fretilin depended on international support to reach the goal of full independence. At the same time there was no doubt that the party had communist elements. But a communist label would make this task impossible. Another reason was purely internal. Fretilin was after all the *only legitimate representative of the people*. They wanted to attract all segments of the population. A strictly defined ideology would have had the opposite effect; it would limit their support base.

Fretilin stands for Frente Revolucionaria de Timor Leste Independente. "Front" indicates a move away from s party type structure and a desire not to restrict the movement to any specific political philosophy.[26] Fretilin emphasized struggle for independence as the raison d'etre and wanted to include and not to exclude. They simply took some ideas from here there and put them together. This could illustrate that East

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[25] Jill Jolliffe and Michael Richardson, Interview with Nicolau Lobato, Dili, November 26th 1975.

[26] Jill Jolliffe: East Timor, page 64.

Timorese nationalism is different from other nationalist movements in Southeast Asia. It was developed at a time when the rest of the region was already decolonized. It was based on the interests of farmers and not based on the ambitions of urban political elite. In fact, urban areas and urban elite were very limited in East Timor. The economy was based on agriculture and most of the population lived in rural areas. While nationalist movements in other states in the region had to "construct" a sense of belonging together, East Timor could base the policies on an already existing unity. The political framework was probably kept blurred on purpose – to attract as many people as possible and prevent internal disputes.

2.3.5 True to Traditions

Scholars like Taylor claim that Fretilin succeeded because the party respected and partly incorporated the traditional exchange system. This is an interesting point of view. Many revolutions have faced problems and failed at the countryside. They have tried to force new ideas and structures on a traditionally oriented rural class. Fretilin did not try to turn the village structure up-side down by introducing new structures. Instead the party worked trough the traditional power structure. The changes they implemented were practical and did not challenge the local belief systems, according to Taylor. This could be true, but I find some weakness in Taylor's theory of a Fretilin symbiosis with traditional values. The traditional exchange system differs a lot from the modern co-operative construction Fretilin introduced. The way of distributing the products is not the same. All decisions in an agricultural co-operative were supposed to be taken democratically. Half the crop was given to the families involved and half to be traded with other co-operatives and the Fretilin-administration.[27] A journalist who visited one of the production units described the atmosphere among the farmers: "*The people are still suspicious of the idea (…). They have been drawn into similar collective projects by*

[27] John G. Taylor, East Timor, page 34.

either the Portuguese or the Japanese only to find themselves dispossessed."[28] Moreover, in later revisions of the party programme, Fretilin implemented systematic changes to transform the agricultural sector. I would suggest that Fretilin at least reformed the traditional exchange system. There are other factors indicating that Fretilin did not fully respect the exchange system. To a large extent the party refused to support the liurai's powerbase. The result was, as mentioned earlier, that many liurais supported UDT in 1974 – 75.

Fretilin's strong presence all over the island can explain why they became the most popular party. Urban elite party members moved to the countryside and implemented programs concerning agriculture, health and education. Despite not giving the liurai special privileges, the strategy was to approach the liurai first in order to secure the cooperation from the villagers. A transitional government consisting of Fretilin, UDT and the Portuguese Governor was established. Fretilin had to compromise on their demand for immediate independence. It was a challenge for Fretilin to cooperate; after all the party was the only legitimate representative of the people. Fretilin's dominance in the coalition was quite obvious. UDT moved to Fretilin's politics in most areas and observers claimed that the transitional government proposals were written by Fretilin members.[29] Furthermore the process of decolonization was a struggle between the future UDT wanted for the island, and the future Fretilin wanted.

2.3.6 Coup Attempt

Some observers note that leftist group within Fretilin became stronger and blocked the more moderate fraction from taking part in the international decolonization conference in Macao. "*Their view of Fretilin as the sole representative of the Timorese*

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[28] From an interview with vice-president in Fretilin, Lobato: Grant Evans, Eastern (Portuguese) Timor. Australian Union of Students, Feb. 1975, page 9.

[29] Interview with Major Jonatas, Lisbon, February 15th 1985.

people, and their equation of it with a liberation front along Portuguese-African lines, led them to denigrate negotiations with other parties. (…) These notions led them to dismiss Macao as largely irrelevant."[30] Taylor and Jolliffe write that UDT orchestrated a coup attempt, followed by a brief civil war. The chaos made the Portuguese authorities flee the island. Before the collapse of the coalition UDT tried to force Fretilin to drop its left wing but failed. Fretilin won the "war against" its former coalition partner and declared the Democratic Republic of East Timor on 28th of November 1975.

It appears that Fretilin succeeded in creating a nation-state in an economic, political, social and cultural sense. Observers reported that the self declared government in a short time managed to achieve legitimacy among the majority of the population as well as managing security. The former Australian consul in Dili, J.S Dunn reported:

> *"Whatever the shortcomings of the Fretilin administration, it clearly enjoyed widespread support from the population, including many hitherto UDT supporters. (…) I had never before witnessed such demonstrations of spontaneous warmth and support from the indigenous population."*[31]

It is problematic to generalize from one enthusiastic eye witness report. Yet I have seen no one object to the notion of Fretilin as a unifier for the new nation. Fretilin's organisation structure and style of decision-making could contribute to explain the lack of serious conflicts. The leadership or management was divided between a Central Committee, an Executive Committee and a Political Military Committee. The Central Committee had 52 members and consensus was usually achieved after hours of debate and discussion. This rather formal and complex power structure may have neutralised potential fractions and divisions "in the name of consensus." The independence lasted

[30] John G. Taylor: East Timor, page 49.

[31] Dunn, The Timor Affair, page 7.

only a short time. The 7th of December Indonesian forces invaded East Timor. It is not possible to verify, but probably 60.000 people were killed in the months to come[32]. At the most, Indonesia deployed 40.000 soldiers on the tiny island.

2.3.7 Internal Strife

I mentioned earlier that this is not a historical paper. That is why I will not emphasize the horror of 25 years of Indonesian occupation. I use the term horror because a substantial amount of reports have revealed the brutality of the occupants. Still it is necessary to present some historical fragments in order to explain the development of Timorese nationalism during the occupation. Ideological divisions and personal- and political battles between the two most dominant leaders of the resistance movement during this period effects the governing of East Timor even today. The conflicts between them can contribute to an understanding of the rather confusing ideological foundation of Fretilin. President of East Timor, Jose Alexandre Gusmao, and prime minister Maro Bin Amude Alkatiri were among the founders of Fretilin. Gusmao led the resistance struggle until he was captured by Indonesian troops in 1982. Gusmao has almost from the beginning been known as a "moderate" politician who repeatedly warned against left wing elements in the nationalist movement. The Front was an inclusive coalition of conservative, moderate and radical nationalists.[33] Yet some Timor-experts at that time (1975) offer another version of Fretilin's political foundation. Dunn reported:

> *"It is clear that Fretilin is not a Communist Party, though it has a left wing. (…) The party structure tends to give the impression that it is Marxist, but in fact the organisation appears to have been inspired by*

[32] Lopez da Cruz, President of the Provisional Government and former UDT leader claimed in February 1976 that 60.000 East Timorese had been killed since the invasion.

[33] Jill Jolliffe, East Timor, page 153: James Dunn, "Communist Influence of Fretilin Prior to the 1975 Invasion."

the structures of Fretilin and PAIGC[34]*, rather than ideological motives.*

I am still inclined to the view that it is more populist than Marxist."[35]

Alkatiri belonged from the very start to the radical left and was one of the architects when Fretilin adopted Marxist-Leninism as the party's ideology in 1977.[36] He never kept a secret of being influenced by the successful liberation movements in Portuguese Africa and Alkatiri became the general secretary of Fretilin. Jill Jolliffe insists the influence did not imply a direct link to Marxism:

"Despite their reading of Marx, the left did not regard themselves as Marxists but as nationalists who believed they could draw on Marxism and adapt it to nationalist ends."[37]

2.3.8 African Inspiration

Nonetheless, The Nationalist-Marxism of Samora Machel's Frente de Libertacao de Mosambique (Mosambique Liberation Front, Frelimo) inspired and provided the working model of Fretilin.[38] The party adopted revolutionary armed struggle and the land

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[34] PAIGC: Partido Africano da Indepencia da Guine e Cabo Verde (African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde).

[35] Dunn quoted in Jill Joliffe's East Timor", page 223.

[36] Dennis Shoesmith: Timor-Leste: Divided Leadership in a Semi-Presidential System, in Asian Survey 43:2, page 235.

[37] Jolliffe refers to Basil Davidson's "Eye of the Storm", which compare African and Timorese nationalism, in Joliffe, East Timor page 153.

[38] Peter Carey, "Introduction", in East Timor at the Crossroads: The Forging of a Nation, eds. Peter Carey and G. Carter Bentley (London: Cassell, 1995), page 5.

reform program from African nationalists.[39] The President of Fretilin, Xavier do Amaral was not aligned with the left. Hence he was charged with treason and his supporters were purged from the Central Committee after the left wing of the party became strong.[40] Fretilin apparently chose the same course as Frelimo in Mosambique, which declared itself a Marxist-Leninist party in February 1977. As a result of the turn to the left, Gusmao left the party but continued as guerrilla leader in the Falintil movement[41].

2.3.9 Ghosts from the Past

The horrors and bestiality committed by Indonesian troops during 25 years of occupation shocked the world. The systematic killing of a people bore resemblance to the Pol Pot regime in Cambodia. Even The Nobel Peace Price Committee recognised the resistance against the occupation. But in 2000 Fretilin admitted the murders of several hundred dissidents and political prisoners in the aftermath of Indonesia's invasion. In December 1975 150 prisoners, mostly from the pro-Indonesian party Apodeti, but also from pro-Portugal UDT, were executed. Fretilin disclosed a series of bloody internal purges carried out in the early years that followed the Indonesian invasion. Probably 200 Fretilin dissidents were killed in this period. *"Now the war is over, it is time to rehabilitate a lot of names and particularly put an end to the suffering of their families"*, said Mari Alkatiri.[42] The Fretilin-led executions were nothing compared with the killings committed by Indonesian troops. Nonetheless the information about internal political

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[39]. Nicol, Timor: The Stillborn Nation (Camberwell, Victoria, Australia: Widerscope 1978), page 94.

[40] Ed. Sarah Niner: To Resist Is to Win! The Autobiography of Xanana Gusmao (Richmond, Victoria, Australia: Aurora Books, 2000), page 49.

[41] Falintil: Forcas Armadas de Libertacao Nacional de Timor-Leste (National Liberation Forces of East Timor); Fretilin army.

[42] Sydney Morning Herald May 15th, 2000.

violence in the Nationalist movement gives a less black and white picture of the movement.

The foundation of nationalism could not be erased by the brutality of occupation. The voter turnout in the 1999 referendum was almost 100 percent, despite the fact that people risked being killed by Indonesian militia if they participated. 78 percent said no to Indonesian rule. East Timor became an independent state on the 20th of May 2002. The election gave Fretilin nearly 60 percent of the votes. Between August 1999 and May 2002, the UN was in charge of the process of nation building. The United Nations had never before been in a position where it had to build a government structure from the lowest level imaginable.

Chapter one presented the problems of labelling Fretilin's political foundation. Chapter two has probably made the picture even more confusing. Party leaders, scholars and other observers can simply not agree on defining what Fretilin de facto is. It is practically impossible to come up with a verifiable definition of their political platform. I have outlined the confusion on purpose; partly to present interesting features of the party and partly to illustrate that fragmented facts and statements alone cannot alone explain a specific type of nationalism and ideology. Again we are reminded that because of the lack of a defined methodology and a comprehensive theoretical framework, the result will appear fragmented and leave unanswered questions. The two next theory based chapters about nationalism and political ideology will try to fill in some of the blanks.

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CHAPTER III

IMAGINED AND INVENTED NATION

3.1 What is a Nation?

3.1.1 Introduction

Chapter one outlined the troubles of defining key concepts like nation and nationalism. Reasons given were both historical and geographical. The ideas were born in a specific time in European history. Still we cannot dismiss attempts of generalizing in order to come up with one general definition. After all it is not acceptable to define nation and nationalism for each country in the world in order to grasp every possible element of the concepts. The challenge we are facing is the fine line between generalizing and specifying. I will first apply a broad approach and then narrow the scope to discuss one specific theoretical framework. It is an effort to analyze where East Timor fits in the discussion on the nature of nation and nationalism.

3.1.2 A Modern Phenomenon

Most scholars agree that nationalism is a modern phenomenon. The disagreement is about the causes of nationalism and whether nationalism is good or bad. Furthermore scholars differ over the relationship between nationalism and modernization and political power. The terms nation and nationalism are closely connected. In brief the discussion about nationalism has been as follows[1]:

[1] Introduction to "Nationalism", John Hutchinson and Anthony Smith (ed), page 47.

Elie Kedourie: Nationalism arose as a result of politics replacing religion as the key to salvation. Nationalism is an extremely powerful but destructive force.

Ernest Gellner: The modern society's need of cultural homogeneity creates nationalism. Nationalism is rooted in modernity but is a relatively weak force.

Tom Nairn: Nationalism is invariably populist, and its effect is to induct the masses into politics.

Eric Hobsbawn: The Nation is an invented tradition.

Benedict Anderson: The nation is an imagined political community.

3.1.3 Stalin's Nation

What is a nation? Joseph Stalin introduced a set of objective and subjective elements. He argued that a nation only come into existence when several elements have come together; especially economic life, language and a common psychological make-up or a common culture.[2] A nation is primarily a community; a definite community of people. This national community is inconceivable without a common language. It is only when all these characteristics are present together that we have a nation. Take away even one of the other characteristics and the nation ceases to be a nation. I find it hard to find a place for East Timor in Stalin's definition. Strictly speaking the colony did not share a common economic life, apart from serving the Portuguese masters. The economic infrastructure of a colony was to produce goods for export and not to redistribute the profit among the colonized people. As an independent state East Timor does not have one but several languages. Stalin underlined that he did not mean one common official language, but a common language that most members of the community understand. Still

[2] "The Nation", in Marxism and the Natural Question, from the Essential Stalin: Major Theoretical Writings 1905 – 1952, ed. Bruce Franklin (Croom Helm: London, 1973), page 57 – 61.

Timor does not fit in with the diversity of languages including Bahasa Indonesia, Tetum, English, Portuguese and many local dialects. One member of the community does not necessarily understand what another member of the same community says. In a broad sense we could argue that East Timorese share a common culture, but this feature alone is not enough to be classified as a nation, according to Stalin.

3.1.4 Renan's Good Nation

What is a nation? It could be a soul or a spiritual principle. Ernest Renan rejected the static concept of a nation and identified it as a form of morality. The nation is a solidarity sustained by a distinctive historical consciousness.[3] A heroic past, of great men, is the social principle of a nation. The shared memory of common glories in the past and a common will in the present are the essential conditions of being a nation. Renan defined nation as something good, necessary and as a guarantee of liberty. His rather poetic and panegyric definition was clearly influenced by the spirit of the French revolution.

Nonetheless, there are interesting parallels to the sufferings and the sacrifices Timorese freedom fighters went through in the name of a future nation-state. Brutalities committed by Portuguese and Indonesian authorities aimed to pacify the population but had the opposite effect. Timorese freedom fighters often referred to the "martyrs" of the resistance in order to motivate and build moral support to continue the fight. Even today the government keeps alive the spirit of the many who sacrificed their life in the name of the nation and a future nation-state.

But still I question this explicit moral definition of a nation as something good. Renan's work was published during the nineteenth century and predicted an end of the European nations replaced by a European confederation. Impressively enough he was

[3] "Qu'est-ce qu'une nation: translated by Ida Mae Snyder (Calmann-Levy: Paris, 1882), page 26 – 29.

proven right to some extent. He concluded that a nation has only a right to exist as long as it is "good" for the people. History has shown that even "bad" nations exist. They do not cease to exist when an authoritarian regime rules. Is East Timor good, bad or something in between? The hypothesis in this thesis is that monopolizing of power is the outcome of the specific nature of East Timorese nationalism. This line implies something "bad" and does not represent Renan's "good nation". Later discussion intends to verify or dismiss the hypothesis, but nonetheless it illustrates that defining nation as something pure is problematic. In Renan's defence one might assume that an "evil Timorese nation" would not survive in the long run because can the spirit of a nation be kept alive if the members consider "it" as something unwanted? Nonetheless, the theory leads to unanswered questions telling me that the metaphysical and theological abstractions given by Renan are not enough to decipher the features of a nation.

3.1.5 Weber's Approach

Max Weber did not apply a moral approach. He examined the nation as a prestige community, endowed with a sense of cultural mission. He disagreed with Stalin's categories and argued that nations are too various to be defined in terms of any one criterion. Weber affiliates nations to ethnic communities as populations unified by a myth of common descent.[4] Nation is not identical with the people of a state, a community speaking the same language or common blood. The national solidarity could however be linked with a religious creed, ethnic elements or to memories of a common political destiny. Weber tends to emphasize a common political project as a glue of a nation. He made his theory in the beginning of the twentieth century based on nation building in Europe and applies examples from European nations..

[4] "The Nation", in from Max Weber: Essays of Sociology, translated and edited by H.H Gerth and C. Wright-Mills (Routledge & Kegan Paul: London, 1948), page 171 – 177, 179.

Weber rarely refers to other continents. All the new nations popping up in the former colonies in Africa, Asia and Latin America after World War II, could have made Weber reform his own theory. The only common political goal was strictly speaking to get rid of the colonial powers. Many of the new nations did not share a common ethnicity but were purely products of how the colonies divided the world between each other. Timor was cut in half with Portuguese on one side and Dutch on the other side. The nationalist movement has never raised the voice to unify the two parts of the peninsula. The goal was to take over the boundaries defined by the colonisers.

Even before colonisation, Timor was divided into several kingdoms. Even though they interacted and balanced the power in a rather harmonic way, Timorese never considered themselves to be one, single unit. Weber's "myth of a common descent" is in this perspective largely created by the colonial experience. Of course the population of a relatively small island like Timor have always shared a wide range of socio-cultural similarities. After all they are divided by the ocean and the distance from one side of the island to the other is not that big. The islanders rarely interacted with other Southeast Asian territories. Nonetheless it is highly questionable if ethnicity or national solidarity are the factors to explain the concept of the Timorese nation.

3.1.6 Connor's Criticism

To avoid labelling theories on nations as inconclusive or expired, we need to apply some more contemporary approaches which actually take the post World War II nations into consideration. Walker Connor's project was partly to make a clear distinction between the terms state and nation. The Latin word nation conveyed the idea of common blood ties. Later the word was also being used to describe the inhabitants of a country regardless of the blood ties. Connor points out the tendency of employing the term nation as a substitute for the term state. The reason for this practice could be that identifying the people as the front of all political power in the 17th century created a doctrine where the

people and the state are almost synonymous.[5] Merging the two terms rejects the possibility that one state consists of many nations. The French nation was declared at a time when the members did not define themselves in the term of one single nation thus they shared one single state.

Connor insists that even if most states today call themselves nation-states, only a few of them are de facto nation-states. Connor criticizes the common use or abuse of several key terms, as nation-state, nationalism, nation-building and ethnicity. He lashes out at fellow scholars for lack of "academic background and footnoted materials." His project appears to be retrospective with an implicit appeal to look back to the roots of the terms and to the classic theorists like Max Weber and Ernest Barker. According to Weber a group of people need to know what they are not before they know what they are. Barker followed this logic when he concluded that members of an ethnic group are merely an ethnic group and not a nation until they become aware of the group's uniqueness.[6] Connors work is rhetorical and probably meant to create an academic debate. It tends to be less useful as a tool to understand the nature of for instance the Timorese nation. However the reminder of the distinction between state and nation is crucial to separate rhetoric from leaders of a state from what a nation de facto is. The Fretilin government might use terms like "nation-building" and "in the interest of the nation" when it actually means state-building referring to pure state-interests. Connor separates between pre-national people and a real nation, but does not make a specific distinction in order to establish "when a nation is a nation." At what point were the Timorese people aware of that they did not only belong to a village, a kingdom but to have something in common with all peoples in East Timor? The degree of such a consciousness is hard to detect because it is an ongoing process. Hence I find several methodological problems of applying this theory in the case of East Timor.

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[5] Walker Connor: A Nation is a Nation, is a State, is an Ethnic Group, is a…, Ethnic and Racial Studies, ¼ (1978), page 379-88.

[6] Walker Connor: A Nation is a Nation, is a State, is an Ethnic Group, is a…, page 379-88.

3.2 The Nation as an Artefact

3.2.1 Asia versus Europe

The theories mentioned above list some objective and subjective features in order to call a nation a nation: Stalin's "absolute" elements, Renan's vision of the Good Nation, Weber's ethnic criteria and Connor's consciousness condition. A presentation of other theorists would produce even more criteria. We face a fundamental problem in fitting in a new state like East Timor in any of those mentioned and unmentioned theories. Indeed there are some interesting and relevant matches between theory and East Timor. But the matches are too few to make a satisfying description of the Timorese nation and nationalism.

A theory which was developed right before and during nation building processes in Europe is not easily applicable in other parts of the world. Asia and Europe share the fact that nationalism arose in opposition to imperial rule. In both continents the empires were overthrown. In Europe the dynasties disappeared from the scene. In Asia they simply withdrew to their own continent where they continued to existing economic, military and political influence.[7] Most contemporary scholars would probably agree that the impact of the indirect colonial presence was that they were used as models for nation- and state-building. In contrast to Europe, the Asian colonies took over already excising states. The boundaries were defined and drawn by the colonisers without any historical links to justify the units. At least this is the general picture and there are exceptions from the "colonial map rule." Nonetheless, most Asian states faced the problems of legitimizing their rule; they took over existing colonial structures of government and administration.

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[7] James Mayall: Nationalism and the International Order – the Asian Experience, in Michael Leifer (ed): Asian Nationalism (Routledge, London and New York, 2000), page 190.

According to James Mayall the political class monopolized the symbols of nationalism, neglecting ethnic or cultural arguments for self determination. "Self determination was thus a political principle for dislodging alien rule rather than an instrument of popular mobilization aimed at legitimizing the government."[8] What forms of nationalism do we see in Asia? Both Indonesia and Singapore have been through a rather State-centered nationalism as described above. This was adopted by the post-colonial states in an attempt to unify a diversity of cultures and ethnic groups into one. In his study of the Philippines, James Putzel concludes that nationalism has been defined as an economic and political project. The state has or at least had little ethnic and linguistic coherence. The study discusses several theories on nationalism and dismisses most of them. *"The problem with these theories of nationalism and democracy is that they curiously ignore the centrality of politics, political ideas and conscious political action."*[9] Putzel identifies Filipino nationalism as an artifact or something created. This leaves a huge gap between Putzel and more classical theorists, like Weber and Stalin. He suggests a way out, namely Benedict Anderson's idea of nationalism as imagined and the nation as an imagined community. Asia is not one homogeneous unit and East Timor is not Philippines. Nevertheless it could be relevant to test ideas of nation as an artifact with the case of East Timor.

3.2.2 Asian Nationalism

The Portuguese colony of East Timor did not have any university. Before 1970, only two students per year attended university in Lisbon, but in 1974 the number was increased to 39.[10] Most of them took up posts in government administration. The creation of urban, educated elite created vague ideas of independence and development. Timor-

[8] Asian Nationalism, page 190.

[9] James Putzel: Social Capital and the Imagined Community – Democracy and nationalism in the Philippines, in Asian Nationalism, page 171.

[10] John G. Taylor: East Timor, page 17.

experts mention general notions about nationalism discussed since the middle of the 60s. However no records I have come across reveals any attempts of mass mobilising in order to create a nationalist movement in the 60s. Portuguese-educated Timorese established parties when the political shift in Portugal allowed it. Did the East Timorese nation exist at that time? I would argue that nationalism has to come prior to a nation. After all nationalism defines what the nation consists of. The resentment of the Portuguese rule connected people in a desire to kick them out. But no matter the theoretical approach, this factor alone is not enough to call the territory a nation or to label their resentment as nationalism. The deep rooted exchange system and hierarchy illustrated that the loyalty lines went from the villagers to the liurai. Shortly after the Portuguese coup the first theoretical work of Timorese nationalism was published. Abilio de Araujo, a member of the urban Dili elite published his work "Timorese Elites." [11] It was the first attempt to define the role of Portuguese colonialism, but more important; "*it expressed an advanced consciousness of the position of Timorese politicians as people drawn from the urban elite."*[12]

Only 22 days after the Caetano regime was overthrown in Lisbon, ADST (later Fretilin) published their manifesto. The document does not mention ethnic, religious or social arguments as raison d'etre. Instead the new party produced a long list of colonial failures and how to undo the injustice. In fact the manifesto seems to take the idea of the Timorese nation for granted and is in fact about state-building. Self determination was the political principle, something Mayall would label as typical Asian nationalism. Political ideologies vary but the continent still seems to have some features in common. Putzel is pessimistic about the nature of Asian nationalism and labels it to a large extent as anti-democratic. His case study Philippines explains his pessimism because the nationalist project has been carried most forcefully by non-democratic political currents of the right

[11] Abilio de Araujo: Timorese Elites, Jill Jolliffe and B. Reece (ed) (Canberra, 1975).

[12] Jill Jolliffe: East Timor, page 69.

and the left.[13] Similar studies of Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Vietnam, Laos and Burma would lead to some of the same conclusions. Again the picture is not one dimensional but still they all bear parallel signs of state nationalism. Observed from outside, a reasonable territorial unit for an East Timorese nation or state would be the whole island. Instead the nationalists accepted the division of west and East Timor and only demanded independence for half of the island. The border defined by Dutch and Portuguese authorities more than 400 years earlier was adopted without further discussions. The nationalists educated in Portugal made a manifest partly based on Portuguese and European ideas of a "modern nation". East Timor's constitution from 2002 is loosely based on the current Portuguese constitutional system.[14] Fretilin even chose Portuguese as the official language. The majority of the population spoke other languages, but the influential Portuguese-educated Dili-elite insisted on Portuguese as official language. The most central components of a East Timor nation were simply adopted from the Portuguese.

In early 1975 an observer in East Timor noted that 60 percent of the population supported Fretilin.[15] No polls or elections at the time verified this estimate. Only eight months after the foundation the party seemed to have mobilized the masses for the cause of nationalism. The manifesto does not try to explain to the population why Fretilin is the right choice for the future. Why was the political action alone enough to accumulate the support from the majority? The whole concept of independence seemed to derive from external factors, like border, administrative structure, language and political ideas. The classical theories on nationalism and nation cannot help us out here. Those theories were based on "something" having existed prior to the empires. The people within a territory shared a common past and at least to some extent the idea of belonging together. The

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[13] Asian Nationalism, page 171.

[14] Maurice Duverger: A New Political System Model: Semi-Presidential Government, in "Parliamentary Versus Presidential Government, ed. Arend Lijphart (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), page 148.

[15] Robin Osborne: 500-year Siesta breaks Up, Australian, 26th of February, 1975.

empires disappeared and the peoples in Europe could consolidate what already existed. The theories do not explain what the construction East Timor consists of. The notion of a nation as something constructed, fabricated or invented is obvious in the Asian experience. Hence I will apply some more contemporary theories on the case of East Timor.

3.2.3 The Invention

Marxist historian Eric Hobsbawm provides an instrumentalist approach to nationalism. He claims that nation and nationalism are simply "invented" traditions. The innovators were political elites in order to legitimize their power in a century of revolution and democratization. The motivation was and is that "historical novelty implies innovation."[16] The paradox is that modern nations claim to be something very old and antique and something natural. But this image could in fact be a construction or invented components. This make up transforms people into citizens and classes will identify themselves through nation-wide political parties within the confines of the nation. The elite invent public ceremonies and public monuments. The official state invents traditions include symbols like the national anthem and the flag. In fact, this process converges state, nation and society. The ultimate goal of the invention is to make an autonomous state, according to Hobsbawm. The declaration of the short lived independent East Timor state in 1975 converged or merged the three elements: state, nation and society as well: *'Long live the Democratic Republic of East Timor. Long live the people of East Timor, free and Independent! Long live Fretilin!'*

Political scientist Paul Brass takes a similar stand with his scepticism towards primordialists, who believe ethnic groups and nations are results of something natural or primordial. Brass does not completely dismiss the idea of ethnic communities based on

[16] Eric Hobsbawn and Terence Ranger: The Invention of Tradition (CUP: Cambridge, 1983).

shared descent. But elements of ethnicity are more likely used by movements as a tool to unite the group. Brass defines this strategy as politically induced cultural change*:*

> *"the process by which elites and counter-elites within ethnic groups select aspects of the group's culture, attach new value and meaning to them, and use them as symbols to mobilize the group, to defend its interests, and to complete with other groups."*[17]

3.2.4 Mauberism

UDT was the first party to be established and became at first the largest nationalist organisation with their demand of integration with Portugal. Fretilin had high ambitions as "the sole representative of the Timorese people" and tried to figure out how to become the dominant party. Influential liurais supported UDT, and this alliance assured support from villagers as well. Against the odds Fretilin did grow to become the most popular party, and the success derived in part from its identification with the 'Maubere' or later named as "Mauberism." The word "Maubere" was originally used by one of the poorest hill-tribes. According to Taylor it means "friend", according to Jolliffe it is a common name (like Smith or Jones) and according to Shoesmith it means "my brother."

The Portuguese used the term to denigrate the Timorese peasantry – *maubere*, the backward, primitive people from the interior. [18] Fretilin turned the idea on its head to make Maubere a term of national pride. Maubere or mau bere became a popular refrain, a call for Timorese unity, and being a mau bere was a synonym to being a son of Timor.

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[17] Elite Groups, Symbol Manipulation and Ethnic Identity among the Muslims of South Asia, in Political Identity in South Asia, ed. David Taylor and Malcolm Yapp (Curzon Press, London, 1979), page 35-43.

[18] Jill Jolliffe: East Timor, page 105.

Fretilin took a negative, patronizing word and made it the symbol of what the movement represented. The term became popular; in fact it was the conventional form of greeting in mid-1975.[19] *"The celebration of Maubere identity allowed Fretilin to Timorize the idea of 'the people' (in nationalist sense) and "the masses" (in a revolutionary sense)"*[20] Shoesmith recognizes the redefinition of Maubere identity as powerful tools both in nationalist and ideological sense. The ideological impact of "Mauberism" will be discussed later.

Brass would probably label this phenomenon a selected aspect of a group's culture. Moreover, Fretilin did attach a new value and meaning to the term, and used the aspects as a symbol to mobilize the people. Intentionally or not Fretilin applied the strategy of politically induced cultural change. Apart from this cultural element, Fretilin based its rhetoric and programme on modern, western ideas of democracy, human rights and autonomy. Such a conclusion does not give much credit to primordialists because I basically do not label the nature of the Timorese nation as something natural or primordial. Hobsbawm claims that nationalism is invented and the nation is an invented construction. Fretilin's "make up" or unifying instrument was the Timorization of the different ethnic groups at the eastern part of the island. Mauberism mixed with external[21] political ideas transformed the identity of people from belonging to a village or kingdom to belonging to a nation.

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[19] John G. Taylor: East Timor, page 42.

[20] Dennis Shoesmith: Timor-Leste, page 239.

[21] Terms like "External ideas" and "democracy as western" is not meant to discredit the Timorese resistance by implying they imported all their ideas. I simply refer to the origin of ideas like democracy, human rights and civil society. The ideas might be universal, but I chose not going into that debate in this thesis.

3.2.5 Is Nationalism Fake?

Nationalism became an efficient tool of mass mobilization in order to create a front against colonialism. The resistance started 400 years earlier, often with an impressive ability to gain support and make alliances against the Portuguese military forces. But the Topass-liurai alliance for instance, was not based on comradeship but on pure strategy purposes. After attacking the Portuguese on the battlefield the alliance disappeared and liurais and Topasses worked against each other. Moreover nationalism did not only support people's resentment of the colonizer; it also presented a recipe of a future after decolonisation. The new political elite in East Timor invented traditions by creating symbols like Mauberism, a national anthem and a flag. Jill Jolliffe described the ambience in Dili on November 28th 1975, the day Fretilin declared independence: "*The new national anthem rang out, in the unfamiliar cadences of the pentatonic scale of traditional Timorese music.*"[22]

Applying the theories of Hobsbawm and Brass leaves the impression that Timorese nationalism is an artefact, a fabrication or something fake. This again implies negative connotations on the phenomenon of nationalism. In the spirit of the French revolution, Renan labelled the nation as something good. A few centuries later it has all turned bad. At least Hobsbawm is influenced by a Marxist way of analyzing history and progress. Even classical Marxists could approve nationalism, but only as a *stage* some societies have to go through according to their dialectic philosophy. To assimilate nations and nationality as something false by implicitly questioning how genuine the phenomena are could be a sidetrack. At least this strategy could disguise important features and make it difficult to define terms like the Timor nation and Timorese nationalism. Hobsbawm and Brass have contributed with better understanding of nationalism outside the European sphere. Their approaches make it easier to analyse the colonial impact in Asia. Nonetheless they leave some unanswered question about what the invention de facto is. Benedict Anderson's concept of the Imagined Community might offer some answers.

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[22] Jill Jolliffe, East Timor, page 212.

3.2.6 Imagined Communities

Observers noted that more than 2000 witnessed the independence ceremony in 1975 with cheers, embraces, singing and weeping. The message in the national anthem was clear: 'Homeland! Homeland, East Timor our nation!' Timorese poet, Francisco Borja da Costa described the sacrifices leading up to independence[23]:

Crimes litter the land,
The people flee
Or are drawn into fratricidal carnage.
Corpses mount,
Soaking in bloody rivers.
In the confusion of black smoke
Timor's skies darken,
The stench of burning bodies drifts
From the flaming palhotas
Fired by order of the UDT gangsters.

The memory of the nameless victims of wars who sacrificed their life in the name of the "homeland" is a powerful symbol for nationalism. They stand for great examples of patriotism and heroism. Tombs of Unknown Soldiers are emblems of the modern culture of nationalism. Benedict Anderson says the tombs are "saturated with ghostly national imaginings."[24] Reminiscence of those who suffered and died because of the UDI-coup contributes to legitimize the Fretilin-defined nation. The poet exaggerates about "bloody rivers", labels the enemy as "gangsters". After all it is poetry but illustrates the magical effect of sacrifices and death. "The idea of ultimate sacrifice comes only with an idea of purity, through fatality."[25] Anderson partly outlines the significance of death to

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[23] Jill Jolliffe, East Timor, page 128.

[24] Benedict Anderson: Imagined Community, page 9.

[25] Benedict Anderson: Imagined Communities, page 144.

distinguish nationalism from political ideologies. Dying for your nation beats dying for Marxism or Liberalism. Those ideologies are not much concerned with death and immortality but nationalism and religion is. Hence Anderson identifies nationalism as a cultural rather than a political phenomenon. He seeks to identify the cultural roots of nationalism rather than its political platforms.

This point of view stands in stark contrast to contemporary political scientists who would argue that nationalism is per definition an ideology. Further discussion on nationalism in an ideological contest follows in next chapter. At this point I will just make clear the controversy in Anderson's analysis without additional debate. Undoubtedly sacrifice and death have been motivating factors to accumulate massive support for the nationalist movement in mid-1970s. Countless examples of patriotism opposed to Portuguese bullets and knives could explain the strong support for Fretilin only a few months after the party was established. Furthermore, the extreme brutality during 25 years of Indonesian rule left almost 100.000 "nameless soldiers." Indonesian troops started a new bloodshed right before the referendum in 1999, but that did not stop almost 100 percent of the registered voters from giving their vote and did not stop 78 percent of them from voting yes to independence. I stress the point of "glorious sacrifices" because it could be one of the most essential factors to understand the nature of Timorese nationalism. Taylor emphasizes on the indigenous socio-economic patters to explain the developing of a strong nationalist movement. Jolliffe emphasizes the intentions expressed by Fretilin and ends up with a rather black and white picture of the evil Portuguese and the good Timorese freedom fighters. Anderson's theoretical approach is not moralist nor isolated to local factors. The theory implies more a universal human desire for salvation. Anderson aligns nationalism with terms usually connected to religion; the nation loomed out of an immemorial past and glides into a limitless future.[26]

I presented the main idea and the definition of "the imagined community" in chapter one. Anderson disagrees with Hobsbawm and Brass's attempt to equal the

[26] Benedict Anderson: Imagined Community, page 11-12.

invention with fabrication. Instead he makes the term synonymous with imagining and creation. *"In fact, all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (…) are imagined. Communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined."*[27] The nation is an imagined political community. The nation is imagined as a community because it conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship, according to the theory. The so-called fraternity makes it possible for people to die for such limited imaginings. This sounds more like a high spirited religious or political speech than a theoretical tool. It is imperative to be more precise about what impact the imagining has on Asia in general and East Timor specifically.

3.2.7 The Last Wave

Most of the countries in Southeast Asia belong to the "Last Wave" of nation-building. The "Imagined Community"-theory does not try to fit the new autonomous areas into the original concept of nationalism born in the spirit of Enlightenment and Revolutions in America and France. Anderson recognises that the new states have their own character. That does not imply looking at post-World War II nation-building process as an isolated phenomenon. The new states blended popular nationalism with State Nationalism. Several of the new states chose European language-of-state and adopted elements of European ideologies and "imaginings" of the colonial states. The colonial powers monopolized education by introducing modern-style schools. *"Their common experience, and the amiably competitive comradeship of the classroom, gave the maps of the colony which they studied (…) a territorially specific imagined reality which was every day confirmed by the accents and physiognomies of their classmates."*[28]

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[27] Benedict Anderson: Imagined Communities, page 6.

[28] Imagined Communities, page 122.

The teacher spoke the colonial language and by that further generated the imagined community. Fretilin was well aware of the importance of language and education. Reshaping and standardizing the education system and making Portuguese the official language for a new state were the first decisions made by the new party. The most important thing about language is its capacity for generating imagined communities, according to Anderson. The Fretilin manifesto outlines political and social goals, and the theory explains why this policy in fact is a powerful nationalist tool. Fretilin continued the Portuguese effort to create imaginations in the process of building a nation.

3.2.8 Census

It might seem like a paradox and irony that nationalism in Asia was modelled on the colonial state; after all the colonies were usually anti-nationalist. Anderson explains this apparent paradox by ignoring colonial ideologies/policies and by introducing the terms *census, map and museum.* Anderson claims that these three institutions formed the way the colonial state imagined the territory is ruled over. The census created "identities" imagined by the classifying mind of the colonial state. The fiction of the census is that everyone is in it, and that everyone has one, and only one, extremely clear place. The Portuguese classified the people as Topasses, Chinese, different "tribes" and Assimilados (a small exclusive privileged group of Timorese with Portuguese father.) Official colonial documents from what today is Malaysia and Indonesia illustrate the creation of racial and often confusing identities. The large racial categories were retained and even concentrated after independence, but now redesignated and reranked.[29] The independent Malaysia could and fit the whole population is the categories 'Malaysian', 'Chinese', 'Indian' and 'Others'. Anderson labels this quantification as "feverish imaginings". The racial policy of the Portuguese Dili administration is not yet studied and documented in detail. For that reason I cannot elaborate about the specific identities created by the

[29] Charles Hirschman: The Meaning and Measures of Ethnicity in Asia: An Analysis of Census Classifications, Journal of Asian Studies 46:3.

colony. Fretilin has always emphasized the Timorese people and not on specific ethnic groups, which could indicate that Timor differs from Malaysia and Indonesia. Colonial scientists tried to justify colonialism applying racial theories. O *mundo que o portugues criou* ("The world the Portuguese created") was a best selling book in Portugal during the 40s and 50s. The author Gilberto Freyre wrote: "*…aspects of the influence of race-mixing on the social and cultural relationship between the Portuguese and Portuguese descendants."* He further added: *"in all places where this manner of colonization dominated, the prejudice of race is practically insignificant and the mixing of races, a psychological, social and, one can even say an active and creative ethnic force…*"[30]

Freyre designated his ideas by the term "Luso-tropicalismo" or "Portuguese Topicality." The theory was largely ignored by other academics but used as ideological and political banners by the colonial propaganda until the Portuguese coup in 1974. Despite obvious propagandist purposes; Luso-tropicalismo indicates a different policy in East Timor than in neighbouring colonies. At least the authorities in Dili tried to create the impression of "race merging". To my knowledge the Dutch and British colonial powers did not express similar desires. The census institution in pre-independent Malaysia and Indonesia indicates strict divisions between the categories.

3.2.9 The Map

The map worked on the basis of a totalizing classification as well. It was designed to demonstrate how old and antique the territory was. It also served as a logo, instantly recognizable and visible everywhere. The map was an influential emblem and motivation for the anti colonial nationalism. A map can be reproduced infinitely, it separates 'us' from 'them' and it creates an imagined community. Maps give the impression that East Timor has "always" existed. The concept of a map is modern, but it is presented as something which has always been there. It is interesting to see how efficient maps are

[30] G. Freyre: O mundo que o portugues criou, Lisbon, Livros do Brasil, 1940, page 43.

used as tools to shape a national identity. The map legitimizes East Timor in geographical space and time, as if they are saying: These boundaries from the past legitimate us as a nation today. The Portuguese created and distributed the Timor map, and a line was drawn between east and west. Hence there was no need to discuss whether the Timorese nation should include the western part of the island. The demarcation and definition of an East Timorese nation is of course more complex, but the concept of the map illustrates the impact of imaginings in nationalism.

3.2.10 The Museum

The museum allowed the state to appear as the guardian of tradition. The supremacy of this institution was strengthened by the fact that all the symbols of tradition could be reproduced again and again. Ancient sites like Pagan, Angkor and Borobudur were measured, photographed reconstructed and displayed. Nineteenth-century archaeology made such museums possible. The museum institution allowed the state to be the protector of a generalized but also a local tradition. The colonial state produced complex archaeological reports and illustrated books for the people. The reproduction included maps, stamps and postcards of historical monuments. Post-independent states inherited this form of political museumizing. Cambodia uses a replica of Angkor and Indonesia reproduces Borobudur for public display and national pride.

Antonio de Almeida became one of the most powerful figures in Portuguese colonial research. During field work in Timor, he discovered pre historic archeological layers and he developed an analysis of ethno-linguistic division.[31] The name of the map was “Portuguese Timor” and as if to verify the legitimacy, the colony displayed antiques from a distant past. Collecting items for a museum was also one of the first priorities after the independence in 2002. Most of the country’s infra structure was shattered to pieces. Aid to a starving and suffering population as well as rebuilding a museum were among

[31] Ivo Carneiro de SOUSA: The Portuguese Colonization…, page 185.

the first priorities. UNESCO Director-General Koïchiro Matsuura declared in a letter to UNESCO's 188 Member States: *"This heritage has been targeted because of its significance for national identity, which should on the contrary cause it to be safeguarded as a symbol of community and the promise of a shared future."*[32]

Note the use of the terms 'national identity' and 'symbol of community.' A museum is a way to build an imagined community, according to Benedict Andersen. East Timor National Museum and Cultural Centre communicates that "we prevailed, we defeated the enemy, we survived troubled times, we are the product of a proud, glorious past". The museum posts maps even from a time nobody knew the concept of a map. Before 1850, only religious, cosmographic maps existed. Army and administration indeed had some diagrammatic guides, but they did not mark boundaries. Photographs of dead heroes, replica of monuments and other antiques remind the visitors of this underlying message. Every object is classified in different categories, as *"(…) a total classificatory grid, which could be applied with endless flexibility to anything under the state's real or contemplated control."*[33]

The museum is meant to explain, verify and justify the existence of East Timor. Nevertheless, the word museum comes from the Greek *museion*, which referred to *temple for the muses* - the nine Goddesses for art and science in Greek mythology. Today most museums serve another God; the nation-state. They are meant to show glimpses of a proud, tragic, glorious past. A complex past is simplified and rationalized as a flexible tool for the nation to separate "facts from fiction" and to separate "us from them". Census, map and museum clarify the way the colonial power thought abut its "property"; the colony. Absolutely all elements of the colony could be classified. The whole construction or image reminds of 'a glass house', a metaphor used by the Indonesian novelist Pramoedya Anatana Toer. The object displayed appeared to be real but was a

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[32] UNESCO'S official website; http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=2966 & URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

[33] Benedict Andersen, Imagined Communities, page 184.

construction and contributed to the imagined community. Picture a stone breaking and destroying the glass house. What would be left of the museum? The metaphor indicates that "what we see is not necessarily what is there." I do not argue that the museum is an artifact or something fake. Nevertheless it is something imagined and we need to dissect the elements of the museum in order to identify the nature of nationalism and the process of nation-building.

3.2.11 Adopting Colonial Heritage

Post-colonial states, like East Timor, adopted census, map and museum. The nationalist movement was based on anti colonial sentiments. Fretilin objected to centuries of Portuguese colonialism, and could not find anything but negative impacts for the Timorese people. One could argue that without the imagined community created by colonialism there would be no such thing as nationalism. How could anyone have defined nationalism and nation without any concept of belonging together and notions of a shared past within defined boundaries? The exchange system explains why the Portuguese never managed to fully penetrate the population and pacify the people. The indigenous hierarchical network was too solid to be completely replaced by a system favourable to the Portuguese. Extracting that unique feature of Timorese society, Taylor appears to have found the source of Timorese nationalism.

Anderson's theory offers another option; that the colonial heritage created the seeds that the nationalists eventually could harvest. I do not argue that the Timorese were passive receivers of impulses from the Portuguese. The imagined community was a construction based on the symbiosis of the unpopular relationship between Portugal and Timor. Fretilin's manifesto, paragraph two confirms the invisible bonds between the island and Portugal: *"Fretilin defends the policy of closer international co-operation with Portugal, Brazil, Guinea-Bissau and the future countries of Portuguese expression (…), safeguarding the superior interests of the people of East Timor."*

The "world" Portuguese rule created was Lisbon as the centre and the listed colonies in Africa, South America (plus Asia) as elements of the "colonial universe". As mentioned earlier, Portuguese became the official language and the 2002-constitution was loosely based on Portuguese standards. Portugal drew a successful mental map and Fretilin adopted the imaginings. At least it could explain why a nationalist movement insisted on being close to members of a state who oppressed them brutally for centuries. Adopting of the imaginings also clarifies why Fretilin got so much inspiration and political influence from countries far away in Africa rather than post-colonial Southeast Asian nations.

3.2.12 Questioning a Theory

So far I have presented Anderson's theory without criticism or fundamental questions. Still the argument of an imagined community or that nations do not really exist, has triggered an international academic debate. Anderson supports to a big extent Gellner's idea of communities' perceived rather than real connections. Ernest Gellner's nationalism is created by the need of modern societies for cultural homogeneity. "*Nationalism is not the wakening of nations to self-consciousness: it invents nations where they do not exist*."[34] Gellner equals nationess and invention. Patrick Geary takes a similar stand, but describes the illusion as mythical rather than imagined.[35]

An alternative perspective is to identify the phenomenon as a national theatre, because the theatre scene displays not only something fictitious but also something real and true. In this context a national theatre is not an imagined community but a community of imagination. Doctorate candidate Timothy W. Scholl at the University of California suggests this comparison: "*Ideally, a national theatre would involve its*

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[34] Ernest Gellner: Thought and Change (Weidenfeld and Nicholson: London, 1964), page 169.

[35] Patrick Geary: The Myth of Nations: the Medieval Origins of Europe (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002).

audience in a perpetual re-consideration and re-creation of the national certainties that make up its understanding and perception of itself and others."[36] Czech political theorist Miroslav Hroch defines a nation as a large social group integrated by a set of objective and subjective factors. Economic, political, linguistic, cultural, religious, geographical, historical factors in relationship with a collective consciousness produced the nation.[37] . Hroch's definition of a nation could be adapted to the definition of the national theatre. Hroch defines the nation as subjective and objective or as both fictitious and real.

Anderson limits nationness to a subjective, created and somehow surreal invention. Hroch seems to recognize the element of invention but identifies the phenomenon as collective consciousness. In addition he incorporates historical, economic and cultural factors to explain what a nation consists of. Anderson's approach has undoubtedly given the study of nationalism a new dimension. The emphasis on where Asian nationalism "comes from" has created better understanding of the nature of nationalism in countries like Indonesia, Malaysia and East Timor. Imagined community could even partly explain the slow democratic process in parts of Southeast Asia. A genuine popular nationalism met competition from a more centralizing official or state nationalism. This is at least the case for Malaysia and Indonesia and a later chapter will discuss whether the nature of Timorese nationalism has led to state authoritarianism. Anderson dismisses any link direct link between political ideology and nationalism. He claims that nationalism is a product of cultural and not political factors. In this perspective nationness is more connected to religion than political sentiments; Patriots sacrifice their life in the name of the immortal nation and not in the name of political dogmas.

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[36] Timothy Scholl: Imagi-nation, University of California Santa Barbara, page 3.

[37] Hroch, Miroslav. "From National Movement to the Fully-formed Nation: The Nation-building Process in Europe," in Balakrishnan, Gopal, ed. Mapping the Nation. New York and London: Verso, 1996: pp. 78-97.

3.2.13 Culture versus Ideology

The work “Imagined Communities” tries to verify the theory by applying examples from Malaysia and Indonesia. I will argue that a study of for instance Vietnam or Burma could give a more confusing picture. The nationalists in Vietnam distanced themselves from the influence of the colonial power France. Ho Chi Minh promoted a national Vietnamese language and dismissed French. Post-colonial Vietnam did not adopt French administration or any close ties to France or former French colonies. Indeed Vietnam chose a form of State Nationalism, but the nature of Vietnamese nationalism was directly inspired by ideology. The reunited Vietnam implemented a rapid transition to socialism, inspired by the USSR’s and China’s experience. England did not continue dominating Burma after decolonization.

Like Vietnam, Burma chose another path. General Ne Win established a repressive, one-party state, the so-called “Burmese path to socialism”. I have to add that a more in-depth analysis of the two countries would give a more complex picture than I present. Both Burma and Vietnam took over the territorial units defined by the colonial powers. Both nations defined themselves within the boundaries of the imagined communities created by others. Nonetheless, my point is to illustrate the problems of applying “the imagined community” merely as a cultural phenomenon. I suggest that political ideas and ideologies have to be considered if we want to identify nationalism. Hence the next chapter will focus on the ideological platform of East Timor’s Fretilin party.

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CHAPTER IV

FRETILIN: IDEOLOGY AND GOVERNANCE

4.1 The ideological Dimension

4.1.1 Introduction

The political history of East Timor culminated with the first democratically elected parliament in 2001 and president in 2002. Chapter two ended with the Indonesian occupation and referendum in 1999. To present the political history in two separate parts is done to distinguish roots of nationalism from actual governance. Hopefully the nature of Timorese nationalism has become clearer - at least the cultural roots of the phenomenon. This chapter shall emphasize the political dimensions of Timorese nationalism. The objective is to sort out the confusion concerning Fretilin's political fundament.

Some say with absolute certainty that Fretilin was based on Marxist-Leninism, others say there are no such link. Social democratic and populist are two other labels suggested to explain Fretilin. Many of these comments and analyzes appear to be fragmented and not based on political theory. Hence we need to compare the political ideas expressed by Fretilin with specific ideologies. The second part is about the election process and about how Fretilin is leading the state today. I will outline the policy of the government to discuss the hypothesis; *monopolizing of power is the outcome of the specific nature of East Timorese nationalism*.

4.1.2 Definition of Ideology

Social scientists, especially Marxists, adopt an instrumental approach when they see ideology as socially 'determined'. I will use the term ideology as a body of coherent and comprehensive beliefs, of interest in their own right. Ideology is for me synonymous with comparative political ideas rather than history, sociology or public policy. I define ideology as *"an overt or implicit set of empirical and normative views about human nature, the process of history, the socio-political structure."*[1] Benedict Anderson defined nationalism as a cultural phenomenon and dismissed any ideological link. I will argue that nationalism could be considered an ideology, despite the fact that the nationalist platform has been used by "everyone" from liberals, fascists, Marxists, dictators and democrats. But try viewing nationalism with fundamental rather than instrumental eyeglasses, and the conclusion could be that the phenomenon constitutes an ideology. The reason is that nationalism says something about human nature and history. A nationalist would say there is something universal about the human desire of grouping together into national units. Furthermore they see history as the process of nation-building.[2] Several scholars disagree, like William Pfaff*: "Nationalism is not an ideology because it has no universality. It is impossible to be a nationalist as such, only a German or Croatian or American nationalist."*[3]

4.1.3 Social Democracy versus Marxism

SDT stands for Social Democratcia Timor (Social Democratic Association of Timor). The name of Fretilin's forerunner indicates a social democratic platform. Fretilin

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[1] Contemporary Political Ideologies, edited by Roger Eatwell and Anthony Wright (Westview Press, Colorado, 1993), page 7.

[2] Contemporary Political Ideologies, page 8.

[3]William Pfaff: The Wrath of Nations: Civilization and the Fury of Nationalism.(New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993).

means Frente Revolucionaria de Timor Leste Independente (Revolutionary Front of Independent East Timor). In four months the leaders reclassified the party from 'social democratic' to a revolutionary front. The question is whether the name change was purely semantic or indicated a shift toward the left. To find an answer it is necessary to compare the party programme with the two political ideologies Marxism and Social Democracy.

Briefly summarized, social democracy is a form of representative democracy emphasizing some principles for building a welfare state. It highlights individual liberties social justice, solidarity and freedom against discrimination. Social democracies have worked for strong labour laws and welfare states. Today most social democrats do not see a conflict between a capitalist market economy and their definition of a socialist society. Marxists demand revolution but social democrats settled for change through reforms. Marxist theories claimed that the capitalist economic system has brought inequalities of wealth. Karl Marx himself predicted the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism by the lower and working classes and the goal is the classless (communist) society. Ultimately, the injustice will be replaced by a fair socialist system.

I will not go in depth into the dialectic Marxist world view, only present some basic features of the ideology. An ideological manifesto has to present a view about human nature, history and socio-political structures. Fretilin's *manifesto* describes the experience of colonisation: *"It is in fact that 500 years of Portuguese colonialism can be translated into the following human, social, economic, cultural and political panorama, which is clearly oppressive and violating the most basic rights of the human being…"* The manifest refers to economic exploitation, illiteracy, corruption and an anachronistic political and administrative structure. Fretilin explains the fundamental injustice by using the term *"…economic superstructures that paralyse any form of development of the country and of the dominated people."*

Marx defined the economic base or the relations and forces of production in any society as generating other social formations, called the superstructure. Social Democrats ideology did not implement this materialistic-historic aspect. This could indicate at least a partly Marxist-inspired party program. Karl Marx would probably have described the

colonial experience of East Timor in similar terms. But where Marx prescribed revolution, Fretilin suggested democracy. *"The economic and political philosophy of the revolutionary front is based on a concept of social democracy, the same as the previous Timorese Social Democratic Party."*

Implicit, Fretilin denies any shift to the left in the political spectrum. As if to reject any fear of hostility against the capitalist part of the world, the manifesto adds that it wants close ties to Portugal, the United Nations and other international donors. On the other hand, the document suggests an economic program not directly compatible with capitalism: *"Economic reconstruction: (…) Creation of co-operatives. The co-operatives will be the base of the economic and social life of East Timor. Co-operatives of production, distribution and consumption will be set up throughout the country. (…) All large farms will be expropriated and returned to the people and will be used within the co-operative system."*

This bears resemblance to the Soviet model of socialism, where the government controlled the means of production, replacing markets with bureaucratic planning of production and distribution. Shortly after the party was born, Fretilin leaders were sent to rural areas to set up cooperatives. The idea was to organise all domestic supply and demand through a cooperative base in Dili. The Fretilin program stressed self-reliance and restrictions on import of products. Also, social democracies organised production, distribution and consumption in cooperatives in the 70s. In many sectors the state controlled cooperatives monopolized the production and distribution. Nonetheless, Fretilin's economic reconstruction is closer to a communist strategy because mostly it removes most of capitalist mechanisms. Expropriation of big farms indicated hostility to private ownership. Summarized the Fretilin manifesto is a contradiction in terms. The document rejects Marxism and embraces Social Democracy and it rejects Social Democracy and embraces Marxism.

So far, I have tried to look at a political ideology as political ideas communicated by a political party's most important document; the manifest. Idealistically this should be sufficient to identify the political platform of a party. After all studying the practice of an

organisation does not necessarily provide a truer insight than studying political ideas. Reading transcripts of interviews with Fretilin leaders usually confuses more than clarifies. The reason is political/personal conflicts, hidden agendas we find in any political party. Nonetheless the *manifesto* is filled with contradictions and paradoxes. We have no choice but to analyse other sources in order to recognize the ideology of Fretilin.

4.1.5 African Socialism

Chapter two presented the close link between the resistance movements in Timor and Mozambique. The revolutionary front symbol of FRELIMO was copied by FRETILIN. Mozambique became independent after ten years of war. The new republic turned to the Soviet Union and East Germany for economic help and restructured itself as a Marxist-Leninist party two years after independence. The regime wanted to transform Mosambique into a "new society", by reshaping Marxist terminology to articulate national and racial concerns.[4] Frelimo did not apply Marxist-concepts of class or superstructure but used colonial experiences racial injustice. Frelimo believed in modern progress and a revolutionary transformation of the people.

The front was a part of the so-called African Socialism. This direction was a revisited Marxism and more pragmatic than classical Marxism. Socialism was popular because it represented an alternative to the colonial tradition. The followers declared they did not oppose capitalism but represented something completely different. The new aspect was some sort of "Africanism" appealing to an African identity. Their socialism was merely a recapturing of the spirit of what it was to be African.[5] A multitude of reasons were presented in support of African socialism. Many believed that Africa was too far "behind" capitalist states in terms of economic development to compete fairly

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[4] Margaret Hall and Tom Young: Confronting Leviathan: Mosambique since Independence (Athens, Ohio University Press, 1997), page 66.

[5] From Wikipedia encyclopedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/African_socialism.

with them. Others appealed to a sense of unity that would not be provided by the competitive capitalist systems. Still others believed that the development of Africa should be planned in order to avoid wasting scarce resources, and avoid future class conflicts.

African identity and socialism were often intertwined. Some leaders claimed that Africa had always been "socialist," and appealed to socialism as a unifying cultural element for Africans. This was not by any means the only form of African identity that they appealed to, but the combination of socialism and African identity was doubly effective in ending the era of old imperial regimes. Social revolution usually went hand-in-hand with socialism. It may seem like a sidetrack to sketch out the features of African Socialism in general and Mozambique socialism in specific. But the apparently ideological pragmatism in Fretilin's program indicates that the party was inspired from sources far away from East Timor. Both Mozambique and East Timor used the Marxist banner without incorporating some of the basic components of the classical ideology. Both expressed skepticism about capitalism without dismissing free enterprise completely. The socialist movement in Guinea Bissau styled themselves the 'sole representative of the people', and so did Fretilin. A final look at the manifesto gives a hint of a political ideology in Fretilin's political project: *"The Social Democratic Party considers itself the interpreter of the profound ideals of the people of all East Timor and, because of this reason, declares itself the only legitimate representative of the people and will now be called "Revolutionary Front of Independent East Timor."* Jill Jolliffe concludes that Fretilin was inspired by Marxism/African socialism, but insists that the party was not communist. I will argue that the African was more than an 'inspiration.' Fretilin's mix of Social Democracy and Marxism in the manifest indicates a political platform based on the ideas of African Socialism. According to a strict definition, these ideas are nothing more than a "hybrid ideology." Dr Jan Blommaert labels African Socialism a user-friendly political ideology and a populist version of socialism*: "All*

kinds of existing policies could be covered by the term, which at the same time maintained its populist and egalitarian appeal." [6]

4.1.6 Mauberism as Ideology

The populist element is obvious in the case of Timorese nationalism as well. Fretilin explained the chosen term 'front' with the ambition to unite all Timorese nationalists no matter where they belonged on the political spectrum. But African Socialism is of course a useless term for Timorese nationalism. African Socialism was based on African experiences, history and culture. Still we haven't identified the ingredients Fretilin replaced "African" in socialism with. I think the answer rests with Mauberism, mentioned in chapter 3. Fretilin redefined Maubere identity and Timorized the idea of 'the people' and the 'masses'. The result was a powerful nationalist and revolutionary tool. Jolliffe labels Mauberism as a *"populist catchy expressing a general political orientation"* [7] rather than an ideology. In a study from 2003, Dennis Shoesmith argues against such a conclusion. Shoesmith insists that Mauberism is de facto an ideology. *"It symbolized a popular sovereignty what was indigenous but not traditional. (…) It provided the party with a radical foundation myth validating the struggle for independence and social revolution."* [8]

East Timorese and African socialists replaced parts of Marxist-doctrine with local elements; Fretilin created Mauberism and worked trough local kinship alliances. The manifesto does not encourage capitalism but does not explicitly reject it either. The cooperative-program appears radical but the totality of the policy is rather pragmatic. In other words Fretilin could be classified as a lean leftwing populist party. Mozambique's

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[6] Jan Blommaert: State Ideology and Language: The politics of Swahili in Tanzania, Published as LICCA Papers nr. 3, 1997 (.Duisburg: Gerhard-Mercator University).

[7] Jill Jolliffe, East Timor, page 105.

[8] Shoesmith: Timor-Leste, page 239.

Frelimo monopolized the power with a one-party system. Timor's Fretilin won the short civil war and was the "last man standing." The 1975-republic did not last long enough to show whether the party would have allowed political competition.

4.2 Independence and Governance

4.2.1 New Platform

Twenty five years of resistance against Indonesian occupation did have an impact on Fretilin's political base. The party issued a document similar to a manifesto called the "Electoral Commitment 2001"[9]. All hints of radical strategies are replaced with more social democratic policies like free basic education, and - health service. Mono-agriculture is replaced by "a policy to diversify the agricultural system" and expropriation and state cooperative by an expressed will to encourage private interests. Fretilin commits itself to building a "multi-party democratic society." Fretilin as the 'sole representative of the people is replaced by 'Fretilin as the driving force of the resistance.' The document repeats several times the sufferings the 'Maubere people' had to go through and refers to a death toll of over 250.000 people during occupation.[10] The ideas or even the ideology of "Mauberism" has finally become an official part of the party's platform.

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[9] Frente Revolucionaria Do Timor-Leste Independente – Fretilin – Electoral Commitment 2001: www.pcug.org.au

[10] It is impossible to verify the total amount of deaths during 25 years of occupation. Indonesian authorities have indicated that approximately 100.000 died.

4.2.2 Elections

To observe how political actors handle an election process is a test of democracy. In liberal democracies and strong civil societies, this is a matter of competition based on fair rules. The fairness implies that the voters have qualified choices and that any political party have a fair chance to gain support. The first democratic task for the soon-to-be independent republic of East Timor was to create a constitution. Election for the Constituent Assembly was held on August 30th 2001.

Five months prior to this event, Fretilin started to elect party representatives at all administrative levels, from the hamlet up to the national level. Fretelin had survived 25 years of Indonesian suppression and was in fact the national symbol of fight for freedom. Most of the other parties in 2001 were new, inexperienced and without a countrywide network. For the majority of the population, Fretilin was the only party they had ever heard of. The UN encouraged and assisted this transition to a modern democracy; "modern" in the sense of a western liberal-style of society. Scholar Tanja Hohe is critical of UN's close relationship with Fretilin in the nation-building process. It led to tensions in some villages, when Fretilin representatives were accused of trying to prevent political competition. Representatives misunderstand the principles of a multi-party system by expressing that *"the whole village is Fretilin anyway."*[11].

Democracy can only work in a society where the population participates, and participation is based on qualified choices. Furthermore people must share the notion of a nation. Most of the population could not read or write. An elitist analysis would argue that the illiteracy rate made it impossible for the people to make qualified choices. Observers have also noted that the majority were loyal to the village and the family – not to a nation-state. Villagers and village chiefs clash with new political leaders and

[11] Tanja Hohe: The Clash of Paradigms: International Administration and Local Political Legitimacy in East Timor, in: Contemporary Southeast Asia, Volume 24, Number 3, December 2002, p. 583.

traditional values clashes with modernity in East Timor.[12] Implicitly the argument is that colonisation and occupation did not prepare the population for this sudden transition to free elections. I will argue that the elitist-analysis ignores the fact that decades of resistance had indeed prepared East Timor for nation-building and a democratic process.

4.2.3 Political Arrogance

Fretilin was being accused of being arrogant during the campaign. The party obviously knew it had a fair chance to win the election. The leader and nominee for Prime Minister, Mari Alkatiri, stated that Fretilin would not cooperate with any government it did not lead. The only option for the party was power. Dennis Shoesmith notes *that "It is doubtful that Fretilin leadership could ever accept as legitimate a government formed by their political opponents on the right."* [13] Fretilin regards the parties to the right as collaborators and landlords. The front was based on the notion of being the rightful leaders of the people. The only exercise in executing power in 1975 ended with civil war because UDT and Fretilin could not cooperate.

Alkatiri also boasted about the party's strength. During the campaign he said that Fretilin was guaranteed at least 80 per cent of the votes but would try to achieve 100 per cent.[14] Any politician wants the victory against opponents to be as big as possible and any political party would like to be as big as possible. Political leaders can work for power-monopoly in authoritarian regimes but democratic parties are supposed to respect democratic principles of power-sharing. The opposition accused Alkatiri of disregarding basic democratic rules and labelled him as anti-democratic. The people went to the ballots to elect a constitution assembly. The opposition demanded regular elections after

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[12] Tanja Hohe: The Clash of Paradigms: International Administration and Local Political Legitimacy in East Timor, in: Contemporary Southeast Asia, Volume 24, Number 3, December 2002, page 571.

[13] Dennis Shoestring: Timor-Leste, page 235.

[14] Anthony Smith in Southeast Asian Affairs 2002, p. 59

the constitution has been written. Instead Fretilin blocked any further election and announced that the Assembly would itself constitute the country's first parliament, removing any need for a general election until 2007.

Fretilin gained 57, 37 percent of the total National Representative Election, with a lead of the second largest party of almost 50 percent. Lurdes Silva-Carneiro de Sousa analysed the election in more neutral terms than the opposition: *"Fretilin is the clear winner of the election. Is anyone to be surprised by these results? The party's victory was announced before the election. (…) …one is forced to admit that the overwhelming majority of the East Timorese in that precise moment choose to reward, to pay tribute to, to honour (…) the Fretilin guerrilla fighters, their commanders who have for past decades expressed, transported and shaped the idea of East Timor nationalism."*[15]

Jose Alexandre "Xanana" Gusmao, the "father of the nation" who was elected as president in 2002, saw the danger of a power monopoly. He expressed the view that a Fretilin landslide might not be healthy for democracy: *"The implication may be bad; a majority will close the possibility of better participation from all"*.[16] Gusmao distanced himself from Fretilin and for president as an independent candidate. He has repeatedly criticised Fretilin's politics, because he believes that it does not serve the people but those in power.[17]

The new Prime Minister did not lose his self confidence after not succeeding in getting 100 percent of the votes. He stated in public that he expects Fretilin to be in power for the next 50 years.[18] Other fragile democracies have to deal with weak coalitions. Coalition governments have a tendency to compromise instead of making

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[15] Lurdes Silva-Carneiro de SOUSA: Some Facts and Comments on the East Timor 2001 Constituent Assembly Election, (Lusotopie 2001 : 299-311).

[16] Rod McGuirk: "Fretilin Majority Could be bad", AAP, 1 September 2001.

[17] Anthony Smith: Southeast Asian Affairs 2004, p. 281.

[18] Anthony Smith: Southeast Asian Affairs 2004, p. 281.

unpopular but necessary decisions. The new cabinet had to start building a nation-state with an infrastructure smashed to pieces. Without a strong government, political diversity in East Timor could have resulted in chaos. In this context, the result of the election was a good thing for the new nation. On the one hand Fretilin represents anti-democratic ambitions. On the other hand, Fretilin seems to be the best guarantor for nation building. This contradiction reflects that politics is not black or white.

4.2.4 Violent Riots

The purpose of the 2001-election was to create a constitution. The opposition demanded new elections later to choose the members of a regular government. Fretilin interpreted the election differently and denied the demands. Some observers claim that Fretilin was not willing to go to the polls after a poorer than expected result. Fretilin is being accused of "stealing the election" but I have no information to verify this accusation. Nonetheless it is a democratic problem when the parties do not agree about basic rules for condition of holding elections. This unresolved controversy illustrates how deep the gap between the cabinet, the president and the opposition is in East Timor.

The way a regime deals with opposition reveals the strength of a democracy. It is an indicator of the progress in the process of building the nation as well. How does Fretilin deal with the ones who disapprove their politics and who even dare to stand up and protest? The first serious test came December 4th 2002. 500 people marched through the streets demanding police-reforms. Police shot and killed two teenage protesters in Dili. Both of them were probably unarmed. Up till today the police has not publicly explained exactly what happened. Eye witnessed have explained that more than 70 of the protesters were arrested and beaten badly by the police.

July 4th 2004 police used teargas to break up an anti-government demonstration in the capital. 30 protesters occupied a government building and 100 anti-riot police stormed the building using batons and firing tear gas. Again the demonstrators demanded police reforms. Both incidents and several other could illustrate use of unnecessary force

against non violent protesters. At least it shows how easy it is to mobilize an angry crowd and indicate the tensions towards the government and the police.[19] It is unfair to blame the Fretilin government for all actions taken against opposition. Even states with long democratic traditions fail and clash against civil rights. But such failures do not justify abuse of force and any government has to face critical questions about their actions. East Timor insists on being a democratic state and has to be measured according to the rules of democratic conduct.

The police have to deal with pro-Indonesia militia elements, frustrated ex-freedom fighters and pure criminal elements. People being angry for different reasons all represent security threats against the new nation. Half the population is extremely poor, according to UN figures, and this unfair distribution of wealth is a potential threat against political stability. It requires major political skills to deal with these obstacles. The mission is after all to build a nation and not spending huge resources on calming down a frustrated population.

4.2.5 Corruption and Famine

The Alkatiri government is now blamed for poverty and unemployment. Fretilin is beginning to attract accusations of "Corruption, Collusion, and Nepotism: (familiarly known as CCN, an ironic reference to the Indonesian acronym KKN for Korrupsi, Kolusi dan Nepotism, the accusation made against the Suharto regime)[20] Some observers have noted a growing resentment against the new elite of returned exiles and their determination to impose a Portuguese-style culture on the government and administration of the new state.[21]

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[19] Anthony Smith: Southeast Asian Affairs 2004, p. 279.

[20] Dennis Shoesmith: Timor-Leste, page 251.

[21] Tim Dodd: Wealth Divide behind Timor Violence, Australian Financial Review, December 6th, 2002.

March of 2005, several international newspapers reported about serious threats against Press Freedom in East Timor. Suara Timor Lorosae, East Timor's oldest and biggest newspaper was facing eviction from Dili by the prime minister. Furthermore Alkatiri has banned the newspaper's reporters from his press conferences and ordered government offices to boycott Lorosae.[22] The reaction came after an article about corruption in the government and widespread famine in several districts. Parliamentary speaker Francisco Guterres has labelled Alkatiri's actions as unconstitutional. President Xanana Gusmao has offered to mediate between the newspaper and the prime minister.

June 2004, Alkatiri deported an Australian freelance journalist, who was threatened with charges of weapons possessions and subversive intentions. A Dili court cleared the journalist of all charges but the state Interior Ministry expelled him anyway. 50 East Timorese journalists have signed a petition asserting that the Prime Minister's restrictive actions violate constitutional provisions for press freedom. Section 41 of the East Timorese constitution says: *"The State shall guarantee the freedom and independence of the public mass media from political and economic powers."*

The verbal attacks on Fretilin do not seem to end. Nobel Price laureate Ximanes Belos has drawn attention to the famine problem and Bishop of Dili, Dom Alberto Ricardo, has expressed concern about government corruption. Also In 2004 Fretilin tried to strike back against bribery accusations involving Oil Company and members of the government. Fretilin representatives of the Parliament called the accusations malicious and an attempt to *"disrupt the process of reconstruction and development of the Nation."*[23]

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[22] Asia Media, 22nd of March 2005.

[23] Press Release from National Parliament Fretilin, Dili, 9th of March 2004.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

Chapter one defined the objectives of this study. The thesis has indirectly revealed what have not been the objectives. I have not analysed nor discussed the many challenges for building the East Timor *state*. Obviously the issues of state building are worth investigating. Nonetheless my task has been to decipher Timorese nationalism and nation. To make a complete picture of nation as well as state would require more work than I have a mandate to deliver. It could also be a shortcoming but still a priority to not highlight the role of the Catholic Church in East Timor. There is no doubt that the church contributed to unity and created awareness about the struggle for independence. Particularly during occupation the church was the only visible national symbol to keep the hope of self-determination alive. Most of the population converted to Catholicism in the period of Indonesian rule, and today 80 percent of the inhabitants are members of the Church. Even so, the Catholic Church was never an active participant in shaping or developing Timorese nationalism. Therefore, I chose not to emphasize religious influence in the nationalist movement in this paper.

Another matter worth mentioning as a summary is the use of sources. The bibliography discloses almost a complete lack of local sources. Scholars and journalists quoted are all non-Timorese. This fact confirms that Timorese political history is largely written by Europeans. Furthermore most of the Timor-experts are men and do not analyse gender issues which could be a relevant factor in a context of nationalism. The Republic of East Timor is slowly developing institutions and higher education. Hopefully, future Timorese academics will write the history of Fretilin, the history of East Timor and fill in the blanks no foreign scholar has been able to fill.

5.2 The Questions Answered

I started this thesis by asking some key questions about the strength of the nationalism in East Timor; *what made it possible for the people to maintain their identity and avoid being pacified by Portugal and Indonesia?* I tried to answer by using a social anthropological approach. A number of mechanisms based on a system of exchange ensured the economic needs of the population. This could explain why no "outsiders" ever succeeded in total pacification of the population. The traditional bonds were too strong for anyone to break. When Portuguese and Indonesian tried, it had the opposite effect; oppression simply confirmed the bonds rather than weakening them. The indigenous economic, social and cultural system was able to reproduce itself more or less intact for hundreds of years. Villagers were loyal to their House (family and ancestors), to the village chief and not to foreign control. I still find this explanation not to be the whole truth. The world has been filled with strong indigenous cultures which eroded because of external pressure. I think East Timorese identity and resistance survived partly because of other factors. Timor is an island, isolated from other ethnic groups. Ethnic, lingual and cultural diversity never represented big threats. Without strong internal conflicts, it was easier to fight against external threats.

Why have the population been so determined to fight for their own independence? The history of East Timor is a history of intense, long lasting brutality. Not many other Southeast Asian people have suffered as much as East Timor. The latest figures from 2004 indicated that as many as 100.000 people were killed during Indonesian occupation. No one can verify any figures, but 100.000 means that nearly 15 percent of the population died. It was like Indonesia tried to repeat 400 years of colonial suppression in only 25 years. It bears resemblance to the Khmer Rouge regime in Cambodia.

What made it possible for them to decide their future through a democratic vote? The answer is Fretilin. The party defined East Timorese nationalism practically alone. The party shaped its political platform based on the needs of the people. Any national movement would claim they work for the best interests of the people. But reality bites

and too many movements end up representing the interests of small elites in urban areas. Fretilin moved to the countryside, discovered the challenges and offered a way out. The party structure with regional sub-committees and massive grass root support assured loyalty and unity through the 25 years of Indonesian occupation. Timorese exile leaders could not sit and wait for the world to recognise their right to be independent. The issue was simply not on the international agenda. The strength of Timorese nationalism was the trigger factor that finally resulted in a democratic vote.

These answers just give the general picture or an outlook on the political history of East Timor. The answers are too superficial to identify the specific nature of Timorese nationalism and the notion of the East Timor nation. Hence my study applied several theories in order to recognize and classify the phenomenon.

5.3 Cultural and Political Definitions

I have tried to define the nature of East Timorese nationalism by applying different theoretical instruments. The approach may seem too broad, but nonetheless it produces interesting results. Benedict Anderson's theory indicates that concepts like nation and nationalism are created by imaginings. The process started with the Portuguese colonisation and the nationalist movement continued the creation of the imagined community. The invisible colonial legacy has been decisive for the birth of the Timorese nation. The pillars of the nation could be illustrated by census, map and museum. The theory leaves an impression of something created, or even an artefact. If collective consciousness alone creates the nation, it dismisses the impact of other more specific local elements. I suggested a revised model; "the national theatre" in order to implement more specific and "visible" features like economic, political, cultural and geographical factors. Another problem with Anderson's model is that it ignores the political dimension in creating nationalism and a nation.

Classical ideologies or anthropology alone do not explain Timorese nationalism. "Hybrid ideologies" or more regional determined political ideas clarify the picture.

Fretilin was strongly influenced by African Socialism. Mozambique replaced some elements from Marxism with elements reflecting the local experiences with Colonialism. Mauberism was the Timorese version of “African Socialism.” The “Electoral Commitment 2001” formally implements Mauberism as an integrated part of Fretilin’s policy. Marxism is completely abandoned and replaced with a nationalist rhetoric. The political base today appears to be social democratic but still I dare to suggest hints of state authoritarianism. The 1974-manifesto indicates that the nature of Timorese nationalism is in fact authoritarian. On the one hand Fretilin stood for unity across political, cultural and religious divisions. On the other hand Fretilin insisted on being the sole representative of the people. The party leaders did not want to compromise with opponents or to show diplomatic skills in order to avoid the chaos. The result was the UDT-coup followed by Indonesian invasion.

5.4 Troubling Signs

The election process in 2001 showed that Fretilin did not learn from mistakes. Again the strategy was power monopoly and the ambition was 100 percent of the votes. The party refused to recognise a government not including Fretilin and the prime minister said that Fretilin intend to stay in the cabinet for 50 years. These statements could be nothing more than harmless political rhetoric. Nevertheless the statements signalize a turn towards state authoritarianism. Aggressive responses to demonstrations and a critical press are unhealthy signs for a democracy as well. Increasing criticism about government corruption reveals a growing gap between the cabinet and the people. All this could indicate political arrogance, democratic weakness and a process towards a power monopoly.

Colonisation created an imagined community with Portugal as the undisputed centre of power hegemony. Nationalism replaced Portugal with Fretilin as the power hub. Fretilin monopolized the nationalist movement and the party’s founders are in charge of governing the country today. The nationalist mission is to build a strong state, but the

project is risky as long as Fretilin takes steps that could weaken the unity in the nation. The nature of Timorese indicates a desire to limit political competition and opposition. Political figures who lead their people from resistance to liberation tend to become immune against critical questions. Their fight against "evil forces" justifies even democratic compromises. It is important to remember that leading a resistance movement requires different qualities than representing a democracy. The process of nation-building requires census and a pluralistic society – at least if we see the nation in a democratic context. Mauberism symbolizes an indigenous, popular sovereignty. This ideology is a powerful tool in building a nation as long as Mauberism is not merely used as propaganda and political slogans. Fretilin was founded and shaped in times of crisis and resistance. The founders and leaders today are still influenced by this legacy. A transformation to a pluralistic society requires power sharing with new generations and new ideas. East Timor has just started this transformation from resistance to independence. Hence it is too early to pass a "democratic verdict" against the government of East Timor. After all Fretilin has only been in power for a few years. The real test comes with the next general election in 2007.

The hypothesis for this thesis is; monopolising of power is the outcome of the specific nature of East Timorese nationalism. I have only partly verified the premise. The history of Timorese nationalism might explain the hints of authoritarian attitude expressed by the government today. But as for now, the "flaws" of the government are not big enough to declare Fretilin as a de facto authoritarian regime. I think it is more reasonable to conclude that East Timor has great potentials to develop a liberal democracy. Fretilin has committed itself to work for a multi-party system and the constitution is confirms commitment to build a liberal democracy. Fretilin is probably the best option for East Timor at this critical stage of nation building. It would probably be far worse to deal with the huge challenges through fragile coalitions. Nevertheless it is a sign of a healthy democracy and civil society to confront the government with critical questions. A less aggressive and defensive and a more listening and open minded government would lay the foundations of a strong nation. East Timor still has potential to develop democracy instead of state authoritarianism.

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BIOGRAPHY

Oystein Solvang was born in Oslo, Norway on 11 March 1967. Previous studies include a Bachelor Degree in Political Science/Mass Communication from the University of Bergen, Norway. For 10 years he has been employed by Norwegian Broadcasting Company (NRK) as reporter, anchor and editor for radio and TV news. He has travelled in most of the countries in Southeast Asia and been a freelance reporter for NRK in Bangkok. 2005 he graduated from the Master's Program in Southeast Asian Studies, Chulalongkorn University.

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