Identity-building after conflict: the east-west divide and nation-building in Timor-Leste

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Bachelor of Arts (Honours)

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Abstract

There is a growing consensus that the international community’s nation-building efforts have disproportionately focused on state-building – developing the capacity of the state and its institutions. Peace and security have been inextricably linked to state-building, in particular to the construction of a liberal democratic state and institutions. However, identity-building – developing a unifying national political community – is also a fundamental process of nation-building. Identity-building legitimises and consolidates the nation-state, guarding it against further fragmentation. The thesis critically assesses nation-building in Timor-Leste. Peace and stability in Timor-Leste were under threat from internal forces and not external ones, as had been the case during periods of Portuguese colonialism and Indonesian occupation, only a few years after achieving independence on 20 May 2002. The emergence of the so-called east-west divide between Timorese from the eastern region, lorosa’e, and those from the western region, loromonu, during the 2006 crisis in Timor-Leste indicates that identity-building in Timor-Leste is fragile or even failing. In the post-independence period, contemporary lorosa’e and loromonu identities have become politicised in a divisive national discourse about the competing roles played by both groups during the resistance movement. The developing national political community in Timor-Leste appears to be weak and unable to contain strong regional identities. The thesis examines the political significance of the east-west divide in the post-crisis period, exploring the implications of its ongoing significance for nation-building in Timor-Leste, in particular for identity-building. The thesis argues that the divide poses a critical challenge to the emergence of new narratives of nationalism which support reconciliation in the post-independence period and consequently, to the development of a cohesive national political community.
Declaration

Having completed my course of study and research towards the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, I hereby submit my thesis for examination in accordance with the regulations and declare that:

1. The thesis is my own composition, all sources have been acknowledged and my contribution is clearly identified in the thesis. For any work in the thesis that has been co-published with other authors, I have the permission of all co-authors to include this work in my thesis, and there is a declaration to this effect in the front of the thesis, signed by me and also by my supervisor; and

2. The thesis has been substantially completed during the course of enrolment in this degree at UWA and has not previously been accepted for a degree at this or another institution.
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## Abbreviations

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<tr>
<td>ADITA</td>
<td>Democratic Integration of Timor-Leste and Australia Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>AMP</td>
<td>Alliance for a Parliamentary Majority</td>
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<td>AMPT</td>
<td>Timorese People's Monarchy Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>APODETI</td>
<td>Timorese Popular Democratic Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>ASDT</td>
<td>Timorese Social Democratic Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>CAVR</td>
<td>Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation</td>
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<tr>
<td>CEPAD</td>
<td>Centre of Studies for Peace and Development (Dili)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNE</td>
<td>National Election Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>CNRM</td>
<td>National Council of the Maubere Resistance</td>
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<tr>
<td>CNRT</td>
<td>National Congress for Timorese Reconstruction</td>
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<tr>
<td>CNRT</td>
<td>National Council of Timorese Resistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPD-RDTL</td>
<td>Popular Council for the Defence of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FALINTIL</td>
<td>Armed Forces of National Liberation of East Timor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F-FDTL</td>
<td>FALINTIL Timor-Leste Defence Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frente Mudança</td>
<td>Front for National Reconstruction Timor-Leste - Change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fretelin</td>
<td>Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor</td>
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<tr>
<td>INTERFET</td>
<td>International Force for East Timor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRIN</td>
<td>Integrated Regional Information Networks (Jakarta)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISF</td>
<td>International Stabilisation Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KHUNTO</td>
<td>Enrich the National Unity of the Sons of Timor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Korka or KORK</td>
<td>Wise Children of the Land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KOTA</td>
<td>Association of Timorese Heroes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAG</td>
<td>Martial arts group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSD</td>
<td>National Statistics Directorate (Dili)</td>
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<tr>
<td>OHCHR</td>
<td>Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (Geneva)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parentil</td>
<td>Timorese National Republic Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>PD</td>
<td>Democratic Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>PDC</td>
<td>Christian Democratic Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>PDL</td>
<td>Democratic Liberal Party</td>
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<td>PDM</td>
<td>Maubere Democratic Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>PDN</td>
<td>National Development Party</td>
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<td>PDP</td>
<td>Popular Development Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>PDRT</td>
<td>Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste Party</td>
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<td>PL</td>
<td>Liberal Party</td>
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<td>PLPA</td>
<td>Aileba People’s Liberty Party</td>
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<td>PMD</td>
<td>Proclaimer Bloc of Millennium Democratic Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>PNT</td>
<td>Timorese Nationalist Party</td>
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<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<tr>
<td>PNTL</td>
<td>Timor-Leste National Police</td>
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<td>PPT</td>
<td>People’s Party of Timor</td>
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<td>PR</td>
<td>Republican Party</td>
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<td>PSD</td>
<td>Social Democrat Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>PSHT</td>
<td>Sacred Brotherhood of the Lotus Heart</td>
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<tr>
<td>PST</td>
<td>Socialist Party of Timor</td>
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<tr>
<td>PTD</td>
<td>Democratic Timorese Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>PUN</td>
<td>National Unity Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sagrada Familia</td>
<td>Holy Family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STAE</td>
<td>Technical Secretariat for Electoral Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trabahlista</td>
<td>Timor Labor Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UDC/PDC</td>
<td>Democratic Union of Timor/Christian Democrat Party of Timor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UDT</td>
<td>Timorese Democratic Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>UIR</td>
<td>Rapid Response Unit</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNAMET</td>
<td>United Nations Mission in East Timor</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNDERTIM</td>
<td>National Democratic Unity of Timorese Resistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNMISET</td>
<td>United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNMIT</td>
<td>United Nations Integrated Mission in East Timor</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNOTIL</td>
<td>United Nations Office in East Timor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNPOL</td>
<td>United Nations Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNTAET</td>
<td>United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UPF</td>
<td>Border Patrol Unit</td>
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<tr>
<td>URP</td>
<td>Police Reserve Unit</td>
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Introduction

Weak, failing or failed states are considered to pose a serious threat to international peace and security. In the aftermath of the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks, the international community has shifted towards a state-centric paradigm of security and development, which focuses on the vulnerability of failing or failed states to transnational crime, in particular to terrorism. Peace and security have been inextricably linked to state-building, in particular to the construction of a liberal democratic state and institutions.

The international community has adopted nation-building as the solution to the problem of failed or collapsed states. The purpose of nation-building is to develop a unifying national political community within the institutional framework of a state. The development of such a political community is considered to lay the foundation for sustainable peace and stability by mitigating social and political conflict. Since the turn of the 21st century, international and regional organisations have carried out comprehensive nation-building projects in Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iraq, Kosovo, Sierra Leone and Timor-Leste. Timor-Leste is the only one of these countries which was administered by the United Nations (UN) before achieving independence.

The thesis critically assesses nation-building in Timor-Leste. The UN carried out nation-building in Timor-Leste for more than a decade. International outcry over widespread violent conflict in Timor-Leste following the referendum for independence from Indonesia on 30 August 1999 led to the deployment of an Australian-led UN peacekeeping force, the International Force for East Timor (INTERFET), in September 1999 and the establishment of the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) in October that year.
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Only four years after Timor-Leste achieved independence on 20 May 2002 however, peace and stability were threatened by internal forces and not external ones, as had been the case during periods of Portuguese colonialism and Indonesian occupation. The emergence of the east-west divide between Timorese from the eastern region of the half island, lorosa’e, and those from the western region, loromonu, during the 2006 crisis indicated that nation-building in Timor-Leste was fragile or even failing. The developing national political community in Timor-Leste appeared to be weak and unable to contain strong regional identities.

The historical origin and nature of the east-west divide are heavily contested. The ‘east’ generally refers to the three far eastern districts of Baucau, Lautém and Viqueque and the ‘west’ to the ten central and western districts of Aileu, Ainaro, Bobonaro, Cova-Lima, Dili, Ermera, Liquiçá, Manatuto, Manufahi and Oecusse. The Tetun term lorosa’e means east, eastern or easterly – the direction of the sunrise. Loromonu means west, western or westerly – the direction of the sunset. The lorosa’e-loromonu dichotomy has been used to create a division at Timor-Leste’s geographical heart which is as irreconcilable as east and west.

Prior to the 2006 crisis, the historical origin and nature of the east-west divide were not well understood by the international community. There was no broad consensus that the divide was a potential source of social or political conflict in Timor-Leste. Lorosa’e and loromonu identities do not correlate with diverse ethno-linguistic identities in Timor-Leste. Instead, they appear to be latent identities of relatively obscure origin during the Portuguese colonial period which became politicised during the resistance movement and, to a lesser extent, during periods of rural-urban migration from the
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1940s and widespread displacement in Dili following the referendum for independence on 30 August 1999. The resistance movement was strongest in the eastern region of Timor-Leste because of its strategic location: its geographical distance from the border with West Timor, Indonesia; and its mountainous terrain. As a result, the Armed Forces of National Liberation of East Timor (FALINTIL) were more active in the eastern region and fewer lorosa’e were co-opted into the pro-autonomy militia. These strategic advantages contributed to inaccurate perceptions that loromonu put up a weaker fight, participated more actively in the militias and were pro-autonomy. This divisive narrative of ‘heroes’ and ‘traitors’ has informed antagonism between lorosa’e and loromonu in the post-independence period. This narrative was part of a broader narrative about relative sacrifice and suffering during the resistance and consequently, about which particular individuals or groups were more entitled to the benefits of independence (Kent 2010, Sahin 2011 and Wallis 2013).

Prior to the 2006 crisis, violent conflict relating to the east-west divide was evident between martial arts groups (MAGs), with some incidences of violence involving FALINTIL veterans. Tension relating to the divide was also evident within both the FALINTIL Timor-Leste Defence Force (F-FDTL) and Timor-Leste National Police (PNTL). The issue was elevated to the national political agenda in early 2006 when around 150 officers and other ranks of the F-FDTL submitted a petition to the Timorese Government which alleged discrimination against loromonu in the F-FDTL. The soldiers became known as the ‘Petitioners’. The labour dispute festered for several months, with the Petitioners swelling to almost 600 soldiers, and eventually triggered a national security and political crisis. Following the outbreak of armed confrontation between the F-FDTL and PNTL, the Petitioners and their supporters came to represent a “justice movement” to rectify discrimination against loromonu relating to the divisive
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national discourse about the competing roles of *lorosa’e* and *loromonu* during the resistance movement (Arnold 2009, p. 435).

The political crisis triggered the resignation of then prime minister Mari Alkatiri as well as minister of defence Roque Rodrigues and minister of the interior Rogerio Lobato. The two ministers were accused of illegally transferring weapons to civilians during the 2006 crisis. Political observers argue that historical grievances and disputes between political leaders were given expression through the violence on the streets of Dili. Widespread violent conflict led to a significant loss of life, injury and displacement as well as the destruction of property and critical infrastructure. An estimated 150,000 Timorese were displaced during the crisis and some remained in Internally Displaced Person (IDP) camps in Dili and the nearby districts until late 2009.

Some argue that the death of Major Alfredo Reinado, the symbolic leader of the Petitioners, during the attempted assassination of then president Jose Ramos Horta and Prime Minister Xanana Kay Rala Gusmão on 11 February 2008, led to the decline of the east-west divide. Some believed Major Reinado was the primary agitator of the *lorosa’e*-loromonu dichotomy, representing the grievances of loromonu within the PNTL and their struggle for emancipation from perceived discrimination. Reinado’s death rendered the Petitioners leaderless and the group appeared to disband. The Alliance for a Parliamentary Majority (AMP) coalition government, led by Prime Minister Gusmão, took measures to address the grievances of the Petitioners through a cash payment scheme, which effectively demobilised the group.

The thesis examines whether the east-west divide resonated more broadly in Timor-Leste, beyond the security sector, because of its correlation with a divisive national
Introduction
discourse about the competing roles of *lorosa’ē* and *loromonu* during the resistance movement. If the divide is viewed as a symptom of a divisively constructed narrative of nationalism, while the death of Reinado and the disbandment of the Petitioners removed some the key actors in the 2006 crisis, the root cause of the identity-based conflict remains unresolved.

How a nation tells the story of its past – in both collective remembering and forgetting – informs its present and future. The thesis examines the political significance of the east-west divide in the post-2006 crisis period. In particular, it analyses the strong relationship between political party affiliation and region in the presidential and parliamentary elections held in Timor-Leste in 2007 and 2012. In addition, the thesis explores the implications of the ongoing significance of the divide for nation-building in Timor-Leste, in particular for identity-building. It argues that the divide poses a critical challenge to the emergence of new narratives of nationalism which support reconciliation in the post-independence period and consequently, to the development of a cohesive national political community.

Theoretical framework

There is a growing consensus in literature on nation-building that the international community’s nation-building efforts have disproportionately focused on state-building – developing the capacity of the state and its institutions. As a result of a shift towards a state-centric paradigm of security and development, international peace and security have been inextricably linked to state-building. However, identity-building – developing a unifying national political community – is also a fundamental processes of nation-building. The key criteria of identity-building include: the connection between
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citizens and the state; a sense of common purpose; the transfer of citizens’ allegiance from local to central authority; and the erosion of social divisions (Talentino 2004).

The thesis critiques the disproportionate focus on state-building in literature on nation-building. Such a disproportionate focus has significant implications for nation-building in post-conflict societies. Identity-building legitimises and consolidates the nation-state by strengthening the connection between citizens and the state. When nation-building is reduced to a technical exercise – and state-building is reduced to the institutional transfer of liberal democratic forms of statehood and the state is reduced to its institutions – strengthening the connection between citizens and the state is challenging. State-building without identity-building undermines the development of a national political community which transcends social divisions and mitigates social and political conflict. By mitigating such conflict, identity-building guards the nation-state against further fragmentation.

Constructivist arguments have significant implications for our understanding of the emergence and persistence of identity-based conflict. Political leaders can play a role in constructing both identity and identity-based conflict to hold or accumulate power. As a result, the state can become a site for competition between social groups. Polarised collective identities can become entrenched over time and, as a result, identity-based conflict is prone to intractability. Therefore, such identities may continue to be significant and undermine peace and stability in the long-term. Based on this theoretical framework, the thesis explores the implications of the ongoing significance of the east-west divide for nation-building in Timor-Leste.
Introduction

Like literature on nation-building, existing research on nation-building in Timor-Leste also has a disproportionate focus on state-building. This research has focused on the implications of the 2006 crisis for state-building. The thesis makes an original and substantial contribution to existing research by exploring the implications of the crisis for identity-building in Timor-Leste.

In addition, comprehensive research on the political legacy of the east-west divide which emerged during the 2006 crisis has not yet been undertaken and the thesis aims to close this gap. There is a conventional view that, following the death of Major Reinado, the symbolic leader of the Petitioners, the divide declined as quickly as it rose and is no longer significant (Arnold 2009 and Hicks 2009). However, the theoretical framework indicates that the ongoing political significance of the divide could have significant implications for the nation-building project in Timor-Leste and requires further investigation.

Aims of research

The aim of the research is to critically assess the implications of the east-west divide for nation-building in Timor-Leste, in particular for identity-building. The research will address the following questions:

− What is the ongoing political significance of the east-west divide which emerged during the 2006 crisis in Timor-Leste?; and

− Does the divide pose a significant challenge to nation-building in Timor-Leste?

The thesis hypothesises that the disproportionate focus on state-building in Timor-Leste has derailed progress towards identity-building. The emergence of the east-west divide
Introduction

during the 2006 crisis in Timor-Leste was symptomatic of weak identity-building in the post-independence period. Given that identity-building is a fundamental process of nation-building which legitimises and consolidates the nation-state and guards it against further fragmentation, the nation-state is vulnerable to further identity-based conflict. Such conflict is prone to intractability and its root causes are unlikely to be resolved without significant progress towards the key criteria of identity-building: the connection between citizens and the state; a sense of common purpose; the transfer of citizens’ allegiance from local to central authority; and the erosion of social divisions (Talentino 2004). Therefore, the thesis hypothesises that the divide continues to be politically significant in the period since the crisis and poses a critical challenge to the nation-building project in Timor-Leste.

Research methodology

The research methodology is based on the theoretical framework which critiques the disproportionate focus on state-building in literature on nation-building. The research included informal and formal semi-structured interviews with Timorese and non-Timorese who were involved in nation-building in both community and government sectors as well as Timorese academics in the field of political science. The informal and formal semi-structured interviews had two purposes: first, to explore views on the ongoing political significance of the east-west divide in Timor-Leste; and second, to explore views on the divide’s implications for nation-building. The interview research is used to address both research questions. The research included analysis of public debate on the divide from monitoring official government communications, the National Parliament and local media. The research also included anecdotal evidence from my
Introduction

experience living and working in Dili, and travelling to the districts, from October 2007 to November 2009, and visiting Dili in July 2013.

Chapter outline

Part one of the thesis establishes the theoretical framework for the research. Chapter one reviews literature on nation-building and identity-based conflict. The first section of the chapter challenges the literature’s disproportionate focus on state-building which neglects identity-building. The second section of chapter one examines the implications of the disproportionate focus on state-building for nation-building. The purpose of chapter one is to demonstrate that if identity-building is fragile or even failing, new nation-states may be vulnerable to identity-based conflict.

Chapter two applies the theoretical framework to nation-building in Timor-Leste, where the emergence of the east-west divide during the 2006 crisis indicated that identity-building in Timor-Leste was fragile or even failing. The first section of the chapter examines UN nation-building efforts in the post-independence period in Timor-Leste. This section reviews existing research on these efforts and critically assesses their implications for both state-building and identity-building. The second section of chapter two explores the development of nationalism in Timor-Leste. This section examines the emergence of narratives of nationalism during the resistance movement and how these narratives have evolved in the post-independence period. It reviews existing research on nationalism and critically assesses the current construction of nationalism in Timor-Leste. This construction of nationalism is grounded in the resistance movement and layered with the divisions inherent in the resistance. The third section of chapter two reviews existing research on the impact of the crisis on the
Introduction

nation-building project in Timor-Leste. This section addresses the question of how the thesis would make a substantial and original contribution to existing research by exploring the implications of the ongoing political significance of the divide for nation-building in Timor-Leste. The fourth section outlines the research methodology based on the theoretical framework, qualitative interview research and analysis of public debate in Timor-Leste.

Part two of the thesis examines the ongoing political significance of the east-west divide in the post-2006 crisis period in Timor-Leste, addressing the first research question. Chapter three examines the emergence of the divide during the crisis. The first section of the chapter explores the historical origins and nature of the divide. This section reviews literature on the divide and analyses interview research undertaken in Timor-Leste in 2008 and 2009 with Timorese and non-Timorese involved in nation-building in both community and government sectors. The second section of chapter three examines the events during and after the crisis, until the death of Major Reinado on 11 February 2008. In particular, this section explores the role played by political actors in manipulating the divide as they jostled for power in the new nation-state. Based on the theoretical framework on nation-building and identity-based conflict, the final section of chapter three characterises the crisis as an identity-based conflict relating to the divide.

Chapter four examines whether the east-west divide continues to be politically significant in the post-2006 crisis period, following the death of Major Reinado and the settlement of the Petitioners issue. The first section of the chapter analyses whether the structural factors which contributed to the crisis remain a potential source of social and political conflict. The second section of the chapter examines the role played by regionalism in the 2007 elections and the views of political parties on the divide. The
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final section of the chapter explores other social fault lines in Timor-Leste which may contribute to identity-based conflict, assessing the relative significance of the divide in the post-crisis period. The chapter analyses interview research undertaken in Timor-Leste in 2008 and 2009 with Timorese and non-Timorese involved in nation-building in both community and government sectors. It also analyses political rhetoric relating to the divide through regular monitoring of government communications, the National Parliament and local media.

Part three of the thesis examines the long-term implications of the ongoing political significance of the east-west divide for nation-building in Timor-Leste, addressing the second research question. The 2012 elections in Timor-Leste were a significant milestone for the new nation-state, and led to the election of a new president, José Maria de Vasconcelos ‘Taur Matan Ruak’ (TMR), the re-election of Prime Minister Gusmão, the re-election of his party the National Congress for Timorese Reconstruction (CNRT) as the senior partner of a coalition government and the return of the Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor (Fretilin) to opposition. The Timorese Government assumed primary responsibility for running the elections, which consequently were viewed as a litmus test of state-building as well as democratic consolidation.

Chapter five investigates the political legacy of the east-west divide. The chapter examines the role played by regionalism in the 2012 elections. It analyses the relationship between political party affiliation and region, compared with the 2007 elections, and critically assesses the development of regionalism in Timor-Leste. The chapter examines political rhetoric about the divide and national unity during the election campaigns. It explores the implications of regionalism for democratic
consolidation in Timor-Leste, in particular for the development of the political party system.

Chapter six examines the implications of the ongoing political significance of the east-west divide for nation-building in Timor-Leste. The first section of chapter six examines the implications of regionalism for the connection between citizens and the state and the transfer of citizens’ allegiance from local to central authority – two criteria of identity-building which are fundamental to the legitimisation and consolidation of the state. In addition, this section examines competing claims to state legitimacy in Timor-Leste, including claims expressed by some political groups which have challenged the legitimacy of the state.

The second section of chapter six examines the implications of regionalism for the development of a common sense of purpose and the erosion of social divisions in Timor-Leste – two other criteria of identity-building. This section explores whether strong local identities in Timor-Leste have weakened the developing national political community. The final section of chapter six examines the implications of the ongoing significance of the east-west divide for the emergence of new narratives of nationalism which support reconciliation between ‘east’ and ‘west’ and national unity.

The thesis concludes by exploring the contribution of the research findings to literature on nation-building and identity-based conflict. The emergence of the east-west divide during the 2006 crisis in Timor-Leste indicates that identity-building is fragile or even failing. The research findings on the implications of the ongoing political significance of the divide for nation-building will contribute to the growing acceptance in literature on nation-building that identity-building is a fundamental process of nation-building
which contributes to the development of a unified national political community. Such a political community is considered to lay the foundation for sustainable peace and stability by mitigating social and political conflict. This critical assessment of nation-building in Timor-Leste challenges the shift towards a state-centric paradigm of security and development and offers new understandings of building sustainable peace and stability in post-conflict societies.
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Chapter one: Nation-building and identity-based conflict: A theoretical framework

Introduction

Chapter one reviews literature on nation-building and identity-based conflict. The first section of the chapter challenges the literature’s disproportionate focus on state-building – developing the capacity of the state and its institutions – which neglects identity-building – developing a cohesive national political community. Identity-building is a fundamental process of nation-building which legitimises and consolidates the new nation-state, guarding it against further fragmentation. The second section of the chapter examines the implications of the disproportionate focus on state-building for nation-building. If identity-building is fragile or even failing, new nation-states may be vulnerable to identity-based conflict. The intractability of polarised collective identities and identity-based conflict poses a serious threat to long-term peace and stability.

Some of the literature on nation-building poses the question of “whether it is the states (in the South) that are failing, or the analysis of research (undertaken mostly in the North) that is inadequate or incomplete” (Fischer and Schmelzle 2009, p. 7). The thesis addresses this question in relation to nation-building in Timor-Leste, where the emergence of the east-west divide during the 2006 crisis indicates that identity-building in Timor-Leste is fragile or even failing. The literature review establishes a theoretical framework on nation-building and identity-based conflict which forms the basis of the research methodology. The purpose of the theoretical framework and the research is to broaden our theoretical knowledge and understanding of nation-building and identity-based conflict and contribute to theoretical debates about these issues. However, such
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theoretical debate has significant implications for policy makers involved in nation-
building. These implications will be discussed in part three of the thesis.

Nation-building: a theoretical framework

Weak, failing or failed states are considered to pose a serious threat to international
peace and stability. In the post-Cold War period, international and regional
organisations have been actively engaged in peace-keeping and peace-building
operations to solve the problem of state failure or collapse. The United Nations (UN)
expanded its operations from traditional peace-keeping missions – which observe peace
agreements – to multi-dimensional peace-building missions – which implement
comprehensive peace agreements, stabilise the security situation and build liberal
democratic states and institutions - to lay the foundations for sustainable peace. In the
post-Cold War period, UN peace-keeping has been applied not only to inter-state
conflict but also to intra-state conflict and civil wars.

At the turn of the 21st century, the UN further expanded its operations to nation-
building. Dinnen (2007, p. 2) argues that “the goal of nation-building in the broader
sense is to unify the national community within the institutional framework of the
modern state, with the objective of social and political stability”. In 1995 the UN
undertook state construction in Bosnia and Herzegovina (United Nations Mission in
Bosnia and Herzegovina (UNMIBH)) and in 1999 the UN served as the administrator of
both Kosovo (UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK)) and Timor-
Leste (UN Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET)). Dinnen (2007, pp.
1-2) describes nation-building as “...the favoured antidote” of the international community to the threats posed by state failure or collapse.

In the aftermath of the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks, there has been a shift towards a state-centric paradigm of international security and development (Duffield 2007 and Tschirgi 2004). Literature on nation-building has focused on the vulnerability of failing or failed states to transnational crime, describing them as havens for terrorists and terrorist activity. Security, peace and development have been inextricably linked to state-building, in particular to liberal democratic forms of statehood.

There is a growing consensus in literature on nation-building that the international community’s nation-building efforts to date have disproportionately focused on state-building (Hampson 1996, Lederach 2001, Prendergast and Plumb 2002, Smillie 2001 and Talentino 2004). Dinnen (2007, p. 2) states that:

Many of today’s international interventions undertaken in the name of nation-building devote most of their resources to building state institutions and have relatively little focus on nation-building in the broader, literal sense. The emphasis is more about regime change or democratisation, as in Afghanistan or Iraq, or the reconstruction of states that have collapsed or been seriously weakened as a result of internal conflict, as in the cases of Timor-Leste or Solomon Islands.

State-building is a fundamental process of nation-building which develops the capacity of the state and its institutions. Boege et al (2009, p. 17) define state-building as:
...sustainably strengthening state institutions in addition to enhancing the capacities of state actors for control, regulation and implementation, particularly in the core fields of statehood, namely internal security, basic social services, the rule of law and legitimacy of government.

Ghani et al (2005, p. 6, Ghani et al 2006a and Ghani et al 2006b) argue that, in order to overcome state fragility, state-building should achieve the following core functions of a state: legitimate monopoly on the means of violence; administrative control; management of public finances; investment in human capital; delineation of citizenship rights and duties; provision of infrastructure services; formation of the market; management of assets, including natural resources; international relations; and the rule of law.

Literature on nation-building often fails to take into account that, in addition to state-building, identity-building is another fundamental process of nation-building. The nation-state is grounded in a national political community as well as in an effective state and its institutions. Talentino (2004, p. 559) argues that:

...a nation is a distinctive group of people who feel a communal bond on the basis of culture, history, religion, geography, or linguistics, while a state is a political actor defined by territorial borders, political organisation, and recognised legitimacy. The nation-state is the combination of both identity and function into a single unit.
State-building and identity-building are deliberate processes which are distinct and separate from each other. In terms of state-building, four criteria relating to the functioning of the state are used to measure its success: legitimacy; effectiveness; ability to function without international assistance; and the rule of law (Talentino 2004, p. 571). In terms of identity-building the criteria are: citizen connection with the state; a sense of common purpose; the ratio of central to local authority; and the erosion of social divisions. I would argue that the strength of citizens’ connection to central authority, in particular the transfer of citizens’ allegiance from local authority to central authority, is a far more significant criterion than the ratio of central to local authority because it reflects more accurately the connection between citizens and the state. The different criteria reveal how distinct state-building and identity-building processes are from each other.

While state-building is a top-down and often external process, identity-building is a bottom-up and internal one. Bottom-up processes contribute to identity-building because, first, they bridge social divisions, develop a sense of common purpose and transfer citizens’ identification from the local to the national level and, second, they demonstrate the tangible benefits of cooperation between different groups. The distinction between top-down and bottom-up processes relegates state-building to the national level and identity-building to the local level. Past nation-building experiences indicate that state-building is the “building block” for nation-building (Talentino 2004, p. 572). Yet Talentino (2004, p. 558) argues that:
Top-down approaches provide for the most obvious short-term needs by developing structures of government and establishing systems that emphasise transparency and accountability. Bottom-up processes try to bring individuals together by focusing on the benefits of inter-group relations. But that effort to transcend divisions and encourage interactions cannot be sustained without first developing the state itself and building structures for stable administration. Efforts to bridge social divides may not spring up naturally, but often need political development to provide a reason for integration...state-building provides the essential catalyst for identity-building. Identity-building then provides the basis for long-term state consolidation.

While state-building and identity-building processes are distinct and separate from each other, they are also intertwined. Identity-building cannot occur without an effective state, but identity-building consolidates and legitimises the state and guards it against further fragmentation. The development of a cohesive national political community is dependent on citizens’ acceptance of and commitment to the state, as well as active participation and representation in the state, all of which contribute to a belief in the legitimacy of the state (Talentinto 2004, p. 564). Such a political community is based on a strong sense of civic identity and values, which transcend social divisions. Identity-building processes are strengthened by community consultation and decision-making, and eventually the tangible benefits of cooperation between groups and with the state. Talentino (2004, p. 564) warns that citizens’ acceptance of and commitment to the state may be severed by weak rule of law and encourages those involved in nation-building to prioritise restoring law and order and reducing corruption. In this
way, Talentino (2004, p. 564) demonstrates that state-building and identity-building are intertwined and that identity-building cannot occur without an effective state, describing the existence of a state as a representation of civic identity. Most significantly, a strong sense of civic identity and values transcends social divisions, which may have contributed to violent conflict in the past, and, in doing so, guards the nation-state against further fragmentation.

Reconciliation and transitional justice strengthen identity-building processes. However, Sahin (2011, p. 226) argues that responsibility for reconciliation and transitional justice in post-conflict societies lies with local, rather than external, actors. The UN has neither the capacity nor jurisdiction to impose the development of a cohesive national political community or justice. Instead, Sahin (2011, p. 226) argues that the UN “…may create a space for social groups to contend with their past, resolve their differences, and adopted constructive measures towards promoting a sense of unified national community”. In this way, external actors play a role in mediating between different groups and facilitating community consultations on issues relating to nation-building. External actors also play an important role in providing funding and material support for such activities, in particular to promote good governance and enhance the effectiveness and legitimacy of the state. Sahin (2011, p. 226) notes that UN efforts to strengthen identity-building depend on the support and commitment of the local political elites to produce social and political transformation in the long-term.

The disproportionate focus on state-building has significant implications for nation-building. Brown (2009b) argues that state-building may become a technical exercise in transferring liberal democratic forms of statehood – state-building is reduced to the
institutional transfer of liberal democratic forms of statehood and the state is reduced to its institutions. Brown (2009b, p. 146) argues that:

A fundamental problem with attempting to build democracy primarily through institutional transfer is that this approach profoundly misunderstands the nature of working political community, and certainly of democratic, participatory political community.

The state and its institutions do not constitute a national political community. Both the state and society contribute to the development of a national political community: state institutions function because they are embedded in social norms and practices and institutions which regulate these norms and practices. Brown (2009b, p. 147) argues that:

Such a dense network of exchange and relationships linking government with other social, political and economic networks would be fundamental to most forms of governance enjoying widespread legitimacy. If the goal is to support the emergence of democratic governance, however, where participation and communication are fundamental, then a focus primarily on government bureaucracies becomes even less adequate. Elections in themselves, while important, cannot carry the entire responsibility of representation and of linking people with government.
When nation-building is reduced to a technical exercise in transferring liberal
democratic forms of statehood, building a connection between the state and its citizens
is challenging. Such technical processes overlook the extent to which institutions are
embedded in a cultural and social context (Brown 2009b, p. 162 and Brown 2009a, p.
16). Brown (2009b, pp. 147-8) argues that:

State formation, however, involves the slow, complex and difficult processes by
which populations, with all the multiple social, economic, cultural formations of
which they are part, come to understand themselves as sharing the political
community of the state and by which the structures and practices enabling that
sharing of political community take shape and are sustained.

Literature on nation-building is orientated towards a western-style liberal democratic
state. But such a state “hardly exists in reality beyond the OECD world” (Boege et al
2009, p. 16). Most post-conflict societies in which nation-building takes place have
never had experience with a western-style state nor liberal democratic values and
practices (Hohe 2002a, p. 570). The disconnection between citizens and the state
widens if new liberal democratic forms of statehood substantially differ from traditional
social and political structures and customary governance (Brown 2009b, p. 148). There
is a broad consensus that new western-style states tend to lack deep roots in post-
conflict societies. The introduction of western-style states has not been accompanied by
what Boege et al (2009, p. 19) describe as “the development of the economic, political,
social and cultural structures and capacities that had provided the basis and framework
for an efficiently functioning political order in the course of the evolution of the state in
European history” – thus explaining the lack of roots. Von Trotha (2009, p. 38) argues
that state-building in the post-Cold War period has demonstrated that traditional social
and political structures are far more influential than the state. Such structures have
greater influence in remote or rural regions where the state and its institutions have
limited reach. Boege et al (2009, p. 20) describe them as determining the “social
reality” of a significant proportion of the population.

By failing to take into account the significance of the local context, nation-building has
often contributed to a clash of paradigms (Hohe 2002a, p. 570). Brown (2009b, p. 162)
argues that “building a state in which people do not feel at home, and where they do not
speak the ‘language’ is not a recipe for nationhood, democracy or security”. The clash
of traditional and modern paradigms undermines the local legitimacy of the state and
consequently, the connection between citizens and the state. Without such a
connection, citizens are likely to feel a sense of alienation and marginalisation from the
state (Brown 2009b, p. 148).

The disconnection between citizens and the state undermines the legitimacy and
consolidation of the state. Brown and Gusmão (2009, p. 61) argue that such
disconnection may contribute to the development of a state which becomes
“significantly disconnected from prevalent social practices and values, and divorced
from the actual socio-political and economic dynamics shaping people’s lives”. The
state and its institutions only function when they are “embedded in social and cultural
norms and practices” (Boege et al 2009, p. 31). Brown and Gusmão (2009, p. 68) argue
that “to seek to build peace is to engage with people’s sense of history, identity, and
community – with a shared sense of how to approach the past and future, and what
stands as the context for inclusive participation”.

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If there are competing claims to state legitimacy, the nation-building process may be influenced by both state and non-state social and political structures. Boege et al (2009, p. 20) pose the question of what constitutes political order in weak, failing or failed states in which the state is one actor among many and state order is “only one of a number of orders claiming to provide security, frameworks for conflict regulation and social services”. Where the state is not embedded in society, such a society is functionally stateless as only outposts of the state exist. However, statelessness does not imply anarchy or the total absence of political orders as “the state’s ‘outposts’ are mediated by ‘informal’ indigenous societal institutions which follow their own logic and rules within the (incomplete) state structures” (Boege et al 2009, p. 20). Boege et al (2009, p. 24) argue that:

...regions of so-called fragile statehood are generally places in which diverse and competing claims to power and logics of order co-exist, overlap and intertwine, namely the logic of the ‘formal’ state, of traditional ‘informal’ societal order, and of globalisation and associated social fragmentation...In such an environment, the ‘state’ does not have a privileged position as the political framework that provides security, welfare and representation; it has to share authority, legitimacy and capacity with other structures. In short, we are confronted with hybrid political orders, and these orders differ considerably from the western model state.

The concept of ‘hybrid political orders’ is applied to states in which both state and non-state social and political structures co-exist. Boege et al (2009) argue that an approach
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to nation-building which takes into account hybrid political orders is, both theoretically and practically, more relevant than a state-centric one. The term ‘hybrid’ is used to characterise these political orders for three main reasons: first, it is broad enough to include a wide range of non-state political orders; second, it focuses on the synthesis of different political orders; and third, it establishes that these different political orders are not separate from each other (Boege et al 2009, p. 24). Instead they “permeate” each other and contribute to a multi-dimensional political order (Boege et al 2009, p. 24).

Therefore, the state and its institutions co-exist with traditional social and political structures which can also provide for the security, representation and welfare of citizens. Within hybrid political orders the state does not have a monopoly on violence, there are competing claims to legitimacy and authority and both traditional and modern structures co-exist (von Trotha 2009, p. 42).

Boege et al (2009, p. 19) argue that non-state actors which have local legitimacy, authority and capacity, such as traditional leaders, “…have to be reckoned with and engaged with when it comes to building peace and sustainable political order”. Nation-building which does not incorporate hybridity fails to develop a state and institutions with local legitimacy and serves to “…alienate local societies by rendering them passive, thereby weakening a sense of local responsibility for overcoming problems and undermining local ownership of solutions” (Boege et al 2009, p. 19). Boege et al (2009, p. 20) argue that the legitimacy, authority and capacity of benevolent non-state actors and traditional social and political structures can contribute to the nation-building process, arguing that “it is important to search for ways and means of generating positive mutual accommodation of state and customary non-state, as well as civil society institutions – which, in real life are not isolated domains anyway, but elements
of a specific ‘messy’ local socio-political context”. While a state which incorporates hybridity may appear weak in terms of legitimacy, authority and capacity, Boege et al (2009, p. 20) argue that such weakness may strengthen nation-building by developing the connection between citizens and the state by “…perceiving community resilience and customary institutions not so much as ‘spoilers’ and problems, but as assets and sources of solutions that can be drawn on in order to forge constructive relationships between communities and governments, between customary and introduced political and social institutions”. As a result, new forms of governance, which integrate traditional and modern structures, may emerge which contribute to sustainable peace because such forms of governance “…are not introduced from the outside, but embedded in the societal structures on the ground” (Boege et al 2009, p. 20).

Guelke’s (2012) research, which is based on extensive comparative analysis of deeply divided societies in Israel and Palestine, Northern Ireland and South Africa, found that the state illegitimacy contributed to identity-based conflict. Guelke (2012, p. 30) first identifies the social divisions which contribute to identity-based conflict and argues that such conflict exists “…along a well-entrenched fault line that is recurrent and endemic and that contains the potential for violence between the segments”. However, Guelke (2012) notes that the existence of such divisions does not always lead to intractable identity-based conflict. Deeply divided societies are characterised by two factors: first, a lack of political consensus on consultation and decision-making; and second, contested legitimacy. Guelke (2012) concludes that it is these two factors which make such societies vulnerable to intractable conflict.
The existence of hybrid political orders has significant implications for identity-building. In hybrid political orders, a sense of citizenship is “almost entirely lacking; self-perceptions as citizens are almost non-existent or meaningless” (Boege et al 2009, p. 23). Individuals define themselves primarily as “members of particular sub- or trans-national social entities (kin group, tribe, village)” (Boege et al 2009, p. 23). The local community is described as providing the “nexus” of security, welfare and representation (Boege et al 2009, p. 23). The rules and regulations of the local community are far stronger than that of the state. Individuals are more likely to place their trust and confidence in community leaders rather than state leaders. Boege et al (2009, p. 23) argue that “the state is perceived as an alien external force, far away not only physically (in the capital city), but also psychologically”. As a result, individuals feel a much stronger sense of allegiance to local rather than central authority.

The disconnection between citizens and the state and the subsequent illegitimacy of the state may contribute to instability. Brown (2009b, p. 148) argues that:

The political life of a population becomes cut off from the ‘state’ and a gulf is created between the new, technical version of state institutions and the forms and language of political community that make sense to people. This means that the interactions between these new forms of the ‘state’ and the actual political dynamics driving the country are more likely to be seriously dysfunctional because they have not been sufficiently integrated or articulated and may be essentially working at cross purposes.
Significantly Boege et al (2009a, p. 21) argue that, as a consequence, the state and its institutions deviate from the western model and “become the subject of power struggles between competing social groups and their leaders, and are utilised by those groups and leaders for their own benefit, regardless of the needs of the ‘nation’ or the ‘citizenry’”.

Social and political conflict may influence the nation-building process and become embedded in the new nation-state. Hameiri (2007, p. 123) argues that the capacity of the state and its institutions cannot be separated from such conflict. State capacity is “a form of socially produced power” which mirrors patterns of social relationships (pp. 124-5). Hameiri (2007, pp. 124-5) argues that:

...to comprehend why institutions operate the way they do we need to understand the underlying social dynamics, framed by conflict, that work through social and political institutions...By grounding capacity in conflict, we effectively ‘re-politicize’ capacity, defining it as a socially constituted and dynamic phenomenon...Therefore, capacity is not something that resides necessarily within certain institutions or with certain individuals, but an attribute that relates to broader political and social structures, such as those affecting class and ethnicity, within which institutions develop.

Hameiri (2007, pp. 139-40) argues that “the focus on social conflict, based on a broader system-level, structural analysis of state-society relations, is able to position state capacity in the context of the historical development of the state and the material relations it embodies”. Social and political conflict plays an important role in hybrid
political orders. Such conflict is understood in this context as the competition between groups over access to state resources and power.

The state can be viewed as an expression of balances of social and political power and hegemony, rather than a set of institutions, because it exists in the context of social relationships. Hameiri (2007, p. 140) defines state power as a “set of complex social relationships” which are dynamic and influence the functioning of the state and its institutions. Hameiri (2007, p. 140) argues that the state and its institutions do not derive their significance from their capacity, but from the interests they represent and the social divisions they give expression to. The state and its institutions are often politicised because the state and society are not mutually exclusive. Neither is the state simply “embedded” in society (Hameiri 2007, p. 140). Political power is exercised in both state and society. Sahin (2011, p. 238) describes nation-building as a “power-driven process”, arguing that “this is evidenced in the intensification of struggles amongst a variety of social groups (for example, guerrillas, youth, the diaspora, etc.) competing to have a say in the distribution of political power”. Hameiri (2007, p. 140) advocates reorienting the current approach to nation-building away from an institutionalist approach, which focuses on state capacity, towards a holistic approach which focuses on balances of power and hegemony that “permeate both state and society and the interests that benefit from the way institutions operate”. Such an approach dismantles dichotomies of state and society, formal and informal and traditional and modern from our understanding of state-building (Hameiri 2007, p. 144).

There is a growing consensus in literature on nation-building that concepts of state failure or fragility have significant conceptual limitations. Existing research concludes
that these concepts are prescriptive (Nay 2013, pp. 329-30). They are based on a state-centric approach to security and development which focuses on state legitimacy, authority and capacity (Nay 2013, pp. 332-33). These concepts are reductionist and fail to take into account the wide range of factors which impact on security and development (Nay 2013, p. 333). When state-building is implemented as a technical exercise in transferring liberal democratic forms of statehood, nation-building may not contribute to sustainable peace and stability. As Nay (2013, p. 337) argues, state-building is not a “pre-requisite” solution to resolving the problem of weak or failing states. The disproportionate focus on state-building in literature on nation-building fails to recognise that the state is embedded in society and “creates and artificial division” between the two (Nay 2013, p. 337). There are a wide-range of local, regional and international factors which shape society, beyond the national state. Nay (2013, p. 337) asks: “if key factors fuelling political instability are located in the local society and in the global economy, why should the analytical lens and policy solutions primarily focus on state functions?” A state-centric approach towards nation-building would not overcome the subtle and complex dynamics which contribute to social conflict. If conflict resolution measures are based on such an assumption, which creates an artificial division between society and the state, such measures may be ineffective because they fail to address the root cause of the conflict. This challenge to a state-centric approach towards nation-building has significant implications for those involved in nation-building – the policy makers and practitioners. Nay (2013, p. 337) argues that policy making should not be limited to resolving the problem of state weakness or fragility, instead it should address broader international dimensions of security and development.
There are significant challenges to revising approaches towards nation-building. Nay (2013) asserts that theoretical concepts of state failure and fragility may bolster the social and political hegemony of not only western countries, but also the political elites who act as local counterparts during transnational governance and use their control over state resources and power to hold or accumulate such power. Nay (2013, p. 338) notes that political elites may not promote solutions which are developed, implemented and led by local communities. Solutions led by communities rather than political elites may impact the elites’ privileged access to state power and resources. Nay (2013, p. 338) criticises solutions which are developed and implemented by the state and its institutions for preserving the hegemony of international and national powers which have a vested interest in maintaining their hold on power – “mostly at the expense of populations who suffer from war, poverty and repression”. As a result, challenges to the current state-centric approach to nation-building not only challenge conventional wisdom relating to international security and development, but the vested interests that this wisdom serves.

There is a growing consensus that literature on nation-building has a disproportionate focus on state-building. This literature often fails to take into account that, in addition to state-building, identity-building is a fundamental process of nation-building which legitimises and consolidates the nation-state and guards it against further fragmentation. A state which lacks legitimacy may be characterised as a hybrid political order, in which there are competing claims to legitimacy. In such orders, the state and its institutions co-exist with traditional social and political structures which can also provide for the security, representation and welfare of citizens. The existence of hybrid political orders has significant implications for identity-building, by undermining the
connection between citizens and the state. The following section examines how the nation-state may be vulnerable to identity-based conflict and further violent conflict.

**Identity-based conflict: a theoretical framework**

*The social construction of identity and identity-based conflict*

Identity refers to a social category which an individual “either takes special pride in or views as a more-or-less unchangeable and socially consequential attribute’” (Fearon and Laitin 2000, p. 848). Social categories have two key features: “rules of membership that decide who is and is not a member of the category”; and “content, that is, sets of characteristics (such as beliefs, desires, moral commitments, and physical attributes) thought to be typical of members of the category, or behaviours expected or obliged of members in certain situations (roles)” (Fearon and Laitin 2000, p. 848). One other feature is the “social valuation” of members of social categories relative to others (Fearon and Laitin 2000, p. 848). Social valuation is often referred to as identity politics.

What does it mean to say identities are socially constructed? Constructivists argue that identities are socially constructed because “social categories, their membership rules, content, and valuation are the products of human action and speech, and that as a result they can and do change over time” (Fearon and Laitin 2000, p. 848). Fearon and Laitin (2000, p. 850) argue that identities are produced and reproduced by specific processes of human action and speech, focusing on strategic action by individuals or groups. Ethno-symbolism argues that identity is formed by social categories relating to pre-
modern cultural elements. These elements include: a collective name; a myth of common ancestry; shared history; a common culture; a homeland; and a sense of solidarity (Smith 2008). Ethno-symbolism argues that the formation of an ethnic identity occurs over a period spanning centuries. Like constructivism, ethno-symbolism argues that identities are socially constructed and changeable to an extent, however, such construction and change are steeped in centuries of history. Chapter six, which examines the implications of the ongoing political significance of the east-west divide for the development of civic nationalism in Timor-Leste, explores ethno-symbolist interpretations of nationalism.

In contrast, primordialists argue that social categories are “natural, inevitable, and unchanging facts about the social world” and that social categories are “fixed by human nature rather than by social convention and practice” (Fearon and Laitin 2000, p. 848).

Constructivist and primordialist arguments have significant implications for our understanding of the emergence and persistence of identity-based conflict. Given the nature of social categories outlined above, primordialists argue that conflict between identity groups A and B is “inevitable because of unchanging, essential characteristics of the members of these categories...ethnic violence results from antipathies and antagonisms that are enduring properties of ethnic groups” (Fearon and Laitin 2000, p. 849).

In contrast, constructivists reject the essentialist argument that social categories are natural, inevitable and unchanging and therefore argue that conflict between two identity groups is not an “eternal condition” (Fearon and Laitin 2000, p. 849).
Furthermore, Fearon and Laitin (2000, p. 849) argue that identity groups A and B “need not think of themselves as A’s and B’s at all”. The following example is given:

...a constructivist might argue that the people known as Croats and Serbs might, with a different nineteenth-century political history, be known as the South Slavs, or simply as the Serbs. The claim is that not only does the content of social categories change over time but so do the boundaries between them (Fearon and Laitin 2000, p. 849).

Fearon and Laitin (2000, p. 850) argue that, while the historical origins of an identity may or may not be relevant in an explanation of identity-based conflict, the social construction of identity is relevant if the process itself by which the content or boundary of an identity is constructed contributes to identity-based conflict. Fearon and Laitin characterise the construction of identity in three ways. These characterisations differ in whether broad structural forces, discursive formations, or individuals are identified as “the agents that act to produce and reproduce a system of social categories” (Fearon and Laitin 2000, p. 850). Fearon and Laitin (2000, p. 853) note that “…ethnic identities – the content and boundary rules of ethnic categories – might be constructed by the actions of individuals seeking various ends”.

The role of political leadership

Political leaders may play a role in constructing identity and identity-based conflict. Kriesberg (2003a, p. 4) argues that:
leaders put forward identities that include some people while excluding others. They may expect to benefit from the construction and strengthening of exclusive identities, privileging their own language or religion and gaining power by arousing emotions against other groups and peoples.


Elite machinations and politicking may contribute to identity-based conflict. Identity-based conflict may be characterised as both a means and by-product of efforts by political leaders to hold or accumulate power (Brass 1997, Deng 1995, Prunier1995 and Woodward 1995). Fearon and Laitin (2000, p. 853) argue that “elites foment ethnic violence to build political support; this process has the effect of constructing more antagonistic identities, which favours more violence”. Political leaders’ motivation to “play the ethnic card”:

...emerges out of political fighting within the leader’s ethnic group between ethnic extremists and moderates. Extremist groups or leaders may use violence as a strategy to force or induce moderates to increase their support for extremism...Or threats to a moderate leader’s power base within his own group may lead him to provoke violence in order to gain the support of extremists or the broader public (Fearon and Laitin 2000, pp. 864-5).
Fearon and Laitin (2000, p. 865) identify two ways in which political leaders can construct identity. First, they may construct polarised collective identities in a more antagonistic manner by altering the identity categories of each group. Antagonism between the groups may set in motion a spiral of revenge. Second, extremist leaders may incite violent conflict or encourage moderates to do so in order to “purify” their culture (Fearon and Laitin 2000, p. 865).

If conflict serves political and not popular interests, then it is difficult to explain popular involvement in the conflict. Fearon and Laitin (2000, p. 854) pose the question of “how elites can convince their followers to adopt false beliefs and take actions that the followers would not want to take if they understood what the leaders were up to?”. They identify four explanations of popular involvement. First, “innate or learned psychological bias leads members of ethnic groups to discount or ignore their own leader’s involvement in producing ethnic conflict, so that the Other takes all the blame” (Fearon and Laitin 2000, p. 854). Second, asymmetric information from political leaders may allow them to manipulate popular beliefs. Fearon and Laitin (2000, p. 854) argue that:

even if people do not know which side to blame for the failure of constitutional negotiations, an ethnic riot, or incident of ethnic violence, they do know that one or both sides are to blame. Thus, observing any such event should lead them rationally to increase their belief that the other groups or its leaders may be dangerous or at fault, even if it happens in this case that their own leadership provoked the conflict.
During conflict, political leaders may enjoy higher levels of public trust and confidence as they are perceived as having greater information about the conflict (Fearon and Laitin 2000, p. 855). Third, political leaders may incite violence to legitimise a coup d’état. If a security threat exists, political leaders may be able to take advantage of constitutional or institutional powers to centralise their own power. Finally, discourses on ethnicity may be so influential that individuals are “totally blinded” and interpret events according to these discourses (Fearon and Laitin 2000, p. 855).

In addition to identity, violent conflict may also be constructed by political leaders. Brass argues that popular involvement in conflict may occur because individuals are pursuing their own diverse agendas that may have little to do with communal antipathies per se. When politicians interpret local disputes in an ethnic frame, they are merely giving people the license to pursue their own agendas under the banner of ‘communal conflict’ (cited in Fearon and Laitin 2000, p. 855).

Such interpretations have the effect of perpetuating or fostering larger scale communal violence (Fearon and Laitin 2000, p. 869). Brass concludes that what is referred to as communal violence instead often consists of grievances and disputes which are not related to communal antipathies (cited in Fearon and Laitin 2000, p. 869).

A necessary condition for intractable identity-based conflict is the availability of thugs who can be mobilized by political leaders. Fearon and Laitin (2000, pp. 871-2) explain that:
If elites ‘let the thugs go’, who have motivations besides or in addition to ethnic hatred, processes begin that leave the moderates in the group little choice but to follow a familiar path. By initiating violent tit-for-tat sequences, thugs bring about the construction of more antagonistic group identities, making it rational to fear the other group and see its members as dangerous threats.

Other motivations can include looting, land grabs, and personal revenge. Fearon and Laitin (2000, p. 874) argue that “the activities of thugs set loose by the politicians can ‘tie the hands’ of publics who are compelled to seek protection from the leaders who have endangered them”.

Identity-based conflict and intractability

Intractable conflicts can be broadly defined as conflicts that are recalcitrant, intense, deadlocked, and extremely difficult to resolve (Coleman 2000). Identity-based conflict is prone to intractability. Human needs theory argues that individuals and groups have basic and universal human needs, which include recognition, security and identity, and that these needs need to be met to maintain social stability (Burton 1990). Maiese (2003, p. 4) argues that identity-based conflict is intractable because identity is a fundamental human need:

Conflicts over identity arise when group members feel that their sense of self is threatened or denied legitimacy and respect. Because identity is integral to one’s self-esteem and how one interprets the rest of the world, any threat to identity is likely to produce a strong response. Typically this response is both aggressive
Identity-based conflict is based on polarised collective identities with each group believing the conflict is between ‘us’ and ‘them’ (Kriesberg 2003b). Kriesberg (2003a, p. 1) argues that “people who share the same collective identity think of themselves as having a common interest and a common fate” and therefore may be willing to participate in identity-based conflict. Conflict often persists due to the development of polarized collective identities between in-groups and out-groups, especially if negative characterisations which demonise or dehumanise the out-group exist (Coleman 2003).

Polarised collective identities may be instrumentalised during conflict. Coleman (2003, pp. 21-2) argues that new in-groups and out-groups are formed along “authentic but arbitrary” social categories which relate to the conflict between them. Coleman (2003, p. 22) argues that:

These group distinctions and the collective identities that ensue initially serve instrumental functions such as resisting oppressive opportunity structures, staking claims to territory and sovereignty, or buffering each group’s social identity and esteem (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Kelman, 1999). In time, however, the collective identities that emerge take on meaning and value of their own.

As conflict escalates, in-group discourse and out-group hostilities escalate, leading the groups to become increasingly polarised, “resulting in the development of polarized
collective identities constructed around a negation and disparagement of the out-group” (Coleman 2003, p. 22).

Polarised collective identities may become entrenched over time. Coleman (2003, p. 22) argues that changes occur – in the psychological states of individuals, the structure and function of groups and the nature of the community in which the conflict takes place – which contribute to the intractability of identity-based conflict. Most significantly, these changes include the emergence of a heterogeneous group identity, with defined categories such as ethnicity, religion and language (Coleman 2003, p. 22). Other changes include: the construction of histories and ancestors, which emphasise loyalty to the group; the polarisation of collective identities to the extent that group identity, “us”, is defined in opposition to “them”; and calcifying images of the other in a way which demonises and dehumanises them (Coleman 2003, p. 22). These changes are supported by narratives which seek to justify the rights and claims of groups. Coleman (2003, pp. 22-3) argues that these identities are passed down from generation to generation through socialisation processes, including parenting, education and the media. These processes effectively freeze learning, which Coleman (2003, p. 23) argues results in a frozen sense of us versus them.

Constructivist arguments have significant implications for our understanding of the emergence and persistence of identity-based conflict. Political leadership can play a role in constructing both identity and identity-based conflict to hold or accumulate power. As a result, the state can become a site for competition between social groups. Literature on conflict theory argues that polarised collective identities may become entrenched over time and, as a result, identity-based conflict is prone to intractability.
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Chapter one: Nation-building and identity-based conflict: A theoretical framework

Conclusion

There is a growing consensus that literature on nation-building has a disproportionate focus on state-building. Talentino (2004) argues that the disproportionate focus on state-building has significant implications for nation-building. The theoretical framework adopted from Talentino (2004) argues that both state-building and identity-building are fundamental processes of nation-building. The key criteria of identity-building include: the connection between citizens and the state; a sense of common purpose; the transfer of citizens’ allegiance from local to central authority; and the erosion of social divisions (Talentino 2004).

Identity-building legitimises and consolidates the nation-state, guarding it against further fragmentation. However, when state-building is implemented as a technical exercise in transferring liberal democratic forms of statehood, the connection between citizens and the state may be weak. A clash of paradigms between traditional and modern political and social structures may alienate and marginalise citizens from the state, preventing widespread acceptance of and commitment to the state. As a result, the state lacks legitimacy. If identity-building is fragile or even failing, nation-states may be characterised as hybrid political orders, in which there are competing claims to legitimacy and authority. Such nation-states may be vulnerable to identity-based conflict.

State-building without identity-building undermines the development of a national political community which transcends social divisions. These divisions may be woven
into the fabric of the state and its institutions. As a result, the nation-state is vulnerable to identity-based conflict and further violent conflict. Constructivist arguments show how political leaders can play a role in constructing identity-based conflict to hold or accumulate power. Polarised collective identities and identity-based conflict are prone to intractability. Therefore, such identities may persist and pose a serious threat to long-term peace and stability.
Chapter two: Nation-building, nationalism and the emergence of the east-west divide in Timor-Leste

Introduction

Chapter one reviewed literature on nation-building and identity-based conflict and established the theoretical framework for the thesis. The chapter critiqued the literature’s disproportionate focus on state-building – developing the capacity of the state and its institutions. Such a disproportionate focus has significant implications for nation-building in post-conflict societies. Identity-building – developing a cohesive national political community – is also a fundamental process of nation-building. Identity-building legitimises and consolidates the nation-state, guarding it against further fragmentation. Weak identity-building undermines the nation-building project because the nation-state is vulnerable to identity-based conflict and further violent conflict. Polarised collective identities and identity-based conflict are prone to intractability. Unless such identities are reconciled, they pose a serious threat to long-term peace and stability.

Chapter two applies the theoretical framework to nation-building in Timor-Leste, where the emergence of the east-west divide during the 2006 crisis indicates that identity-building in Timor-Leste is fragile or even failing. The first section of the chapter examines the United Nations’ (UN) nation-building efforts in the post-independence period in Timor-Leste. This section reviews existing research on these efforts, critically assessing their implications for both state-building and identity-building. The second section explores the development of nationalism and national identity in Timor-Leste. This section examines the emergence of narratives of nationalism during the resistance movement and how these narratives have evolved in the post-independence period. It
reviews existing research on Timorese nationalism, which critically assesses the current construction of nationalism in Timor-Leste.

The third section reviews existing research on the impact of the 2006 crisis in Timor-Leste on the nation-building project. This section addresses the question of how the thesis will make a substantial and original contribution to existing research by exploring the implications of the ongoing political significance of the divide for nation-building in Timor-Leste. The fourth section outlines the research methodology based on the theoretical framework, qualitative interview research and analysis of public debate in Timor-Leste.

**Nation-building in Timor-Leste**

Timor-Leste’s road to nationhood has been long and hard. Portuguese and Dutch traders arrived in Timor in the 16th century. The Dutch were based in the western region of the island and the Portuguese in the eastern region. The Portuguese and Dutch fought for colonial control over the island until the borders were formally agreed upon in 1906. During the Second World War, Japan brutally occupied Timor-Leste from 1942 until 1945. Portugal regained colonial control over Timor-Leste in 1945 after the Japanese were defeated. Following a military coup in Lisbon in April 1974, Portugal began a rapid and disorganised decolonisation process in most of its overseas colonies, including Timor-Leste. During decolonisation, there was a brief civil war between the pro-socialist Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor (Fretilin) and the conservative Timorese Democratic Union (UDT), won by Fretilin and its military wing.
the National Liberation Forces of Timor-Leste (FALINTIL). The Indonesian military carried out small-scale incursions in Timor-Leste during this period.

Timor-Leste became quickly embroiled in international politics. Fretilin feared a full-scale Indonesian invasion and declared independence on 28 November 1975. On 7 December, the Indonesian military openly invaded Timor-Leste. The initial phase of the fighting between FALINTIL and the Indonesian military, which lasted until 1979, was fierce. It is commonly estimated that between 200,000 to 300,000 Timorese were killed, though estimates vary. During the Indonesian occupation, fighting between FALINTIL and the Indonesian military continued at varying levels of intensity.

Following the downfall of the Suharto dictatorship in 1998, the reform-minded Indonesian President Habibie announced that a referendum on special autonomy within Indonesia or independence would be held in January 1999. The referendum was supervised by the UN under the United Nations Mission in East Timor (UNAMET) (June – October 1999). Violence escalated in the lead up to the referendum, with the Indonesian military organising armed Timorese pro-Indonesian militias as their proxies. The referendum was finally held on 30 August 1999. 78.8 per cent of Timorese voted for independence, with a 98.6 per cent voter turnout. Timorese militias organised and directed by the Indonesian military commenced a nation-wide scorched-earth campaign of retribution (Dunn 2001). The militias and the Indonesian military killed an estimated 1,500 Timorese and forcibly relocated as many as 250,000 Timorese, around one third of the population, into West Timor as hostages. The majority of Timor-Leste’s critical infrastructure and basic services was destroyed during the campaign. An estimated 70
per cent of homes and buildings were destroyed. During this period, FALINTIL remained cantoned under UN supervision.

International outcry over the violence by the militia and Indonesian military led to the deployment of an Australian-led United Nations peacekeeping force (INTERFET) in September 1999 and the establishment of the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) (October 1999 – May 2002). Timor-Leste became fully independent on 20 May 2002, following approximately two and a half years under the authority of UNTAET. There have been three follow-up missions: the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET) (May 2002 – May 2005); the United Nations Office in East Timor (UNOTIL) (May 2005 – August 2006); and the United Nations Integrated Mission in East Timor (UNMIT) (August 2006 – December 2012). International peacekeeping forces led by Australia under the International Stabilisation Force (ISF) returned to Timor-Leste in May 2006 following the outbreak of widespread violent conflict.

Existing research on nation-building in Timor-Leste

Existing research on nation-building in Timor-Leste critiques UN nation-building efforts for having a disproportionate focus on state-building. The United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) was mandated to “assist with the development of democratic processes and institutions of governance, specifically, the development of an appropriate foundation for East Timor” (UN 1999, p. 68). The shortcomings of UNTAET’s state-building efforts in Timor-Leste are widely documented. In terms of state effectiveness, UNTAET is criticised for being
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exclusively central government oriented. As a result, a centralised top-down state structure was created which undermined effective monitoring and fostered authoritarianism (Chopra 2002, Gorjao 2002, Matsuno 2008, Philpott 2006 and Suhrke 2001). This exclusivity was exacerbated by the Fretilin government, led by then prime minister Mari Alkatiri, which adopted a centralised approach towards governance. In terms of state accountability and legitimacy, UNTAET is criticised for excluding local representation and participation from the nation-building process (Chopra 2002, Gorjao 2002, Hohe 2002a, Matsuno 2008, Philpott 2006 and Suhrke 2001).

Such a disproportionate focus on state-building has had significant implications for nation-building in Timor-Leste. Shoesmith (2007, p. 27) argues that:

The first objective in responding to state failure is to restore order, to make violence not feasible, but this is only a first step. In the longer term, there is the need to create a new ‘imagined community’, the acceptance of an inclusive national identity bringing together urban dwellers and subsistence farmers, ‘easterners’ and ‘westerners’. It is only from such an inclusive national community that the state can draw legitimacy and have its authority respected.

Some argue that UN nation-building efforts, which were exclusively central government oriented, excluded many Timorese from the nation-building process. UNTAET is widely regarded as assuming a “power vacuum” existed in Timor-Leste (Hohe 2002a, pp. 579). Those involved in nation-building, including many local political elites, viewed Timor-Leste as *tabula rasa* – void of political orders – and believed that nation-building should “start from scratch” (Boege et al 2009, p. 25). Traditional social and
political structures in Timor-Leste are resilient, with their significance enduring under both Portuguese colonialism and Indonesian occupation and influencing the political structure of the resistance movement (Hohe 2002a, pp. 573-9, Mearns 2007, p. 46 and Philpott 2006, p. 145). McWilliam (2008, p. 138) emphasises that “local cultural traditions are not, after all, preserved relics of an idealised and mythic past, but long-standing, dynamic and successful adaptations to colonial state interventions”.

Customary governance remains a significant source of moral and political authority in Timor-Leste (Mearns 2008, p. 129). Philpott (2006, p. 145) argues that “there never is a vacuum as long as there is a population”. Immediately after the referendum for independence in Timor-Leste, there was not only a population, but political leadership in the form of the National Council for Timorese Resistance (CNRT).

UN nation-building efforts excluded Timorese in rural areas in particular. According to the 2010 census, 70 per cent of Timorese live in rural areas (NSD and UNFPA 2011, p. xvi). Timorese in rural areas may be excluded from the nation-building process because the state and its institutions do not have the capacity for outreach in rural areas outside of the capital of Dili. However, they may also be excluded because traditional social and political structures, which continue to play a significant role in their daily lives, have been marginalised from nation-building efforts (Boege et al 2009, Mearns 2008 and Trindade and Castro 2007).

In addition to marginalising traditional social and political structures, UN nation-building efforts, through transitional governance, also impeded widespread political participation. Barma (2012, p. 291) argues that:
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Yet this approach to peace-building falls short of achieving effective and legitimate governance because the domestic elites empowered by the international community consolidate their own holds on power in a zero-sum political-economic calculus that enables and relies on predation and patronage.

Most perversely, the democracy-building and state-strengthening dimensions of the strategy of peace-building through transitional governance act at cross-purposes to each other in the attempt to reorient the domestic political game away from conflict. At the very core of the tension is a simple conundrum: the international community needs counterparts for state-building but it must attempt to be neutral in democracy-building.

Barma (2012, p. 291) describes transitional governance as a “short cut” which relies on particular political elites to act as local counterparts rather than developing political representation and participation. Barma (2012, p. 291) argues that:

Choosing a counterpart in this manner means that the UN essentially bestows legitimacy upon an entrenched elite and endows it with some measure of control over the state apparatus…The failures of these transitional governance experiments to consolidate some measure of autonomous capacity in the state makes it ripe for patronage pickings – and powerful elites use their control over state resources to manoeuvre within the new political-economic landscape and ensure their on-going hegemony.
Barma (2012, pp. 283-4) notes that, in the early post-independence period, political elites from Fretilin adopted an authoritarian style of governance, which limited the political participation of opposition leaders and parties. Barma (2012, p. 284) describes Fretilin’s consolidation of power during this period as “assuming the revolutionary mantle and legitimised by the UN”. Fretilin won a majority of seats in the 2001 Constituent Assembly elections. In addition, the party strengthened its patronage networks in the districts, in particular by ensuring that official positions in the districts were filled with Fretilin members.

Fretilin was able to secure approval for its draft Constitution, which created a weak presidency, transformed the assembly into the new National Parliament without the prescribed second election and secured approval for its ambitious legislation – without adequate public consultation or the support of opposition leaders and parties. The constitution making process in Timor-Leste was contentious because of tensions between UNTAET and the National Consultative Council, which was established in December 1999 as a forum for Timorese political and community leaders to advise the Transitional Administrator and debate policy issues. The Constituent Assembly was elected on 30 August 2001 to draft a constitution. The election was preceded by a civic education program led by UNTAET, public consultations through Constitutional Commission hearings and registration for the Constituent Assembly election (Wallis 2014, p. 82).

Public consultation about the constitution is considered to be inadequate because the National Council initially decided that an appointed constitution convention, representing all social and political groups, should draft the constitution and undertake
public consultations. The draft would then be debated and adopted in the Constituent Assembly. However, UNTAET overruled this decision, and decided instead that the constitution would be drafted, debated and adopted by the Constituent Assembly, within 90 days of it being elected. Wallis (2014, p. 83) concludes that the constitution making process was contentious because opposition leaders and parties and civil society were concerned that Fretilin would capture the process because it was anticipated to win a majority of seats in the assembly.

Political patronage continued under successive Timorese governments. Barma’s (2012, p. 285) research indicates that, like other rentier states, public expenditure in Timor-Leste increased while public concerns about corruption also increased. Barma (2012, p. 285) argues that:

…in terms of political patronage, preliminary analysis of the geographic allocation of public spending in East Timor indicates that the government is spending more – in terms of both cash transfers to the population and public investment allocation to clients – in the districts most strongly supportive of the coalition partners in the 2007 election. Viewing these various public spending measures in the best possible light, the government is acting to ‘buy the peace’, distributing rents to key constituencies in order to pacify dissent, dampen conflict and maintain stability. A more ominous telling is that Timorese elites are consolidating a predatory grip on power through the capture and strategic distribution of major patronage streams.
Barma (2012, p. 285) claims that competition within the political elite and between different groups for access to state resources and power, combined with institutional weaknesses, contributes to “an atmosphere of persistent insecurity”.

UN nation-building efforts undermined progress towards identity-building in the post-independence period in Timor-Leste. Progress may be measured by the criteria identified by Talentino (2004, p. 571) in chapter one: citizen connection with the state; a sense of common purpose; the transfer of citizens’ allegiance from local to central authority; and the erosion of social divisions. Existing research focuses on the implications of UN nation-building efforts for two of these criteria: citizen connection with the state and the strength of citizens’ connection to central authority.

There is a broad consensus that UN nation-building efforts in Timor-Leste have contributed to a clash of paradigms between traditional and modern structures (Boege et al 2009b, Brown and Gusmão 2009, Hohe 2002a and Richmond and Franks 2007). While local paradigms are sometimes used to interpret liberal democratic values and practices in Timor-Leste (Hohe 2002b, p. 78)\(^1\), these values are widely regarded as lacking cultural resonance in Timor-Leste (Boege et al 2009b, p. 26). Hohe (2002a, p. 585) argues that the co-existence of both traditional and modern structures has led to a clash of paradigms because:

\(^1\) For example, the concept of democracy has been explained using the concept of *biti boot*, meaning big mat in Tetun, which refers to the mats that traditional leaders sit on when discussing issues. Hohe describes the process as: “one speaker welcomes the group and explains the problem. The other elders then talk about the issue until a common agreement is reached and a decision for the community made” (2002b, p. 78). The concept of foreign affairs has been explained using the concept of *manu’ai*, the messenger used for communication between the ancient kingdoms in Timor-Leste. Traditional authority is used to explain executive legislative and judicial power: *lian fuan*, meaning the individuals with the authority to make the rules of a kingdom; *ukun fuan*, meaning the king; and *lia nain*, meaning the individuals with the authority to exercise judicial power.
The concept of a state with citizens who enjoy equal rights and with state bodies that are divided along executive-legislative and judicial lines is quite outside the traditional system. It is also impossible to create instant trust in state bodies, and it is difficult to generate trust in leaders that are not intimately connected with sacred items and ancestral legitimacy.

Liberal democratic values and practices are based on the concept that individuals are equal and should be equally represented by and participate in the state. This principle is in stark contrast to traditional social and political structures in Timor-Leste which are based on a holistic system of hierarchical relationships (Hohe 2002a, p. 587). Richmond and Franks (2007, pp. 17-18) argue that the liberal peace project in Timor-Leste has resulted in “virtual peace”, that is, the nation-state, while having an appearance of a liberal democratic state and its institutions, lacks substance. Liberal peace-building is described as a neo-liberal process because citizens are viewed as “empty vessels waiting to be filled and directed once they have been provided with political rights” (Richmond and Franks 2007, p. 18).

The introduction of liberal democratic values and practices relating to political party competition and multi-party elections disrupted traditional political structures. Brown and Gusmão (2009, p. 67) and Boege et al (2009b, p. 26) argue that “the introduction of party political (in contrast to individual) competition at the local community level appears to have interpolated the polarization that characterized elite politics into the grassroots, raising levels of insecurity and undermining social cohesion”. Political party competition and multi-party elections during the 2001 Constituent Assembly elections
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resulted in Fretilin having a monopoly on political power – a situation which Richmond and Franks (2007, p. 18) describe as producing “...conflict through the consolidation of power and an interpretation of democratic politics as a zero sum political game in which traditional patronage systems are used to create power and consolidate positions”.

Existing research concludes that the legitimacy of the nation-state has been eroded by the marginalisation of traditional social and political structures (Mearns 2008, pp. 133, 139) and of the culture shared by many Timorese (Trindade 2008, p. 16). Boege et al (2009, pp. 25-6) argue that the failure of nation-building efforts to “bridge the gap” between traditional and modern structures undermines the connection between citizens and the state, stating that:

This disconnection between the government, highly centralized in Dili, and the largely rural population has led to the marginalisation of both local culture and rural communities more generally. As a consequence, many people do not find themselves at home in the form and language of the state that they now supposedly inhabit as ‘citizens’.

Trindade and Castro (2007, p. 14) summarise Timorese perceptions of the new state as “lack[ing] a sense of ownership of current government processes. They mistrust the current government and perceive that the idea of the nation-state...is imposed on them just as the colonial system was”.

The disconnection between citizens and the state and the ongoing strength of citizens’ allegiance to local authority is exacerbated by the incapacity of the state and its
institutions to provide for the welfare of citizens. Richmond and Franks (2007, p. 18) describe the incapacity of the state to provide for such welfare as the “key oversight” of nation-building efforts in Timor-Leste. Such incapacity has contributed to widespread discontent and disenchantment with the nation-state. Mearns (2008, p. xviii) argues that the “capacities (or lack of them) of the newly formed state system in Timor-Leste have militated against the growth of a recognition and appreciation of its value to the citizens of the country”. A social contract in Timor-Leste between citizens and the state has not yet emerged and is a potential source of social and political conflict. Consequently, Richmond and Franks (2007, p. 18) argue that:

The state’s institutional capacity has failed them, and this is down to the focus of the internationals themselves on creating empty institutions rather than dealing with the pressing problems of everyday life, which would then create a social contract between citizens and institutions that citizens would perceive as legitimate. In the eyes of local societies and its complex groupings the state is merely a vehicle for local elites and international interests, and liberalism (read neoliberalism) has resulted in an illiberal and ineffective state in the most important area of its facilitation of a secure and prosperous everyday life.

UN nation-building efforts have also had significant implications for the two other criteria for identity-building: a sense of common purpose; and the erosion of social divisions, which go hand in hand. The illegitimacy of the nation-state, underpinned by the disconnect between citizens and the state and the ongoing strength of citizens’ allegiance to local authority, has undermined the development of a sense of common
purpose, which in turn has contributed to the persistence of social divisions. Richmond and Franks (2007, p. 6) argue that:

> It was expressed a number of times that the new state of East Timor (and consequently the people in it) are struggling to find an identity largely because the state building mission lacks ‘a vision of a nation.’ The Timorese people therefore have very little rooting in society, as result there is no incentive to discourage involvement in violence as there is little sense of ownership in the new state: consequently people have nothing to lose and everything to gain.

A critical assessment of UN nation-building efforts in Timor-Leste shows that, like the literature on nation-building, those involved in nation-building have also disproportionately focused on state-building. These efforts have adopted a state-centric approach which has failed to take into account the local context and consequently, resulted in a state and its institutions which lack local legitimacy and authority. This review of literature on nation-building raises two questions: Timor-Leste has achieved international recognition as a new nation, but how is it imagined by the Timorese themselves?; and is there a divide between international and Timorese perceptions of nation-building? Answering these questions requires a review of the history of Timorese nationalism.
**Ethno-linguistic diversity in Timor-Leste**

Timor-Leste is a geographically, ethnically and linguistically diverse nation. Fox (2000, p. 1) describes Timor-Leste as “not one place, but many”. In such a diverse society, nationalism could not be grounded in a shared ethnicity or language. Several interviewees identified ethno-linguistic diversity as one of the most significant challenges to national unity and the development of a strong sense national identity in the post-independence period.

Some of the major ethnic groups in Timor-Leste include Bunak, Fataluku, Galoli, Kemak, Mambai and Tetun. The two language groups of Timor-Leste, Austronesian and Trans-New Guinean, have different origins and reflect an initial migration to Timor-Leste from Asia followed by another migration to Timor-Leste from Papua New Guinea (Fox 2000, pp. 3-5). The main Austronesian language groups include Galoli, Kemak, Mambai, Tetun and Tokudede. Both Kemak and Tetun are spoken across the border in West Timor, Indonesia. Kemak is spoken in the western districts of Ainaro, Bobonaro and Ermera. Other Austronesian language groups include Bekais, Habu, Idate, Kairui-Midiki, Lakalei, Naueti and Waima’a. The Trans-New Guinean language group Bunak is spoken in the western region of Timor-Leste and in West Timor, Indonesia. The other Trans-New Guinean language groups are mainly spoken in the eastern region of Timor-Leste, including Adabe, Dagada and Makassae.
Historical overview of nationalism in Timor-Leste

There are competing visions of the historical development of nationalism in Timor-Leste. Anderson (1993, p. 4) argues that prior to 1975 Timorese nationalism was “still quite thin on the ground, perhaps only a small percentage of the population could then really imagine the future nation-state of East Timor”. Anderson primarily attributes the development of nationalism in Timor-Leste to Indonesian colonial efforts. First, the Indonesian occupation had a stronger presence than Portuguese colonialism, in particular through military posts and an extensive intelligence network. The Indonesian colonial government invested in development in Timor-Leste more than its predecessors. Anderson (1993, p. 5) states “thus the consciousness of being East Timorese has spread rapidly since 1975 precisely because of the state's expansion, new schools and development projects also being part of this”.

Second, Anderson (1993, p. 5) argues that during the Indonesian occupation, Indonesia paralleled the colonial Netherlands East Indies by subsuming diverse ethnological, linguistic or religious identities into one broad identity of “natives”. As a result, Anderson (1993, p. 5) argues that “a profound sense of commonality emerged from the gaze of the colonial state”. In particular, a strong sense of ‘us versus them’ or ‘insiders versus outsiders’ contributed to the development of Timorese nationalism.

Third, the Indonesian Government’s introduction of a policy which forced citizens to adopt one of six state sanctioned religions (Buddhism, Catholicism, Confucianism, Hinduism, Islam and Protestantism) encouraged the spread of a unifying religion in Timor-Leste: Catholicism. A majority of Timorese were animists in 1975 (Anderson
1993, p. 5). Anderson (1993, p. 5) argues that the spread of Catholicism had nationalising effects, first, as an “expression of common suffering”, and second, the Catholic Church’s decision to use Tetun instead of Indonesian transformed Tetun from the language of Dili, Suai, Viqueque, Soibada and on the border with West Timor into a national language.

Like Anderson, Babo-Soares (2003) argues that nationalism in Timor-Leste was accelerated by the brutality of Indonesian occupation. Yet according to Babo-Soares, the historical development of nationalism in Timor-Leste began long before the period of Indonesian occupation. History plays a significant role in the development of nationalism in Timor-Leste, in particular historical myths of a glorious past, common suffering and struggle. The precepts of contemporary Timorese nationalism are informed by the resistance of the beiala, ancestors, who are also referred to as asswain, warriors, in the uluk, the past, or beiala nia tempo, time of the ancestors, which is also referred to as the “glorious past” (Babo-Soares 2003, pp. 83-4). Babo-Soares argues that “this is because the current sense of nation is perceived to emanate from, and to have been stimulated by, the achievements of the past” (Babo-Soares 2003, p. 83). Timorese consider their historical resistance against colonialism and occupation to be the “roots” of their nationalism (Babo-Soares 2003, p. 83). Babo-Soares (2003, p. 85) describes it as an “evolution” of successive phases of resistance against Dutch and Portuguese colonial powers, Japanese invasion and Indonesian occupation.

Babo-Soares (2003, p. 85) argues that, for the older generation of Timorese, beiala nia tempo refers to the period before the arrival of Europeans in Timor. Timorese history is divided into the pre-European period and the funu, the period of war (Babo-Soares
While there were diverse experiences of colonialism, invasion and occupation between different regions in Timor-Leste, Babo-Soares (2003, p. 88) argues that many Timorese, in collective remembering and forgetting, consider beiala nia tempo as a period of peace and stability and social harmony, in which traditional social and political structures were intact and Timorese enjoyed good living conditions.

Successive rebellions and the resistance movement against Indonesian occupation reflected a national longing to return to the beiala nia tempo.

Successive generations of Timorese were entrusted to continue this struggle (Babo-Soares 2003, p. 97). The history of this struggle united the Timorese in a bond which transcended their ethnic and linguistic diversity (Babo-Soares 2003, p. 107) as a shared history of a collective experience. During the resistance movement, references to this history emphasised the “immortal character of the spirit that runs in the blood of the East Timorese” in phrases such as Timor-oan ass’wain, Timor sons are warriors, or Timor Oan Futu-nain, Timor children are warriors (Babo-Soares 2003, p. 108). Unity emerged in the face of a common enemy in ‘us’ versus ‘them’ or ‘insiders’ versus ‘outsiders’. Babo-Soares (2003, p. 111) explains the sentiment as: “‘we’ are different from them because we have been different since the beginning and our ancestors manifested these differences when they decided to wage war against ‘them’”.

Resistance during the Portuguese colonial period

Until 1912, reino, indigenous kingdoms, fought independent and isolated wars against Portuguese colonialism (Babo-Soares 2003, p. 95). Babo-Soares (2003, pp. 81-2) argues that their resistance to Portuguese colonialism contributed to the eventual
emergence of nationalism. Babo-Soares (2003, pp. 81-2) notes that in some instances during this period the *liurai*, kings, formed alliances with the Europeans and in other instances formed alliances with other *liurai* to jointly rebel against them. Babo-Soares (2003, p. 62) argues that these rebellions were relayed in “epic stories of the ‘glorious past’” which today are passed on in the form of *ai-knanoik*, folk stories and *lia tuan*, literally old words. But rebellions in the early period were primarily ethnically oriented rebellions (Babo-Soares 2003, p. 82) and divisions and rivalries between the *reino* are not reflected in the collective remembering of these rebellions (Babo-Soares 2003, p. 108).

Nationalism emerged from the rebellions against Portuguese colonialism around the turn of the 20th century by the *liurai* of Cailoco in Manufahi, joined by a number of other *reino* (Babo Soares 2003, p. 81). These successive rebellions were led by Dom Duarte, the *liurai* of Manufahi and a former ally of the Portuguese colonial government, and later his son Dom Boaventura (Babo-Soares 2003, pp. 70-2). Babo-Soares (2003, pp. 81-2) describes the *Guerra de Manufahi*, Manufahi wars, from 1894 to 1912 as a “turning point” in the nationalist movement and “precursor of modern East Timorese nationalism” because the revolt involved almost all *reino* and its leaders had a nationalist vision. The rebellion from 1910 to 1912 was quashed by the Portuguese which resulted in the deaths of more than 3,000 Timorese (Babo Soares 2003, p. 81). But these sacrifices, suffering and instances of heroism became a source of inspiration for future movements. Babo-Soares (2003, pp. 82-3) argues that:

> While most of the history of the nation, known today as East Timor, was shaped very much by colonial hegemony, local resistance in the past continued to be told
verbally from one generation to another. Folk stories (ai-knanoik) and local narratives continue to emphasise the history of societies’ forbears as successful experiences.

In the post-independence period, political leaders continue to depict ethnically oriented rebellions against Portuguese colonialism in the 18th and 19th centuries as heroism of the past and as the foundation of Timorese nationalism, even though Babo-Soares (2003, p. 70) demonstrates that the Manufahi war from 1910 to 1912 was the first rebellion with a nationalist vision in Timor-Leste.

Between 1912 and 1970 rebellions against Portuguese colonialism contributed to the development of a nationalist consciousness (Babo-Soares 2003, p. 96). These movements were often non-violent as the Portuguese colonial government exercised significant military powers in Timor-Leste (Babo Soares 2003, p. 82). In the first half of the 20th century, the Timorese educated elite covertly campaigned to challenge the legitimacy and authority of the colonial government (Babo-Soares 2003, p. 75). A significant rebellion occurred in Watolari, a sub-district of Viqueque, in 1959, which some argue was influenced by communists from Indonesia who had fled to Timor-Leste several years earlier, and others argue was a protest against the poor standard of living under Portuguese colonialism (Babo-Soares 2003, pp. 75-6). Babo-Soares (2003, p. 76) argues that:

Unlike the previous ethnically mobilised revolts, this rebellion embraced the notion of a nationalist war because the participants included young intellectuals, some civil servants and traditional rulers, suggesting a combination of a much
broader concept for those involved. In the words of the last Portuguese governor in East Timor, Lemos Pirés, it was a combination of ‘anti-colonial, anti-Portuguese and tribal elements’.

While the Portuguese colonial government quashed the rebellion, resulting in the deaths of more than 200 Timorese and the exile of many Timorese, Babo-Soares (2003, p. 76) depicts it as the foundation for the emergence in the 1960s and 1970s of new nationalist groups. Babo-Soares (2003, p. 76) also cites another nationalist movement led by a Timorese known as Mau Klau in 1961 in which Mau Klau declared Timor independent and hoisted a national flag in Batugade, in the sub-district of Balibo. The colonial government also quashed this movement and Mau Klau and his supporters fled to West Timor where they established their government in exile in 1963. Under threat from the Indonesian Government, Mau Klau reportedly “disappeared from the political scene” (Babo-Soares 2003, p. 76). A small group of activists established an underground independence movement in Dili in 1960 (Babo-Soares 2003, p. 82). Later members of the group rose to national prominence, including Xavier do Amaral, Nicolau Lobato, Jose Ramos Horta and Mari Alkatiri.

*The development of nationalism during the resistance movement*

In addition to these indigenous rebellions, international political developments also shaped the development of nationalism in Timor-Leste. Following the Carnation Revolution in Portugal in 1974, the Portuguese Governor in Timor-Leste, Mário Lemos Pires, initiated decolonisation in Timor-Leste. In April 1974 the centre-right Timorese Democratic Union (UDT) was established which supported a period of autonomy with
Portugal before independence. In May 1974 Governor Pires announced that, as part of the decolonisation process, political parties could be established in Timor-Leste. That month, the radical Timorese Social Democratic Association (ASDT) was established by some educated elite and children of liurai. They opposed any period of autonomy and supported immediate independence. ASDT changed its name to the Revolutionary Front of an Independent Timor-Leste (Fretilin) in September that year.

By the end of 1974, several other political parties had been established, including the Timorese Popular Democratic Association (APODETI), which supported a period of integration with Indonesia before self-determination, the Association of Timorese Heroes (KOTA), the Timor Labor Party (Trabahlista) and the Democratic Integration of Timor-Leste and Australia Association (ADITA), which supported integration with Australia. Babo-Soares (2003, p. 78) argues that prior to 1975, no party had a high national profile, but Fretilin was able to attract support from the Timorese military cadets with the Portuguese military.

Fretilin and UDT formed a coalition in 1974, but this coalition collapsed by mid-1975. UDT led a coup d’état on 11 August 1975, followed by a coup d’état by Fretilin on 20 August. This date now commemorates the founding of the military wing of Fretilin, FALINTIL. Fretilin, with the assistance of the local Portuguese military, successfully quashed UDT in a brief but bloody civil war. During the civil war, thousands of people were killed in combat, hundreds of political prisoners were executed and tens of thousands of civilians were displaced to West Timor. The leaders of UDT, as well as KOTA and Trabalhista, fled to West Timor, along with an estimated 40,000 supporters. UDT issued a petition on 7 September calling for integration with Indonesia.
In the second half of 1975, Fretilin controlled Timor-Leste politically, mobilised the population and carried out a grassroots development program. The party unilaterally declared independence on 28 November 1975 and established a government. Nicolau Lobato was appointed prime minister of the new independent nation. The following day leaders of UDT, ADITA, KOTA and Trabahlista met in Bali. Following their meeting, the parties issued a joint declaration calling for integration with Indonesia. The Indonesian military invaded Timor-Leste on 7 December, only nine days after the declaration of independence.

Fretilin controlled the interior regions of Timor-Leste between late 1975 and early 1978. A significant proportion of Timorese fled their communities and sheltered in these interior regions. In mid-1975 Fretilin established *zonas libertadas*, liberated zones, and *bases de apoio*, resistance bases, following a national conference. The Indonesian military brutally repressed the resistance movement under *Operasi Seroja*, Operation Lotus, an encirclement and annihilation military campaign. By February 1979 the last two resistance bases in the western region fell to Indonesia. The vast majority of the original members of Fretilin’s Central Committee who remained in Timor-Leste had been killed. The Indonesian Government ended *Operasi Seroja* on 26 March 1979 and declared that it had successfully pacified Timor-Leste.

Despite the Indonesian military’s brutal repression of the resistance movement, Fretilin maintained its political structures in Timor-Leste until the early 1980s. The party was influenced by diverse ideologies, including nationalism, Marxist-Leninism and anti-colonialism. It promoted *mauberism*, gender equality and the modernisation of...
customary governance. The Tetun term *maubere* had been used as a term of contempt for the majority of Timorese who were poor and uneducated during the Portuguese colonial period, implying that they were far inferior to the Portuguese colonialists. But during the resistance movement it was adopted by Fretilin political leaders as a term of empowerment. Fretilin claimed that it would struggle to liberate the *maubere* from poverty, hunger and illiteracy. It became valuable political rhetoric to broaden the appeal of Fretilin.

As the leader of the resistance movement, Xanana Kay Rala Gusmão played a leading role in developing nationalism in Timor-Leste. He used narratives of nationalism to serve a purpose: to win independence. Unity against the common enemy of Indonesia overcame social divisions during the resistance movement. In her political biography of Gusmão, Niner (2009, p. 59) traces the evolution of Gusmão’s views on nationalism. In the early stages of the resistance, Gusmão argued that nationalism was not a driving force behind the resistance, stating that “everyone was fighting for defending their own homes, land and families”. But from 1980 the movement became a national one, as Gusmão and other fighters traversed the country and built relationships and developed solidarity with other communities. In Niner’s biography she cites the experience of Gusmão, then leader of the Ponte Leste Region (from the Baucau-Viqueque cordon to Tutuala), and 60 soldiers who had travelled with him from Los Palos to the central districts in the first half of 1980. The soldiers protested about protecting the land and families of “only strangers” (Niner 2009, p. 59). They held deep seated regional loyalties which did not extend from the eastern to the central region. But Gusmão noted that:
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...they changed after being in close contact with the people who were appealing to us to continue to fight. These people told them that they were their sons. The people said, “Oh, my sons, you have to fight because my son fell there”, or “My husband was killed there”. The soldiers felt a sense of responsibility to liberate, to fight for them, for husbands, for sons, for children who died. They felt they began to have a greater mission (Niner 2009, p. 59).

Gusmão reported that, following this experience with the people, the soldiers renamed themselves the ‘National Unification Detachment’, “swearing to die for their Homeland” (Niner 2009, p. 59).

By 1980 the resistance movement had been devastated by the Indonesian military. Gusmão, one of only a few surviving members of the Fretilin Central Committee established in 1975 who had remained in Timor-Leste, was elected as both Commander-in-Chief of FALINTIL and National Political Commissar of the Fretilin Central Committee. He led the rebuilding of the resistance. In the context of the Cold War, Gusmão understood that the resistance would have greater international significance if it united Timorese around nationalism rather than Marxist-Leninism (Niner 2009, pp. 82-3). In a secret meeting with Gusmão in Mehara, in the sub-district of Tutuala, in August 1982, the then head of the Catholic Church in Timor-Leste, Monsignor Martinho Lopes, reportedly told Gusmão that he would support the resistance movement if it rejected Marxism and accepted nationalism, which he defined as unity between UDT and Fretilin (Niner 2009, p. 82). Niner (2009, p. 83) described this meeting as “seminal”, which “influenced Xanana to replace the revolutionary stance adopted in 1981 with a more moderate nationalism”. Niner (2009, p. 83) states that:
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The Marxist ideology did not last much longer and the wider nationalist appeal enabled Xanana to strengthen the resistance to include virtually all Timorese. With no strong personal commitment to Marxism, this more moderated and inclusive stance also suited his personal leadership style and he was much more comfortable rising above the ideological factions to the position of unifier.

National unity formed around opposition to Indonesian occupation, in particular opposition to the human rights abuses committed by the Indonesian military. Following years of struggle, in the early 1980s Niner (2009, p. 95) argues that “almost all Timorese defined themselves in opposition to the Indonesian military even if they did not actively support the resistance”. During a ceasefire with Indonesia in 1983, Gusmão developed a new ideology for the resistance based on nationalism, which would embrace Timorese who opposed the Indonesian military and potentially supported some form of self determination, marking an ideological departure with Marxist-Leninism. He urged Timorese to transcend social divisions and unite against a common enemy. While this ideology was more inclusive, it alienated some of his more radical Fretilin colleagues. The new ideology divided Fretilin into two different concepts: a party, which was Marxist-Leninist, and a movement. The following year Gusmão developed a ‘common platform for national independence’, declaring that Timorese were unwilling to participate in a movement or party (Niner 2009, p. 104). He argued that, instead, they should be “moved by a common feeling – that of national identity” (Niner 2009, p. 104).
In the mid-1980s many Timorese were fatigued by years of the Indonesian military’s brutal repression and Niner (2009, p. 110) argues that Gusmão was concerned they were “on the verge of giving up”. As a result, he revitalised the concept of *mauberism*, stating that:

This identity carries on, perpetuated by 10 years of blood spilt by the Indonesian military occupation. This Maubere awareness has never been quelled, either by the palmatória [Portuguese whip], or with colonial laws, but these things forged the historical identity, proper and genuinely Maubere, does not bow before the massacres, persecution, banishment or torture. It is for this identity that the struggle is affirmed with blood and death (Niner 2009, p. 110).

Niner (2009, p. 110) argues that Gusmão became preoccupied with the development of nationalism to legitimise Timor-Leste’s demands for independence and participation in the UN-brokered talks between Indonesia and Portugal. In order to develop such diplomatic clout, he needed to unite all factions within Timor-Leste under his leadership.

Gusmão resigned from the Fretilin Central Committee in December 1987, severing the ties between Fretilin and FALINTIL. He published his manifesto for 1987 on 7 December, the 12th anniversary of the Indonesian invasion, which denounced Marxist-Leninism and announced the autonomy of FALINTIL from any political party in an attempt to broaden the appeal of the resistance movement, in particular for youth and those from UDT and Apodeti backgrounds (Niner 2009, pp. 111-3). Gusmão established the National Council of the Maubere Resistance (CNRM) as the umbrella
organisation of the resistance movement in 1987, which became the National Council of Timorese Resistance (CNRT) in 1998. FALINTIL became the armed front of CNRM. The council included UDT and other nationalist parties. As a result of this restructuring, Gusmão had divested Fretilin of absolute power over the resistance. Towards the end of the 1980s, he adopted narratives of democracy and human rights in an effort to further legitimise demands for independence (Niner 2009, pp. 117-8).

One event which shaped nationalism in Timor-Leste was the massacre at Santa Cruz cemetery on 12 November 1991, where many Timorese had gathered at the funeral of a youth killed by the Indonesian military. The Indonesian military killed an estimated 271 people and injured an estimated 362. The massacre was filmed by British filmmaker and journalist Max Stahl who then buried the recording in the graveyard. Images of the brutal massacre were later distributed around the world, sparking international condemnation of Indonesian human rights abuse in Timor-Leste. The massacre quickened the growth of the civilian clandestine movement around nationalism.

Gusmão was captured by the Indonesian military and imprisoned in Indonesia in November 1992. In the early 1990s the clandestine resistance movement grew, expanding its networks across Timor-Leste and a popular nationalist movement was established. The movement culminated in an UN-sponsored referendum on 30 August 1999 in which 78 per cent of Timorese voted for independence.
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The development of nationalism in the post-independence period

In the post-independence period in Timor-Leste, nationalism has been grounded in resistance, in particular the 24 year resistance movement against Indonesian occupation. Babo-Soares (2003, p. 81) argues that Timorese proudly refer to the resistance as the “culmination of previous wars against colonialism” and the “last stage of their nationalist struggle”. The significance of the resistance movement has been embedded in nation-building in the post-independence period, in particular in symbols of nationalism, including the national flag, coat-of-arms, Constitution and nationalist heritage sites. Nationalism is often described as ‘unity through struggle’.

However, Mearns (2008, p. xiii) cautions that “we can never simply assume that there exists or will emerge a ‘natural’ and lasting unity for any national population despite the rhetoric of the state in which the people concerned find themselves”. Soux et al (2007, p. 50) argue that resistance to Indonesian colonialism “created a sense of ‘nation’ where social coherence had never existed”. In the post-independence period, nationalism, which was grounded in resistance, broke down following the removal of the external threat of the Indonesian colonial power, which was central to the concept of ‘us’ and ‘them’. The removal of the colonial power revealed highly diverse groups competing for political power (Babo-Soares 2003) with competing narratives of the new nation-state (Soux et al 2007, p. 50).

In post-conflict societies, narratives of nationalism may be instrumentalised to articulate demands for access to state power and resources. Rituals and symbols of nationalism may be used to assert moral and political legitimacy (Myrttinen 2013, p. 213). These
rituals and symbols may be politicised by social groups as they compete for power and resources. By commemorating collective experiences during the resistance movement, Leach (2008, p. 159) argues that rituals and symbols of nationalism in Timor-Leste present “competing visions of the past”, including periods of Portuguese colonialism, Indonesian occupation and independence. These rituals and symbols may contribute to identity-based conflict between social groups by privileging the history of one group over another (Leach 2008, p. 157).

In the post-independence period in Timor-Leste, divisive narratives have emerged about relative sacrifice and suffering during the resistance movement and consequently, which social groups are most entitled to the benefits of independence. The narratives have been informed by social divisions between pro-autonomy and pro-integration groups, lorosabe and loromono, diaspora and home-stayers and mestiço, Timorese of mixed decent, and rai nain, ‘Indigenous’ Timorese, all of which relate to constructions of nationalism which establish varying degrees of authenticity and, as a result, are exclusive. These narratives are examined in chapter four.

These varying degrees of authenticity inform competing claims to access to state power and resources as well as social status. These competing narratives “diminished the contributions of the ‘other’ and, therefore, the rights of opposing groups to be full participants in building the new nation” (Soux et al 2007, p. 50). Those who are deemed to be truly Timorese are deemed to be most entitled to state power and resources. Those who are deemed to have made the greatest sacrifice during the resistance movement are deemed to be most entitled to the benefits of independence.
These two concepts are inter-related because those who are portrayed as ‘heroes’ are also portrayed as truly Timorese. Soux et al (2007, p. 50) argue that:

The concept of the Timorese nation was not given the opportunity to evolve as large sectors of the society felt marginalised and distant from their leaders. Rather than a new sense of ‘nation’ to confront the challenges of development, what emerged were diverse and competing narratives. Many of these were based on the old rivalries, ideological cleavages and recalled betrayals: Who were the ‘true’ resistance fighters? Who collaborated with the Indonesians? Who deserved the spoils of war and benefits of peace? Who sat out the war in exile, and did not suffer?

These competing visions also inform competing versions of nationalism in the post-independence period. Leach (2008, pp. 158-9) argues that existing rituals and symbols of nationalism recognise the armed front of resistance, but potentially misrecognise the contribution of the clandestine and diplomatic fronts and international solidarity networks. Misrecognition could contribute to politicisation relating to the roles played by different groups during the resistance movement (Leach 2008, p. 157).

**National flag**

The national flag is one of the most contested symbols of nationalism in Timor-Leste (Myrttinen 2009, p. 213). According to Article 15 of the Timorese Constitution, the colours of the flag have symbolic meaning: “Yellow – the traces of colonialism in
Timorese history; Black – the obscurantism that needs to be overcome; Red – the struggle for liberation; White – peace”. The flag, which was adopted following the declaration of independence on 28 November 1975, has been criticised for being too closely associated with Fretilin’s flag. Myrttinen (2009, p. 213) argues that “...much of the contention is linked to a particular power, namely the power of defining who is or was part of the resistance and thus part of the founding myth of the East Timorese nation-state”.

*Coat-of-arms*

The current Timorese coat-of-arms was introduced in 2007. Its design was first used when Fretilin unilaterally declared independence on 28 November 1975. The motto on the coat-of-arms in Portuguese is ‘*Unidade, Acção, Progresso*’, ‘Unity, Action, Progress’. In the centre of the coat-of-arms, a curved black pyramid with red edges symbolises Mount Ramelau, which is the highest peak in Timor-Leste. On the black field in the centre there is a five-pointed star with rays of light. Under the field there is an open red book resting on yellow industrial equipment. Left of the field there is a rice ear and right there is a corn ear. Under the industrial equipment there is an AK-47 assault rifle, bow and arrows. The use of a red book, representing the ‘Little Red Book’ of quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-tung, and industrial equipment reflect the early Marxist-Leninist ideology of Fretilin and the use of the weapons valourises the armed front of the resistance movement.
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Constitution

The Timorese Constitution was drafted by the Constituent Assembly elected in 2001 for this purpose. The Constitution came into force on 20 May 2002. The preamble demonstrates how nationalism in Timor-Leste is grounded in the resistance movement. The preamble describes the Constitution as “the culmination of the historical resistance of the Timorese People”. It describes FALINTIL as “glorious” and states that its “historical undertaking is to be praised”. It dedicates the Constitution as “a heart-felt tribute to all martyrs of the Motherland”.

Sites of nationalism

The resistance movement and its heroes have been memorialised in street names, national monuments and held up as national role models. One of the most significant sites of nationalist heritage in Timor-Leste includes the former Portuguese jail built in 1963 and used as an interrogation centre during Indonesian occupation, Comarca Balide (Leach 2008, pp. 148-9) in Dili. In the post-independence period, Comarca Balide became a memorial to victims of human rights abuse, the Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation (CAVR) technical secretariat and now the holds the CAVR archives, which includes thousands of testimonials collected from victims during the CAVR process between 2001 and 2005. Other significant sites include the ‘heroes monument’ in Metinaro, east of Dili, a memorial to fallen FALINTIL members, several memorials to the estimated 2,600 victims of the massacres which took place during the 1999 referendum for independence, the most notorious taking place in churches in Liquica and Suai, and the National Museum of Resistance housed in a former
Portuguese court house in Dili (Leach 2008, pp. 148-56). There are also informal sites such as the Santa Cruz graveyard, which was the site of the Santa Cruz massacre on 12 November 1991.

Some argue that the current construction of nationalism was relevant only during the resistance movement. Babo-Soares (2003, p. 126), referring to the period immediately after independence, states that:

The sense of *an imagined community* (Anderson 1991), that had been built through years of painful struggle against outsiders and which had been used to present East Timorese as one people, was fading away. For the East Timorese, at this juncture, national unity did not necessarily guarantee long-lasting peace. In this sense, national unity was merely a means to achieve an objective when it was needed: once the invaders had gone there was no objective to achieve. The bond that kept the East Timorese together began to break down and differences among the nationalist forces re-emerged.

Some interviewees noted that in the post-independence period Timorese were no longer united against a common enemy. In fact, successive Timorese governments in the post-independence period have adopted a pragmatic approach to reconciliation and regional integration and built relationships with pro-integrationists and Indonesia. A senior CNRT party official described nationalism based on the resistance as “artificial”, because the absence of a common enemy in the post-independence period had led to the breakdown of is construction of nationalism (interviewee no 8, personal communication, 7 February 2009 and 4 October 2009).
Nation-building, nationalism and the 2006 crisis

During the 2006 crisis Timor-Leste was described as a state in search of a nation. The current construction of Timorese nationalism is grounded in the resistance movement. Resistance is central to national story telling in Timor-Leste, but this story telling has divided, rather than united, Timorese in the post-independence period. This construction of nationalism is fractured by social fault lines which emerged during the resistance against Indonesian occupation, one of which is the east-west divide. Not only did the emergence of the divide during the crisis in Timor-Leste have significant implications for state-building within the security sector, it indicated that the identity-building process was fragile or even failing. Shoesmith (2007, p. 27) argues that “...the communal conflict that became so violent in 2006 suggests, however, that the project of building an inclusive national community has not succeeded”. Chapter three examines the events of the crisis, which continued until the death of Major Alfredo Reinado, the symbolic rebel leader of the so-called Petitioners group, on 11 February 2008. In particular, it explores the role played by political actors in manipulating the divide as they jostled for power in the new nation-state.

Chapter one argued that state-building without identity-building undermines the development of a national political community which transcends social divisions. These divisions may be woven into the fabric of the state and its institutions, which become sites for competition between social groups. Political leadership can play a role in constructing both identity and identity-based conflict to hold or accumulate power.
As a result, the nation-state remains vulnerable to identity-based conflict and further violent conflict.

The emergence of regionalism within the security sector in Timor-Leste revealed that social divisions had been embedded within the nation-state. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) published a report on the causes of the 2006 crisis, which concludes that grievances and rivalries among political leaders about the formation of state institutions had “ensured that political divisions were reinforced and woven into the overall fabric of the state. As a result, rather than containing and moderating political rivalries, the institutions of State have tended to amplify partisanship and distrust” (Brady and Timberman 2006, p. 9). The lorosa’e and loromonu identities were instrumentalised to articulate competing claims for access to the state power and resources. Grenfell (2008, p. 95) argues that these identities “allowed for a positioning within the nation of different groups to argue and compete over, and potentially feel secure within, the nation in a way that could not be made via particular ethno-linguistic groupings”. Trindade (2008, p. 1) argues that during the crisis Timorese who felt excluded from the nation-state attempted to create a sense of belonging outside of it. The lorosa’e and loromonu identities did not represent a serious challenge to the existence of the nation-state of Timor-Leste, but rather to its stability, as they were used to justify the rights claims made by different groups (Grenfell 2008, p. 95).

Existing research on the 2006 crisis in Timor-Leste underscores the central role played by Timorese political leaders and other political actors in manipulating the east-west divide. USAID’s report concludes that “elite political divisions and rivalries are at the
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heart of the current crisis; without this factor the other simmering tensions may have remained dormant, at least for a time” (Brady and Timberman 2006, p. 8). Accusations of manipulation have been made against all political leaders. Some of these accusations have been legitimised by the report of the United Nations Independent Special Commission of Inquiry for Timor-Leste (UN Inquiry report), which investigated the events of the crisis (OHCHR 2006). A wide-range of research has shown that, prior to the crisis, political interference within the security sector in Timor-Leste was endemic and that regional divisions were institutionalised in the security sector through such political interference (ICG 2006 and Rees 2003). Furthermore, political manoeuvring intensified during 2006 in the lead up to the 2007 parliamentary elections. These divisions are examined in chapter three.

There is also a broad consensus that gangs and youth groups in Dili, with political linkages, played a significant role in manipulating the east-west divide. Existing research shows that some martial arts groups (MAGs) are aligned with different factions within the political leadership, FALINTIL Timor-Leste Defence Force (F-FDTL) and Timor-Leste National Police (PNTL) (Scambary et al 2006 and Myrttinen 2008). Scambary (2006) argues that the escalation of the 2006 crisis was largely a result of the linkages between the political leadership and gangs. According to his research findings, no members of gangs or youth groups interviewed attributed blame for the violence to lorosa’e or loromonu (Scambary 2006, p. 26). Scambary et al (2006, p. 26) report that “it was almost unanimous however, that those responsible for generating and manipulating the violence were ‘higher up’, implying political elites”. Myrttinen (2008, pp. 13-4) argues that political manipulation of the crisis revolves around the lack of action rather than action as “no explicit orders to commit acts of violence need
necessarily to be given by the leadership. Instead, where there should have been a condemnation of violence there is silence on the issue, which is read by the respective ‘militants’ as tacit approval’. Scambary et al (2006) and Myrttinen (2008) highlight the significance of the political manipulation of the divide during the crisis by revealing the artificial nature of regional tensions between gangs and youth groups in Dili. This reveals the constructed nature of the identity-based conflict.

Existing research supports the thesis’ argument that the emergence of the east-west divide during the 2006 crisis in Timor-Leste indicated that the identity-building process was fragile or even failing. This research demonstrates that UN nation-building efforts in Timor-Leste had a disproportionate focus on state-building which neglected identity-building. The development of a national political community in the post-independence period was undermined by divisive national discourses about the competing roles of Timorese during the resistance movement. As a result of weak identity-building, the nation-state became a site for competition between social groups and was vulnerable to identity-based conflict. During the crisis, it was a division between lorosa’e and loromonu which contributed to widespread violent conflict.

**Research methodology**

*Theoretical framework*

The research methodology is based on the theoretical framework outlined in chapter one, which critiques the disproportionate focus on state-building – developing the capacity of the state and its institutions – in literature on nation-building. Such a
disproportionate focus has significant implications for nation-building in post-conflict societies. Identity-building – developing a unifying national political community – is also a fundamental process of nation-building. Identity-building legitimises and consolidates the nation-state, guarding it against further fragmentation. State-building without identity-building undermines the development of a national political community which transcends social divisions. These divisions may be woven into the fabric of the state and its institutions. As a result, the nation-state is vulnerable to identity-based conflict and further violent conflict. Polarised collective identities and identity-based conflict are prone to intractability. Therefore, such identities may remain politicised and pose a serious threat to long-term peace and stability. Based on this theoretical framework, the thesis explores the implications of the ongoing political significance of the east-west divide which emerged during the 2006 crisis in Timor-Leste for nation-building.

Interview research

The research included informal and formal semi-structured interviews with Timorese and non-Timorese who are involved in nation-building in both community and government sectors as well as Timorese academics in the field of political science. The informal and formal semi-structured interviews have two purposes: first, to explore views on the ongoing political significance of the east-west divide in Timor-Leste; and second, to explore views on the divide’s implications for nation-building.

The informal interviews were undertaken between December 2008 and February 2009. These interviews were informal conversations with Timorese and non-Timorese
involved in nation-building, without the use of structured interview questions. These interviews were recorded in jottings and brief notes for the recall and writing of my experiences in the field.

These interviews substantially contributed to the development of the research methodology in the initial phase of the inquiry. These interviewees shared insightful knowledge and understanding of identity-based conflict in Timor-Leste, which often challenged my assumptions about such conflict. The brief notes informed the development and implementation of the formal semi-structured interviews, in particular the drafting of the interview questions. Most significantly, these interviews built rapport with interviewees and gained their trust and confidence. These interviewees often recommended other relevant interviewees, which eventually established a strong network of interviewees to participate in the formal semi-structured interviews. Interviewees often agreed to participate because a friend or colleague had recommended they do so or introduced us.

The formal semi-structured interviews were undertaken between August and November 2009. These interviews were structured discussions with Timorese and non-Timorese involved in nation-building, using structured interview questions.

The research methodology for the interview research reflected well the political and security situation in Timor-Leste at the time. The interview research was undertaken in the aftermath of sustained violent conflict in Timor-Leste, including the 2006 crisis, the violence surrounding the presidential and parliamentary elections in 2007 and the attempted assassinations of then president Jose Ramos Horta and prime minister Xanana...
Gusmão in February 2008. The State of Siege which was declared after the attempted assassinations, did not end until April 2008, only a few months prior to the commencement of the interview research. During the State of Siege, there was a steep increase in allegations of human rights violations against a joint military police command, which had been established to maintain order and capture the remaining members of rebel leader Major Alfredo Reinado’s group. This conflict, which was inextricably linked to the east-west divide, led to a significant loss of life, injury and displacement as well as the destruction of property and critical infrastructure. An estimated 150,000 Timorese were displaced during the crisis and some remained in Internally Displaced Person (IDP) camps in Dili and the nearby districts until late 2009.

Following the 2006 crisis, discussion about the east-west divide had become taboo, and if it was discussed at all, it was in whispers and with nervous glances. Many of the Timorese who participated in the informal interviews stated that they were uncomfortable discussing the divide in a formal interview scenario which was recorded and attributed to them personally. In order to allay these concerns, I decided to protect the relative anonymity of interviewees. The thesis refers to the position and organisation of these interviewees only, not their names. I also decided not record the interviews using a tape recorder or video camera. Instead, I recorded the interviews using jottings or brief notes for direct quotes and then, immediately following the interviews, developed these notes into a complete account of the interview. This methodology addressed the concerns of interviewees and encouraged them to speak more openly and freely.
Interview questions

Separate sets of interview questions were developed for Timorese and non-Timorese interviewees. The east-west divide is a highly sensitive political issue in Timor-Leste and, as a result, questions for Timorese interviewees were less direct. Interview questions for Timorese included:

1. How do you think the nation-building process in Timor-Leste is progressing?
   a. What do you think are the main challenges to nation-building?

2. What affect do you think the 2006 crisis had on the nation-building process in Timor-Leste?
   a. Do you think the Petitioners issue has been addressed?
   b. What do you think of IDP return and reintegration efforts?

3. How do you view Timorese national identity?
   a. How important are local and national identities?
   b. Do they compete with each other?

4. Do political leaders believe that they are representing the interests of all Timorese? If not, which social groups?

5. Do you think there are social divisions within Timorese society which affect politics at a national level?

Interview questions for non-Timorese included:

1. Do you think there are social divisions within Timorese society which affect politics at a national level?

2. Do you think the east-west divide is a significant political issue in the post-2006 conflict period?
3. Do political leaders attempt to draw individual political support from eastern and western groups?

4. How is political representation distributed regionally within the political parties?
   a. Why do you think some political parties are represented in eastern or western regions and not nationally?
   b. Are any political parties seeking to expand their regional representation? Do they perceive there to be any barriers to doing so?

5. Do political leaders believe that they are representing the interests of all Timorese? If not, which social groups?

6. How do you view Timorese national identity?
   a. What is the primacy of regional and national identities?
   b. Do they compete with each other?

7. Does the east-west divide affect the functioning of the state and its institutions?
   a. Political appointments?
   b. Recruitment policy?
   c. Public policy?

Interviewees

Informal interviews were conducted with the following interviewees:

- Program officers from the Return and Reintegration Program at the International Organisation of Migration (IOM);
- Officers from national NGO Belun and the Columbia University’s Centre for International Conflict Resolution who publish periodic conflict vulnerability assessments in Timor-Leste;
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- Officers from the Asia Foundation who published the report ‘A Survey of Community-Police Perceptions: Timor-Leste in 2008’ (Chinn and Everett 2009);
- Officers from Democracy International who are undertaking field research for a nation-wide cultural survey; and
- Officers from the peace-building programs of national and international NGOs Care, Concern, La’o Hamutuk, International Republican Institute, Plan International and Peace Dividend Trust.

Approximately 20 formal semi-structured interviews were conducted with the following interviewees:

- Senior members of major political parties with representation in the National Parliament, including the Revolutionary Front for the Liberation of East Timor (Fretilin), National Council for Timorese Resistance (CNRT), Democratic Party (PD), Social Democratic Party (PSD), National Unity Party (PUN), Association of Timorese Heroes (KOTA) and National Democratic Unity of Timorese Resistance (UNDERTIM);
- Analysts responsible for reporting on the security and political situation in Timor-Leste, including officers from the Political Affairs Section of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) and the International Crisis Group (ICG); and
- Timorese academics from the National University of Timor-Leste (UNTL) and the University of Peace (UNPAZ).

Interviews with senior members of all major political parties were sought to ensure political views were equally represented. Interviews with government officials from state institutions such as the Ministry of Defence and Security, F-FDTL and PNTL were
not sought, because the purpose of the interviews was to explore the views of key political actors and those involved in nation-building in both community and government sectors, rather than the views of officials within the security sector. The focus of this research is not on the details of the complaints raised by members of the security sector and the divisions within that sector, but rather on the broader significance of the east-west divide for nation-building in Timor-Leste.

Analysis of public debate

The research also included analysis of public debate on the east-west divide from monitoring official government communications, the National Parliament and local media. This analysis addresses the ongoing significance of the divide as a form of political rhetoric which has the potential to contribute to identity-based conflict. In particular, it addresses the following questions: do the grievances which allowed political leaders to manipulate and amplify the east-west divide, in particular within the security sector, continue to exist?; do political leaders continue to view the divide as a political tool to hold or accumulate political power?; and do the conditions which enabled the divide to be politically manipulated continue to exist?

Aims of research

The aim of the research is to assess the implications of the east-west divide for nation-building in Timor-Leste. The research will address the following questions:

– What is the ongoing political significance of the east-west divide which emerged during the 2006 crisis in Timor-Leste?; and
Does the divide pose a significant challenge to nation-building in Timor-Leste?

Scope of research

A number of limitations have been placed on the research to ensure that it effectively addresses the research questions. First, the scope of the research on the origins and nature of the east-west divide is limited to the post-independence period. The research is limited to the post-independence period because the factors which contributed to the emergence of the divide in pre-colonial period and periods of Portuguese colonialism and Indonesian occupation cannot be assumed to be the same as the factors which contributed to its emergence in 2006. It cannot be assumed that the current divide is a continuation of historical regional divides. Furthermore, it cannot be assumed that the nature of historical regional divides is the same as the nature of the current divide. Therefore, the research interview questions focused on interviewees’ views of the divide in the post-independence period only.

Second, given that all key political actors and national and international NGOs are based in Dili, and the majority of violent conflict relating to the east-west divide occurred in Dili, all interviews were held in Dili. Other districts in Timor-Leste were far removed from the crisis, due to remoteness and difficulties of transport and telecommunications, and it is unlikely that valuable research on factors which led to the emergence and persistence of the divide would be found. The research did not involve a nation-wide survey of Timorese views of the divide, but rather qualitative interviews with a wide range of interviewees involved in nation-building in Timor-Leste and political observers. In the 2007 report ‘Rethinking Timorese Identity as a Peacebuilding
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Strategy: The Lorosa’e – Loromonu Conflict from a Traditional Perspective’, Trindade and Castro (2007) undertook interviews in Dili and seven other districts, evenly distributed between the eastern and western regions of Timor-Leste. Trindade and Castro’s research findings on Timorese views of the origin and nature of the divide will be incorporated into the research.

Third, there is substantial existing research on UN nation-building efforts in Timor-Leste and the impact of the 2006 crisis on these efforts, in particular within the security sector. The research uses this existing research on institutional weaknesses, and rivalries, within the security sector to demonstrate that these issues were a key factor which contributed to the emergence and persistence of the crisis. There is also significant existing research on the structural causes of the crisis and the roles and responsibilities of political leaders in the manipulation of the east-west divide (OHCHR 2006). The research uses this existing research to characterise the emergence of the divide during the crisis as identity-based conflict.

Conclusion

The thesis hypothesises that the disproportionate focus on state-building has undermined the nation-building project in Timor-Leste. The review of literature on UN nation-building efforts in Timor-Leste demonstrates that these efforts have disproportionately focused on state-building and neglected identity-building. Nation-building efforts in Timor-Leste have adopted a state-centric approach which has failed to take into account the local context, by marginalising traditional social and political
structures and customary governance, and consequently, resulted in a state and its institutions which lack local legitimacy and authority.

The review of literature on Timorese nationalism demonstrates that, in the post-independence period in Timor-Leste, nationalism has been grounded in resistance, in particular the 24 year resistance movement against Indonesian occupation. The significance of the resistance has been embedded in nation-building, in particular in symbols of nationalism. However, in the post-independence period, this construction of nationalism, which is layered with the divisions inherent in the resistance, is a potential source of social and political conflict. This construction of nationalism has been instrumentalised to articulate demands for access to state power and resources. In the post-independence period, divisive narratives of nationalism have emerged about relative sacrifice and suffering during the resistance and consequently, which social groups are most entitled to the benefits of independence. Those who are considered to be truly Timorese are considered to be most entitled to state power and resources. Those who are considered to have made the greatest sacrifice during the resistance movement are considered to be most entitled to the benefits of independence. The thesis hypothesises that such divisive narratives of nationalism could undermine identity-building, in particular the development of a cohesive national political community.

The review of literature on the 2006 crisis indicates that the emergence of the east-west divide during the crisis in Timor-Leste was symptomatic of weak identity-building in the post-independence period. Existing research supports the thesis’ argument that the emergence of the divide indicated that the identity-building process was fragile or even
failing. The emergence and persistence of divisive national discourses about the competing roles of Timorese during the resistance movement in the post-independence period has derailed progress towards identity-building.

Given that identity-building is a fundamental process of nation-building which legitimises and consolidates the nation-state and guards it against further fragmentation, the new nation-state in Timor-Leste is vulnerable to identity-based conflict. During the 2006 crisis, it was a division between lorosa’e and loromonu which contributed to widespread violent conflict. Such conflict is prone to intractability and its root causes are unlikely to be resolved without significant progress towards the key criteria of identity-building: citizen connection with the state; a sense of common purpose; the transfer of citizens’ allegiance from local to central authority; and the erosion of social divisions (Talentino 2004). Therefore, the thesis hypothesises that the east-west divide continues to be politically significant in the post-crisis and poses a critical challenge to the nation-building project in Timor-Leste.
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Introduction

Chapter two applied the theoretical framework on nation-building and identity-based conflict to Timor-Leste, where the emergence of the east-west divide during the 2006 crisis indicates that identity-building in Timor-Leste is fragile or even failing. The chapter examined the United Nations’ (UN) nation-building efforts in the post-independence period in Timor-Leste and their implications for both state-building and identity-building. It explored the development of nationalism in Timor-Leste, critically assessing the current construction of nationalism, which is grounded in the resistance movement. The chapter examined the impact of the crisis on the nation-building project in Timor-Leste. In addition, it provided an overview of the research methodology as well as the aims and scope of the research.

Part two of the thesis examines the political significance of the east-west divide in the post-2006 crisis period in Timor-Leste. Chapter three examines the emergence of the divide. The first section of the chapter explores the origins of the social division between Timorese from the eastern region of the half island, lorosa’e, and Timorese from the western region, loromonu. It reviews literature on the divide and analyses interview research undertaken in Timor-Leste in 2008 and 2009 with Timorese and non-Timorese involved in nation-building in both community and government sectors.

The second section of chapter three examines the events of the 2006 crisis, which continued until the death of Major Alfredo Reinado, the symbolic rebel leader of the so-called Petitioners group, on 11 February 2008. In particular, this section explores the
role played by political actors in manipulating the divide as they jostled for power in the new nation-state.

Drawing on the theoretical framework on nation-building and identity-based conflict, the final section of chapter three characterises the 2006 crisis as an identity-based conflict relating to the east-west divide. By charactering the crisis as an identity-based conflict, the chapter establishes the relevance of the theoretical framework outlined in chapter one to Timor-Leste and contributes to the empirical analysis in chapters four to six.

Origins of the east-west divide

The roots of the east-west divide are grounded in the ongoing strength of local identities in Timor-Leste. Timorese academic da Silva (2006, p. 1) describes Timorese as having both local and national identities which are based on “geographic boundaries and dialects”. Place and language are fundamental markers of Timorese identity. da Silva (2006, p. 1) explains:

People always say they come from Suai, Viqueque, Oecusse or Ermera and even mention a particular dialect, a certain geographical area, a common ancestral inheritance such as *uma fukun* (ancestral house), extended family relations, or ancestral land. Being East Timorese means both belonging to a nation and also to a locality.
Given the significance of place in the construction of identity in Timor-Leste, the potential for regional identities to contribute to identity-based conflict should not be underestimated.

The historical origins of the east-west divide are highly debated. The report of the United Nations Independent Special Commission of Inquiry for Timor-Leste (UN Inquiry report), which investigated the events of the 2006 crisis, concluded that:

The Commission has heard opposing views on the origin and longevity of the cleavage [between East and West]. On the one hand it is suggested that it is a totally new phenomenon, as evinced by the total absence of the issue in the thousands of testimonies collected by the Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation. On the other, the Commission has been told that it is a long-dormant issue dating from the Portuguese era (OHCHR 2006, p. 20).

**Etymology of the east-west divide**

The Tetun term *loro* literally means sun while *sa’e* means to rise or come up and *monu* means to fall or go down. *Lorosa’e* means east, eastern or easterly – the direction of the sunrise. *Loromonu* means west, western or westerly – the direction of the sunset. The *lorosa’e-loromonu* dichotomy creates a division at Timor-Leste’s geographical heart which is as irreconcilable as east and west. *Ema lorosa’e* describes Timorese from the eastern region of Timor-Leste or ‘easterners’, while *ema loromonu* describes those from
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the western region or ‘westerners’. The short hand lorosa’e and loromonu also describe easterners and westerners.

The origins of the Tetun terms firaku, which is synonymous with ema lorosa’e, and the term kaladi, which is synonymous with ema loromonu, are ambiguous. On one hand, the terms are believed to have Portuguese origins. Some argue firaku comes from the Portuguese phrase vira o cu, which means to turn one’s backside to the speaker. The phrase was believed to be adopted to denote the rebellious nature of lorosa’e. Some argue kaladi comes from the Portuguese term calado, which means quiet or reserved.

Babo-Soares (2003, pp. 269-70) argues that most Timorese believe that the terms were originally used by the Portuguese to stereotype behavioural characteristics of lorosa’e and loromonu.

On the other hand, the terms are believed to have indigenous origins. Some argue firaku comes from the Macassae language of Baucau, one of the eastern districts of Timor-Leste. Fi literally means we or us and raku means family or relatives. Firaku often means our friends or comrades.

Some argue kaladi comes from the Malay term keladi, which refers to the yams grown by the Mambai, Kemak and Bunak communities in the central western highlands of Timor-Leste. The Portuguese historian de Matos (1974, p. 447) defined the term caladi as “‘inhabitants of the mountains’ (in Tétum caládi, in Malay keladi: meaning “yam”), probably in deprecating reference to the food eaten by the population in the mountains, which is based on tubers, yams and sweet potatoes”. However, Hicks (2009, p. 88) notes that communities living on the island of Atauro and the districts of Dili and
Oecusse as well as Tetun-speaking communities living on the south coast, which do not grow yams, could not be included in this definition of kaladi.

The Portuguese anthropologist Seixas argues that the terms firaku and kaladi come from the Tetun language of overlords in Wehali, which is on the south coast of West Timor, Indonesia (cited in Kammen 2010, p. 245). He argues that the overlords used these terms to classify the Mambai and Makassae communities in the eastern half of the island of Timor. The Makassae term firaku, meaning our friends of comrades, became a Tetun term to refer to those living in the north-eastern mountains of the island. Seixas argues that the term kaladi might have been an auto-classification by Mambai communities which also became a Tetun term to refer derogatorily to Mambai living in the western mountains. He concludes that the Portuguese, who formed an alliance with the Belos, adopted these indigenous terms as part of their divide and rule strategy. Seixas further concludes that the Portuguese terms virarcu and calado originate from these Tetun terms.

Variations of the term calado were first used in records from the early 18th century to describe groups who rebelled against Portuguese colonial authority in the 1720s. These groups inhabited the mountainous western region of Timor-Leste in the districts of Bobonaro, Cova-Lima, Ermera and Liquiçá and spoke Bunak, Kemak, Mambai and Tocodede languages (Kammen 2010, pp. 246-8). Kammen (2010, p. 248) notes that “...the Portuguese state used the term callades for people who refused to acknowledge the putative colonial masters; unfortunately, however, none of the original sources explains its meaning”.

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Variations of the term *firaku* reappear in records from the mid-nineteenth century as the Portuguese colonial authority established effective state administration in Timor-Leste, primarily to suppress rebellions, collect taxes and conscript Timorese (Kammen 2010, pp. 249-250). Variations of the term *kaladi* appear in these records for the first time. The Portuguese colonial government created new administrative districts divided along regional lines (Kammen 2010, p. 249). Anthropologists also drew on these terms to describe Timor-Leste’s ethnic and linguistic diversity (Kammen 2010, pp. 250-3) but Kammen (2010, p. 253) notes that:

> Throughout these texts there is no indication of tension or hostility between *kaladi* and *firaco*; nor is there reason to think that these terms were used self-referentially. These were primarily labels used by the Lusified residents of Dili and other towns on the north-central coast to refer to the population in the interior, and secondarily terms employed by the authorities in Dili to make sense of the bewildering array of kingdoms and ethno-linguistic groups.

Following the Indonesian invasion of Timor-Leste in 1975, there are very few references to the terms, most likely because resistance to Indonesian occupation united Timorese against the common enemy and subsumed local identities (Kammen 2010, p. 256).

During the 2006 crisis in Timor-Leste the terms *firaku* and *kaladi* were layered with new meaning. *Firaku* was shortened to *Irak*, Iraq, and used to imply that *lorosa’e* were terrorists (Kammen 2010, p. 244). *Irak* was also used as a personal attack against former prime minister Mari Alkatiri who is a Muslim from the Arab-Hadhrami minority.
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in Timor-Leste. The Revolutionary Front for an Independent Timor-Leste (Fretilin) government, led by Alkatiri, was perceived to favour lorosa’e because Fretilin’s political base was in the eastern districts of Baucau, Lautém and Viqueque. The use of Irak tainted Alkatiri and lorosa’e with the same brush.

During the 2006 crisis, kaladi became Amerika, America – the perceived antithesis of Iraq (Kammen 2010, p. 244) – thus reinforcing the dichotomous nature of lorosa’e and loromonu identities. In areas of Dili where violent conflict relating to the east-west divide was prevalent, the terms firaku and Irak and kaladi and Amerika were graffitied onto properties to identify the regional origin of the occupiers. Kammen (2010, p. 244) reports that more explicit graffiti was also used, including “firaku are terrorists”, “firaku are hypocrites” and “firaku are thieves. Long live loromonu”.

The east-west divide as a geographical identity

The geographical division between the eastern and western regions of Timor-Leste is a heavily contested concept. Of the thirteen districts of Timor-Leste, there is no unambiguous line of division between so-called eastern and western districts. First, some argue that the eastern districts include Baucau, Lautém, Viqueque and Manatuto (Babo-Soares 2003, da Silva 2006 and Harrington 2007). Tilman’s (2007, pp. 1-2) argument that the east-west divide was shaped by how the centre, the capital of Dili, viewed the districts, that is, those east of Dili are lorosa’e and those west of Dili are loromonu, would also include Manatuto in the eastern districts. Others argue that Manatuto is part of the central districts or western districts. In a controversial speech on 23 March 2006, then president Xanana Kay Rala Gusmão denounced the Fretilin-led
government as being corrupt and dictatorial and accused it of favouring *lorosa’ẽ*. In the speech, he described the western districts as being from Manatuto to Oecusse. This speech coincided with a tangible shift in Manatuto’s regional association from *lorosa’ẽ* to *loromonu* (Sahin 2011). Former prime minister Alkatiri reportedly stated that, during the 2006 crisis, it was the first time in Timorese history that the district of Manatuto, which is east of Dili, was considered to be part of the western region of Timor-Leste (da Silva 2006, p. 1).

Second, some argue that the western districts include Aileu, Ainaro, Bobonaro, Cova-Lima, Dili, Ermera, Liquiçá, Manatuto, Manufahi, Oecusse (Trindade and Castro 2007, p. 10). This geographical division correlates with the political division between Fretilin and non-Fretilin groups. Fretilin is over represented in the eastern districts of Baucau, Lautém and Viqueque while non-Fretilin groups are over represented in the western districts. Chapter five argues that the relationship between political party affiliation and region remained very strong in the parliamentary election in Timor-Leste in 2012. Political rhetoric about reconciliation between ‘east’ and ‘west’ and national unity contributed to a relatively peaceful election, but did not overcome regionalism in political representation. Others argue that the western districts are distinct from the central districts and only include the far western districts of Bobonaro, Cova-Lima, Ermera and Liquiçá (da Silva 2006, p. 1, Durand 2002 and Fox 2001). The central districts include Aileu, Ainaro, Manatuto and Manufahi.

Third, there is debate about whether the enclave of the district of Oecusse is part of the western districts (Hicks 2009, p. 84). Oecusse, which is within West Timor, is
The east-west divide as an ethno-linguistic identity

Timor-Leste is ethnically and linguistically diverse, but ethno-linguistic identities do not correlate with lorosa’e or loromou identities. However, Timor-Leste’s linguistic diversity criss-crosses the east-west divide with several languages, in particular Tetun, being spoken in both eastern and western districts. While diverse ethno-linguistic groups exist in Timor-Leste, Timorese are united by a shared traditional culture rather than divided by ethno-linguistic differences (McWilliam 2007, Trindade and Castro 2007 and Prueller 2008). Trindade (2008, p. 163) highlights the shared cultural
practices of contemporary Timorese communities: *feto – uma mane*, marriage exchange relationships; *uma tulik*, sacred houses; *mamah bua malus*, chewing of betel nut by elders; *tais*, traditional cloth; and traditional dance such as *tebe-tebe* and *kore-metan*, to commemorate the first anniversary of a community member’s death. According to mythology, the island of Timor was formed by a sleeping crocodile that had a child on its back. All Timorese are believed to have descended from this child and Prueller (2009, pp. 25) argues that, mythologically, they share one ethnicity. Hill (2006) notes that intermarriage between *lorosa’e* and *loromonu* is commonplace.

Despite the lack of correlation between ethno-linguistic identities and *lorosa’e* and *loromonu* identities, some interviewees argued that east-west divide was an ethnic divide. This interview data was not expected. Existing research indicates that *lorosa’e* and *loromonu* identities do not represent homogenous ethnic groups with a common and distinctive culture, language or religion. This interview data raises questions about the social construction of identity. Harrington (2007, p. 22) argues that:

> As with many conflicts designated as ‘ethnic’, ethnicity (though neither group is close to being homogenous) was merely vehicle through which frustration and anger over horizontal inequalities in the political and economic situation; ethnic symbols, identities and roles, were used to mobilize support.

Therefore, some Timorese may ascribe these regional identities with the significance of ethnic ones. The following sections address such politicisation of *lorosa’e* and *loromonu* identities.
The east-west divide as a socio-economic identity

Following the 2006 crisis, the National Statistics Directorate (NSD) (2007, pp. 30-4) analysed its 2004 census data using *lorosa’e* and *loromonu* categories. The NSD (2007, pp. 30-4) concluded that socio-economic conditions varied more significantly between districts than between the eastern or western regions. The eastern region was slightly better off than the western one. The most significant variation was between Dili and the districts.

Some argue that the *lorosa’e*-loromonu dichotomy became solidified in Dili in the 20th century as a result of rural-urban migration into the capital city, in particular as a result of migration by Macassae and Bunak communities following the Second World War, who traded in the local markets. While Dili was considered to be a western district, communities from both eastern and western districts migrated to Dili seeking economic opportunities and formed heterogeneous communities. Harrington (2007, p. 12) argues that “the distinction seems to be relegated largely to Dili where both groups are in close contact with one another”.

The local market places in Dili were transformed into sites of economic competition between *lorosa’e* and *loromonu* market sellers. Violent conflict between *lorosa’e* and *loromonu* over limited land and market space was reported to be common and, in the absence of law enforcement during the Portuguese colonial period, this conflict became entrenched as a “kind of tradition” (Harrington 2007, p. 12). Several interviewees argued that such economic competition was the root cause of the east-west divide (interviewee no 21, personal communication, 20 October 2009, interviewee no 26,
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personal communication, 23 October 2009 and interviewee no 31, personal communication, 30 October 2009). These interviewees argued that long-standing economic competition between lorosa’e and loromomu market sellers in the market places in Dili had contributed to the emergence of the divide. Opposition between individuals, the lorosa’e and loromomu sellers in Dili, was conflated to opposition between groups and entrenched the lorosa’e-loromonu dichotomy. This economic competition elevated the divide to the national political agenda.

The east-west divide was submerged during the period of Indonesian occupation as Timorese united against a common enemy. Harrington (2007, p. 23) argues that “arguments over market access and land and property were directed against the Indonesians instead of between firaku and kaladi”. During this period, the roots of the divide remained buried.

In the post-independence period, land and property disputes were reignited by widespread displacement and property destruction by militia following the referendum for independence on 30 August 1999. The scorched earth campaign coordinated by the Indonesian military significantly destroyed housing, an estimated 30 per cent in Dili and 80 per cent across Timor-Leste (Harrington 2007, p. 14). In addition, the formal title records of the National Land Agency (NLA) were destroyed by militia and personal records were destroyed when Timorese fled their homes. One interviewee described Dili as a “vacant empire” following the end of Indonesian occupation (interviewee no 21, personal communication, 20 October 2009).

In the post-independence period, the United Nations Transitional Authority in East Timor (UNTAET) was not able to resolve these land and property disputes. The
resolution of these disputes was impeded by the multiple systems of title records held in Timor-Leste from the Portuguese colonial period and the period of Indonesian occupation. In addition, some titles were held under customary governance. The Timorese Directorate of Land and Property was hampered by a lack of funding, human resources and technology. There was an increase in migration to Dili as a result of large flows of Timorese returning from West Timor or overseas, acute housing shortages across Timor-Leste and a lack of economic opportunities in the districts. An estimated 50 per cent of housing in Dili was occupied illegally (Harrington 2007, p. 16).

There appeared to be regional inequalities in land and property disputes. Following the post-referendum violence, Dili was re-settled on a first-come-first-serve basis (Harrington 2007, p. 23). Those first to arrive were predominantly lorosa’e because far more loromonu than lorosa’e had fled or been forcibly displaced to West Timor by militia because of their geographical proximity to the border. Harrington (2007, p. 23) argues that “those who arrived first and ‘strongest’ were able to gain control” over houses as well as market places. Mass occupations of houses occurred and lorosa’e family members as well as gangs also arrived in Dili to defend the occupations, resulting in widespread communal violence. Some occupiers collected significant rent during the housing shortage which contributed to social jealousy. Harrington (2007, p. 23) argues that “grievances caused by this situation were not great enough to result in open conflict, but were enough to cause persistent low-intensity conflict over the years, notably in the Mercado Central, Comoro Market area, Quintal Boot, along with other locations”.
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As a result, many Dili residents were pitted against each other along regional lines. *Lorosa’e* were often characterised as the villains and *loromonu* as the victims. *Lorosa’e* were depicted as being responsible for the land and property disputes and even poor economic conditions (Harrington 2007, p. 22). *Lorosa’e* dominance of the market places in Dili was blamed for the high cost of food. As a result, many *lorosa’e* did not live in harmony with their community and were not able to integrate (Harrington 2007, pp. 15-6). Harrington (2007, p. 19) argues that stereotypes about the behaviour of *lorosa’e* and *loromonu* might have informed land and property disputes, stating that:

...*firaku* are considered strong willed, perhaps obstinate; to a *kaladi* observer it may seem a natural for *firaku* to aggressively occupy property and forcefully exclude the owners, as these are ‘ethnic’ traits. *Firaku* might see the inability (or unwillingness) of *kaladi* to protect their properties as being part of their perceived cultural docility and reserved nature, perhaps perceived as weakness through a *firaku* lens.

These land and property disputes were compounded by the widespread displacement and property damage during the 2006 crisis. The main purpose of the violent conflict was to push back against those who had illegally occupied land and property and force them to return to their communities in the districts (Harrington 2007, p. 25). During the crisis, gangs destroyed specifically targeted properties, the majority of which were occupied by *lorosa’e*. Some properties occupied by *lorosa’e* were not destroyed reportedly because their occupiers had integrated well into their communities, highlighting the role personal relationships also played in the violent conflict. While
the initial purpose of the violent conflict was to push back against illegal occupiers, it escalated into youth and gang violence along regional lines.

Some interviewees argued that the east-west divide was significant only in Dili because of such socio-economic conflict. One interviewee described Dili as a site for competition between lorosa’e and loromonu (interviewee no 21, personal communication, 20 October 2009). Rural-urban migration to Dili significantly altered the relationship between lorosa’e and loromonu. The geographical division between east and west was erased in Dili, with families from eastern districts and those from western districts living in the same neighbourhood in Dili. The local market places in Dili provided the stage for the economic conflict triggered by rural-urban migration. However, while the majority of violent conflict relating to the divide occurred in Dili, there were similar incidents in the districts during the 2006 crisis as well as the presidential and parliamentary elections in 2007.

Some interviewees argued that the east-west divide emerged in the post-independence period because competition over access to state power and resources politicised the divide. One interviewee attributed the emergence of the divide during the 2006 crisis to individuals who had felt like they had “missed out” on the benefits of independence (interview no 26, personal communication, 23 October 2009). Socio-economic conflict in the post-independence period appears to have significantly altered how individuals negotiated their relationships to each other and that state.
The east-west divide as a political identity

There is no history of indigenous political alliances along regional lines in the pre-colonial period in Timor-Leste (Babo-Soares 2003). As a result, it is likely that any political significance held by the east-west divide was introduced externally as a result of divide and rule strategies during the periods of Portuguese colonialism and Indonesian occupation, or developed internally during the resistance movement.

When Fretilin was founded in 1975, following the decolonisation process in Timor-Leste, the party’s leaders adopted the terms firaku and kaladi to denounce the Portuguese colonial government’s divide and rule strategy. Fretilin published a Political Program and Manual which stated “...some of the things they [the colonialists] say divide us. They call some Timorese KALADI and some FIRA KU. They want the Timorese to be divided, calling us Kaladi and Firaku. But we are all from the same land, we are all sons of Timor” (Kammen 2010, pp. 255-6).

In an effort to overcome these regional divisions, Fretilin adopted the concept of mauberism. The Tetun term maubere had been used as a term of contempt of the majority of Timorese who were poor and uneducated during the Portuguese colonial period. But during the resistance movement it was adopted by Fretilin as a term of empowerment. Kammen (2010, p. 256) notes:

Fretilin leaders were keenly aware that nascent nationalist sentiment was cross-cut by a host of local allegiances and antipathies. In October 1975 Fretilin Central Committee member António ‘Mau Lear’ Carvarino published an article in the
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Political leaders’ efforts to encourage the development of nationalism during the resistance movement were not able to overcome regional divisions. A contemporary source of conflict between lorosa’e and loromonu is rooted in ongoing divisive national discourses about the roles played by each group during the resistance (Babo-Soares 2003, McWilliam 2007, Scambary 2006; Simonsen 2006 and Westmoreland 2010). The resistance was strongest in the eastern region of Timor-Leste because of its geographical distance from the border with West Timor and its mountainous terrain. The western region fell to the Indonesian military first (Westmoreland 2010, p. 32). As a result, the military wing of the resistance movement, the National Liberation Forces of Timor-Leste (FALINTIL), was more active in the eastern region and fewer lorosa’e were co-opted into the pro-Indonesia militia. Contributing to a perception that the eastern region put up a stronger fight and eastern region and fewer lorosa’e were co-opted into the pro-Indonesia militia, political leaders’ efforts to encourage the development of nationalism during the resistance movement were not able to overcome regional divisions.

The term kaladi refers to loromonu or westerners and the term firaku refers to lorosa’e or easterners.

2 The term kaladi refers to loromonu or westerners and the term firaku refers to lorosa’e or easterners.

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participated less in the militias. While this narrative is built on stereotypes about the role played by lorosa’e and loromonu during the resistance, it has informed antagonism between both groups in the post-independence period as well as competing claims over relative sacrifice and suffering during the resistance.

In the post-independence period, when the hard fought war against Indonesia had been won, lorosa’e claim to have to have won the war through their sustained resistance in the eastern region of Timor-Leste. This narrative demonises loromonu for putting up a weaker fight than lorosa’e. Seixas (2009, p. 76) argues that:

Within the resistance, although the idea of ‘From taci-feto to tacimane, from Lorosae to Loromono, One only People, One only Nation’ was constantly repeated, Loromonu was synonymous to many Timorese as the ‘great door of invasion’ and of ‘collaborationism’ and, on the contrary, Lorosae was the same as ‘real warriors’ and ‘resistants’.

In contrast, loromonu believed they had given a greater sacrifice during the resistance movement, in particular because this region suffered the highest number of casualties. During the 2006 crisis, some protestors reportedly carried banners stating ‘Brigadier General Ruak should declare ‘westerners’ were also involved in the independence struggle’ (Curtain 2006, p. 12).

In addition to putting up a weaker fight, this discourse demonises loromonu for participating in the militia groups, backed by the Indonesian military, which reigned terror in the lead up to and following the referendum for independence on 30 August.
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1999. The groups responsible for the greatest violence were based in western districts, including Aitarak, literally thorn, in Dili, Besi Merah Putih, Iron, Red and White, in Liquíçá, Laksaur, literally eagle, in Cova-Lima and Mahidi, Dead or Alive for Integration, in Ainaro (Babo-Soares 2000, pp. 67-8). While militia groups operated in the eastern region, they were responsible for much less violence (Babo-Soares 2003, p. 292).

This discourse also portrays loromonu as being more in favour of autonomy than independence. Prior to the Indonesian invasion in 1975, the pro-integration political party Apodeti had its political base in the district of Ermera (Hicks 2009, p. 90). In the lead up to the referendum for independence on 30 August 1999, some pro-autonomists claimed that pro-autonomy groups controlled western districts, which would join with Indonesia (Kammen 2010, pp. 257-8). The Indonesian flag was more prominently displayed in the western districts of Bobonaro, Cova-Lima, Ermera and Liquíçá (Hicks 2009, p. 90). In April 1999 leaders of Aitarak and Besi Merah Putih held a pro-autonomy demonstration at Government Palace during which the leader of Aitarak, the infamous Eurico Guterres, proposed dividing Timor-Leste along regional lines (Kammen 2010, p. 258). Under his proposal, even if eastern districts voted in favour of independence, western districts could remain with Indonesia. Pro-autonomists successfully manipulated this narrative to enhance regional divisions within the resistance movement. Reflecting the international community’s concern about regional divisions in the lead up to the referendum, the protocols for the referendum included a provision that ballot papers from all thirteen districts would be mixed to hide regional patterns of voting (Hicks 2009, p. 91).
This discourse about the role played by lorosa’e and loromonu during the resistance movement is part of a broader narrative which has emerged in the post-independence period in Timor-Leste relating to economic, social and political competition over the relative entitlement of particular individuals and groups to the benefits of independence. Frustration over slow and uneven development and discontent and disenchantment with the state was growing in the post-independence period. In this climate, narratives of sacrifice and suffering become a political commodity used to articulate demands for access to state resources and power. Babo-Soares (2003, p. 290) recounts a joke about loromonu, which circulated in the early post-independence period:

- Uluk funu nia laran: During the war
- Funu halao liu iha lorosae: The resistance took place in the east
- Firaku mak funu liu: The firaku fought most
- Loromonu sira moris diak: The western people led a good life
- La halo funu: (They) did not engage in the war
- Buat hotu dia: Everything was good (there)
- Sira la terus: They did not endure suffering.

Political parties and leaders used their contribution to the resistance movement to bolster their moral and political legitimacy, with some claiming that lorosa’e should receive more positions in the new state than loromonu (Babo-Soares 2003, pp. 284-7). A Fretilin party official claimed that Fretilin represented the heroes of the resistance movement, the veterans, and, in seeking to restore broken connections with their identity, culture and history, young Timorese were becoming members of the party.
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(interview no 16, personal communication, 14 October 2009 and 15 October 2009).
The official described them as seeking “connections with their ancestors” (interview no 16, personal communication, 14 October 2009 and 15 October 2009). This anecdote highlights the centrality of narratives of sacrifice and suffering to nation formation in the post-independence period – not only to nation formation in the period immediately following independence, but to ongoing nation formation in which individuals negotiate their relationships to each other and the state.

This discourse about the role played by lorosa’e and loromonu during the resistance is one thread woven into a broader narrative of entitlement. Chapter four examines other social divisions in Timor-Leste which also inform this broader narrative.

Regional identities are informed by both spatial and temporal processes and such an interpretation of the east-west divide highlights the role played by temporal processes. Regional identities may be understood not only in terms of regional boundaries but also in terms of “…social constructs or narratives and expressions of societal power that are developed for specific purposes” (Paasi 2012, p. 1454). Temporal processes may interpret the past and present of a region for its future. Such processes often contribute to narratives of ‘us’ versus ‘them’, particularly if they are used to articulate demands for access to state power and resources.

In addition to its origins, the ongoing significance of the east-west divide is highly debated. Some argue that lorosa’e and loromonu identities are neutral identity markers which reflect stereotypes about behavioural characteristics (Babo-Soares 2003). The term firaku is used to denote the talkative and excitable nature of lorosa’e while kaladi
is used to denote the taciturn and closed nature of *loromonu*. Several interviewees subscribed to these stereotypes. Tilman (2007, p.3) notes that such stereotypes are common in Timor-Leste:

In general almost every district or every linguistic region has their own tags which stereotype them. The Maubisse are known as *fehukropa*, the Tetum name for potato. Maybe this is due to the amount of potato grown in Maubisse, but being called a potato is not a compliment. Potatoes are grown by peasants who are perceived as illiterate, backward and uncivilised, so that to be associated with a potato is to be associated with these qualities. The Atsabe people are referred to as lipadois or smelly sarong. I don't know why. The Bobonaro people are called kudaaulun or horse thieves. The Makasae people are known as masters, the Bahasa abbreviation for mahasiswa terminal meaning bus station university students. It is said that the Makasa'e youths tend to mill around at the bus terminals which also doubles as their “school.” The Makasa'e people are also called muturabu. It is a Makasa'e word that describes anyone with violent tendencies.

Some argue that the identities reflect friendly rivalries between the two regions. Tilman (2007, p.1) argues that “the division is only as relevant as speaking about a Sydneysider and a Melbournian”. Others argue that the identities reflect derogatory stereotypes (Babo-Soares 2003). Others argue that the divide was not a significant social division in Timor-Leste, but had been manipulated by political actors jostling for power during the 2006 crisis (USAID 2006). There was a broad consensus among interviewees that political manipulation was the root cause of the emergence of the divide during the
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crisis. Chapter four examines whether the divide continues to be significant in the post-crisis period and following the death of Major Reinado.

*Regional divisions within the security sector*

Prior to the 2006 crisis, political interference within the security sector was endemic, given the confused and competing mandates of the Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Interior, FALINTIL Timor-Leste Defence Force (F-FDTL) and Timor-Leste National Police (PNTL) (Brady and Timberman 2006, pp. 9, 12-3) and the lack of civilian oversight (Rees 2003, p. 2). The International Crisis Group (ICG) (2006, p. i) argues that the roots of these divisions lie in the poorly implemented demobilisation of the FALINTIL in 2000 and the creation of a new defence force in 2001. The F-FDTL absorbed some of the FALINTIL fighters, leaving others unemployed and resentful. Rees (2003, p. 2) argues that “veterans feel robbed of their independence dividend, and this is compounded by profoundly weak economy and high unemployment”. The UN and other donors focused on creating a new police force, which included a large number of police who had worked under the former Indonesian administration, furthering the resentment of veterans.

There is a broad consensus that the formation of the F-FDTL institutionalised regional divisions within the security sector. Rees (2003, p. 2) argues that:

Early decisions regarding demobilisation and establishing the defence force and police services were made in a spirit of political and practical expediency rather than with a view to the long-term development of East Timor...Old divisions in
the anti-Indonesian resistance movement are being institutionalised in the new East Timorese state with one political grouping (President Gusmão’s allies) finding a home in the defense force and dissidents (under the patronage of the Minister for Internal Administration) likely finding a home in the police service, and some elements of local government.

Tension between the F-FDTL and PNTL existed prior to the 2006 crisis. In 2004 an Independent Commission of Inquiry was established by then president Gusmão to investigate an attack by F-FDTL on a police station in Los Palos (OHCHR 2006, p. 53). The commission’s report, known as the Los Palos report, found that tension between the military and police stemmed from discrepancies in conditions of service and resourcing as well as the establishment of units within the PNTL which had paramilitary functions. The PNTL received substantially more international support than the F-FDTL. Political observers have noted that the F-FDTL and PNTL held competing loyalties: the F-FDTL to Gusmão and the PNTL to then prime minister Alkatiri, which had politicised both institutions. But the UN Inquiry report emphasised that the crisis had revealed that “neither PNTL nor F-FDTL was a monolithic organization” because there were significant relationships between individuals and groups of both institutions (OHCHR 2006, p. 53).

The east-west divide had permeated the security sector prior to the 2006 crisis. In fact several interviewees argued that the divide affected the security sector only, rather than broader Timorese society. These interviewees characterised the divide as a social division within and between institutions, rather than within a nation-state. They
characterised the divide as being confined within the institutional frameworks of the sector. However the violent conflict on the streets of Dili during the crisis indicated that while the institutional weaknesses, and rivalries, within the security sector demonstrate that these issues were a key factor which contributed to the emergence and persistence of the crisis, the divide resonated more broadly in Timorese society.

When the F-FDTL was established in the post-independence period, soldiers were originally selected from FALINTIL veterans. The composition of the F-FDTL, in which 56 per cent of these soldiers were *lorosa’e*, did not reflect the national average of 35 per cent *lorosa’e* and 65 per cent *loromonu*. The F-FDTL leadership implemented a targeted policy to correct the regional imbalance within recruitment and by 2006 the composition of the F-FDTL reflected the national average. But around 50 per cent of officers remained *lorosa’e*, reflecting a regional imbalance between senior and junior ranks.

In 2004 the Los Palos report noted tension between veterans and new recruits within the F-FDTL, in particular because older veterans were given preferred static assignments, seemingly due to their status, age and health factors (OHCHR 2006, p. 54). The UN Inquiry report concluded that “in the context of the over-representation of ex-FALINTIL easterners in the officer ranks, disagreements easily became conflated with east versus west disputes” (OHCHR 2006, p. 54). The UN Inquiry report argues that the divide manifested itself in “…actual or perceived acts of discrimination and nepotism” (OHCHR 2006, pp. 20-1). In an effort to correct regional imbalances in recruitment, the F-FDTL introduced a new promotions policy which led to an increase in promotions for *loromonu* (OHCHR 2006, p. 54). But tensions remained within the F-
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FDTL. In the post-crisis period, the regional imbalance has returned (OHCHR 2006, p. 53). In the second half of 2006 the F-FDTL was reduced from 1435 to 715 soldiers, as a result of the events earlier in the year however, 72 per cent of the remaining soldiers were *lorosa’e*.

The PNTL grew rapidly in the post-independence period. It was established in 2001 during UNTAET and the UN retained executive authority over policing in Timor-Leste until 2004 (OHCHR 2006, p. 57). 2,000 officers were initially recruited, 370 of whom had served with the Indonesian police force during the Indonesian occupation. By 2006 more than 3,000 officers had been recruited. The PNTL had district formations but also a police intelligence service, a migration service, three special police units: Rapid Response Unit (UIR); Border Patrol Unit (UPF); and Police Reserve Unit (URP), as well as subsidiary units. The URP and UPF were established following attacks by former militia groups in 2003 (OHCHR 2006, p. 19). These units were responsible for border patrol, cross-border militia attacks and rural counter-insurgency.

The PNTL was considered to be a weak institution prior to the 2006 crisis. Poor skills and training, internal factionalism and politicisation contributed to its weakness. Competing groups emerged within the PNTL based on roles played during the resistance movement, including former Indonesian police officers, veterans of the resistance movement and former Indonesian university students (OHCHR 2006, p. 57). These groups came under the leadership of senior commanders.

At the National Dialogue held in August 2004, concerns were expressed about regional tensions within the PNTL. A *Nacionalista* movement was established in 2004 by 80
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lorosa’e PNTL officers, which was critical of the institution and its leadership. In response to the movement, disciplinary proceedings for disloyalty were conducted against 21 officers.

**Overview of the 2006 crisis**

In the post-independence period, prior to the 2006 crisis, violent conflict relating to the east-west divide emerged in Timor-Leste. In late December 1999 a fight between lorosa’e and loromonu youth near Areia Branca beach in Dili highlighted the ongoing significance of the divide (Babo-Soares 2003, p. 278). The lorosa’e youth claimed that lorosa’e had put up a stronger fight during the resistance movement. Harrington (2007, p. 13) argues that the incident “...perhaps marked the revival of open firaku-kaladi tensions developed in the 1940’s but subsumed under occupation”. The incident was followed by further fighting a few days later in early January 2000 at the Central Market in Dili during which kiosks owned by lorosa’e were burnt down and two lorosa’e were killed, reportedly in retribution for the first incident (Babo-Soares 2003, p. 280). Three weeks later a larger fight broke out in the Bairro Pite area in Dili, a loromonu area, during which many youth were injured. FALINTIL veterans had joined lorosa’e youth in the fight. Loromonu youth claimed that they had become involved in the fight to defend the accusation that loromonu had not contributed to the resistance. Such instances of violence continued until the 2006 crisis.
Events of the 2006 crisis

The 2006 crisis resulted in a significant loss of life and injury. The UN Inquiry report estimated that, during the events of April and May, up to 38 people were killed, including 23 civilians, 12 PNTL officers and three F-FDTL soldiers (OHCHR 2006, p. 42). In addition, 69 people were injured, including 37 civilians, 23 PNTL officers, seven F-FDTL officers and two United Nations Police (UNPOL) officers. The UN Inquiry report did not find evidence of a rumoured massacre of 60 people by the F-FDTL at Taci Tolu on 28 or 29 April.

Approximately 150,000 people were displaced during the crisis, with around 73,000 in Internally Displaced Person (IDP) camps in Dili and around 78,000 in camps in the districts. The number of IDPs increased by 300 per cent in 24 hours following the armed confrontation between the F-FDTL and PNTL on 25 May. The majority of IDPs were estimated to be lorosa’e (Arnold 2009a, p. 432). The UN Inquiry report estimated that approximately 1650 houses were destroyed during the crisis (OHCHR 2006, p. 42). The World Food Programme (WFP) estimated that more than half of IDPs had lost their primary income or livelihood activity. Living conditions in the IDP camps were poor. Many children in the camps suffered from malnutrition. There were widespread food shortages. There was a perception among loromonu it was unsafe to receive medical treatment at Dili National Hospital.

The UN Inquiry report produced a narrative of the facts and circumstances of the events of the 2006 crisis, which was published in October 2006. The narrative is based on the UN Inquiry report’s collection of material relating to the crisis, which included more
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than 200 statements of witnesses interviewed by the commission and a further 2,000
other documents. Any conclusions about facts and circumstances were reached using
the reasonable suspicion standard, not a higher legal standard such as would be required
for any criminal prosecution. The purpose of this overview of the crisis is to
demonstrate that the violent conflict during the crisis, both within the security sector
and on the streets of Dili, was clearly of an east-west nature.

_ F-FDTL soldiers submit a written petition to Brigadier General Taur Matan Ruak and
  President Xanana Gusmão _

On 9 January 2006 159 officers and other ranks of the F-FDTL, led by Lieutenant
Gastão
Salsinha, submitted a petition which alleged discrimination and mismanagement within
the F-FDTL (OHCHR 2006, p. 21). These soldiers became known as the ‘Petitioners’.
Members of the Petitioners included soldiers from almost every unit in the F-FDTL.
The petition was addressed to then president Xanana Gusmão, and copied to the then
commander of the F-FDTL, Brigadier General Taur Matan Ruak, and then minister of
defence, Roque Rodriguez. Gusmão was reported to have received the petition on 11
January.

The Petitioners were driven by complex motivations which evolved during the 2006
crisis (Arnold 2009a, p. 135). Arnold (2009a, p. 435) describes the movement as
originating from “a fairly mundane “labor dispute”” between junior loromonu F-FDTL
soldiers and lorosa’e F-FDTL “management” (Arnold 2009a, p. 435). But the labour
dispute festered for several months and eventually escalated into a national political and
security crisis. Following the outbreak of armed confrontation between the F-FDTL and PNTL, the Petitioners and their supporters then represented a “justice movement” to rectify discrimination against loromonu relating to ongoing divisive national discourse about roles of lorosa’e and loromonu during the resistance movement. Arnold (2009a, p. 436) reported that:

many Timor-Leste observers feel that the petitioners themselves were largely a transient movement, subject to political manipulation, and hence their significance primarily came from the national tensions they manifested and the political conflict that was ultimately provoked.

The petitioners abandon their barracks

The Petitioners had not received a response from the Timorese Government as at 1 February and on 3 February they abandoned their barracks and gathered in Dili (OHCHR 2006, p. 21). They did not take their weapons with them. On 7 February the Petitioners requested a meeting with president Gusmão.

418 members of the Petitioners held a protest march at the Palácio das Cinzas, Presidential Palace, on 8 February. The protest was attended by the then F-FDTL chief of staff, Colonel Lere Annan Timor. Brigadier General Taur Matan Ruak had sent him in his place, refusing the request of president Gusmão to attend. Minister Rodriguez also attended the protest at the request of Gusmão. Following the protest march, president Gusmão ordered the Petitioners to return to the F-FDTL training centre in
Metinaro. Gusmão also ordered them to participate in an investigation into the allegations of discrimination and mismanagement in the petition.

A commission to investigate the Petitioners’ allegations was established on 10 February. Members of the commission included F-FDTL officers and two members of parliament. The commission undertook its investigation from 12 to 17 February. The commission was not able to resolve the conflict between F-FDTL command and the Petitioners and on 17 February the Petitioners again abandoned their barracks. They had been granted leave, but decided not to return.

The dismissal of 591 petitioners is announced

The F-FDTL dismissed 594 soldiers, of a total of 1,400 soldiers, on 16 March, retroactively effective as at 1 March. Brigadier General Taur Matan Ruak announced the decision (OHCHR 2006, p. 21). The UN Inquiry report concluded that there was no evidence that the dismissal was officially executed by the F-FDTL. The UN Inquiry report found that approximately 200 of the soldiers dismissed were not members of the Petitioners. They were officers and other ranks who had been frequently absent without leave prior to March 2006. Then prime minister Mari Alkatiri expressed his support for the dismissal on 21 March. However, the Petitioners announced their intention to appeal the dismissal to president Gusmão.

President Gusmão’s public response to the emerging crisis appears to have stoked regional tensions. During a nationally televised speech on 23 March Gusmão accused the Fretilin-led government of favouring lorosa’e. He stated that many lorosa’e
veterans, who now held positions in the F-FDTL, perceived Timorese from “from Manatuto to Oecusse”, that is lorumonu, as “militias’ children” (OHCHR 2006, p. 21). Gusmão noted that the F-FDTL had the competency to dismiss the soldiers, but also described the decision as unjust. The UN Inquiry report found that “in quoting the words of the petition, the President gave credence to the petitioners’ claims that the problems within F-FDTL were due primarily to discrimination by easterners against westerners” (OHCHR 2006, p. 22). Gusmão’s speech has been depicted as the catalyst for the emergence of the east-west divide, sparking the violent conflict which followed.

Following president Gusmão’s speech, violent conflict broke out in Dili between 25 and 31 March (OHCHR 2006, p. 22). Youth and gangs from both eastern and western regions of Timor-Leste became embroiled in the issue. The UN Inquiry report found that the violent conflict on the streets of Dili had “...assumed an east versus west dynamic” (OHCHR 2006, p. 22).

*The petitioners’ demonstration begins in front of the Government Palace*

On the morning of 24 April, the Petitioners and their supporters marched from Carantina in Taci Tolu to the Government Palace under police escort (OHCHR 2006, p. 23). The majority of the Petitioners wore their F-FDTL uniforms during the protest, but the UN Inquiry report reported that they were unarmed. The protesters remained at the Government Palace until 28 April. The UN Inquiry report concluded that “the ranks of the petitioners and their sympathizers were augmented noticeably, from the second day
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of the protest onwards, by the arrival of third parties, particularly members of the group
known as Colimau 2000” (OHCHR 2006, p. 23)³.

The UN Inquiry report reported that, during the protest, incidents of violence occurred
in Dili (OHCHR 2006, p. 23). The UN Inquiry report described this violence as
“isolated”, but occurring with “increasing frequency” (OHCHR 2006, p. 23), indicating
that tension was brewing. On 25 April several instances of violence occurred, including
the destruction of a kiosk in the Lecidere beach area, the assault of two youths and the
arson of market stalls in the Taibessi area which were reported to belong to lorosa’e. In
response to the attacks against the market stalls, Ozório Leki, the spokesman for
Colimau 2000, delivered a fiery speech at the protest threatening to “unleash the crowd”
should the PNTL fail to prevent further violence against the market stallholders
(OHCHR 2006, p. 23). He also threatened to overthrow the government.

The following day, on 26 April, further instances of violence occurred. More market
stalls in Taibessi were burned and an off-duty PNTL officer was assaulted. Leki
delivered another speech at the protest, during which he made inflammatory remarks
about lorosa’e. Prime minister Alkatiri was reportedly informed about Leki’s
participation in the protest and his anti-government rhetoric.

The UN Inquiry report reported that Petitioners had expected a government
representative would attend the protest to speak with them (OHCHR 2006, p. 24). The
government held discussions with the Petitioners on 27 April (OHCHR 2006, p. 27).
During these discussions, prime minister Alkatiri proposed the establishment of a

³ Colimau 2000 is a ritual arts group (RAG) which contests the legitimacy of the state in the post-
independence period in Timor-Leste.
commission to investigate the allegations of discrimination and mismanagement within three months (OHCHR 2006, p. 24). In addition, he proposed the Petitioners would receive a subsidy to support their return and reintegration into the districts. Alkatiri did not agree to speak to the Petitioners at the protest about these proposals. But then minister for foreign affairs, José Ramos-Horta, agreed to speak to the protestors on 28 April.

The protest was scheduled to conclude at 1pm on 28 April. The UN Inquiry report noted that “...a tangible change in the atmosphere of the crowd gathered in front of the Government Palace was evident by early morning” (OHCHR 2006, p. 24). The change in atmosphere was attributed to growing frustration among protestors who were expecting minister Ramos Horta to speak to them. The protestors reportedly expected Ramos Horta to arrive at 9am whereas he believed he was expected to arrive at 3pm. The UN Inquiry report reported that “slow-burning anger at his failure to appear reached boiling point at about midday” (OHCHR 2006, p. 24). Several instances of violence occurred in the morning. The number of third parties arriving at the protest site steeply increased. Lieutenant Salsinha was not able to maintain control over youths who had joined the protest. The UN Inquiry report concluded that “in this atmosphere the feeling that the petitioners were willing to die for their cause gained currency” (OHCHR 2006, p. 24).

The protestors entered the Government Palace around midday, breaking the two lines of PNTL officers stationed in front of the building. Many officers reportedly fled the protest site. The UN Inquiry report concluded that there was no evidence that only loromonu officers fled (OHCHR 2006, p. 25). Vehicles and offices were damaged and
officers were attacked with stones and a machete. Officers fired shots (OHCHR 2006, p. 26). General commander Martins authorised the use of tear gas against the protestors, but denies authorising the use of weapons. Only a small number of PNTL and UIR PNTL officers remained at the Government Palace by 1pm, with senior officers returning to the PNTL headquarters. By the time protestors had been dispersed by 1:30pm, two civilians had been killed and four civilians and two officers had suffered serious injuries, including firearm injuries.

The UN Inquiry report described minister Lobato as arriving at the headquarters “...wearing a flak jacket and in a highly agitated state, yelling “kill them all”” (OHCHR 2006, p. 26). He reportedly instructed the PNTL chief of operations, Alfonso de Jesus, to deploy the URP from Taibessi to the Government Palace. The UN Inquiry report found that PNTL records showed that one F2000 fully automatic machine gun and 2,000 rounds of ammunition had been signed over to Lobato.

The Petitioners returned to Taci Tolu after the protest under PNTL and United Nations Police (UNPOL) escort. Violence relating to the east-west divide broke out in Comoro en route to Taci Tolu as well as in Rai Kotu (OHCHR 2006, pp. 26-7). UIR officers were attacked by a crowd in Comoro (OHCHR 2006, p. 26). The Petitioners were fired upon by both UIR officers and the crowd near the Comoro market. One civilian was killed and ten civilians and two officers suffered serious injuries, including firearm injuries. Some Petitioners returned to their base at the Carantina in Taci Tolu, while others fled to the hills. The crowd moved through the area, burning more than 100 houses which the UN Inquiry report confirmed during a visit to the area in August 2006 were mainly owned by lorosa’e.
Protestors gathered at Rai Kotu around 5pm, armed with bows and arrows (OHCHR 2006, p. 27). The group attacked two F-FDTL vehicles carrying 14 soldiers returning from the F-FDTL headquarters in Taci Tolu. They had constructed a road block from burning tires and thrown grenades at the vehicles. The soldiers responded with gunfire and the protestors dispersed. One civilian was killed in the exchange.

In the early evening of 28 April, political leaders met to discuss the security situation. The meeting was attended by prime minister Alkatiri, minister Lobato, then minister of state administration, Ana Pessoa, minister Rodriques, Colonel Lere and general commander Martins. The UN Inquiry report received divergent accounts of this meeting, in particular relating to whether Alkatiri authorised the F-FDTL to use force against the Petitioners (OHCHR 2006, p. 27). But the UN Inquiry report concluded that:

while the nature and basis of the F-FDTL intervention may have changed following the decision of the persons assembled at the residence of the Prime Minister, the Commission is satisfied that F-FDTL was made ready to intervene and did intervene in the events of the day well before this decision was made (OHCHR 2006, p. 28).

The leaders decided to deploy the F-FDTL to restore order and contain and control the movement of the Petitioners (OHCHR 2006, p. 27). The PNTL and F-FDTL were given geographic areas of responsibility, with Taci Tolu, the epicentre of the conflict, given to the F-FDTL. The UN Inquiry report noted that while, in a report to the
president of the National Parliament dated 11 May 2006, Alkatiri described the decision to deploy the F-FDTL as being made by the ‘Crisis Cabinet’, pursuant to article 20 of Timor-Leste Decree-Law 7/2004 and section 115 (1) (c) of the Constitution of Timor-Leste, “no orders were given in writing. No formal declaration of the state of crisis was made” (OHCHR 2006, p. 27). Alkatiri informed president Gusmão of the decision the following day. Lere also informed minister Ramos-Horta the following day.

During the night of 28 April, both PNTL and F-FDTL patrolled Dili and its outskirts (OHCHR 2006, p. 28). They reported differing views on the purpose of these patrols to the UN Inquiry report:

The PNTL perspective articulated to the Commission was that petitioners were to be arrested and handed to PNTL only if they were moving about, and that no operations to capture petitioners were authorized. On the other hand, F-FDTL soldiers acted under orders that they were to search for petitioners and shoot them if they attempted to escape (OHCHR 2006, p. 28).

Several instances of gunfire were reported, particularly in the western region of Dili where the F-FDTL was stationed at Rai Kotu, Taci Tolu and Beduku. One civilian was killed and two suffered firearm injuries. The UN Inquiry report concluded that the rumour the F-FDTL had massacred 60 people was unfounded (OHCHR 2006, pp. 28-9).
On 29 April Brigadier General Taur Matan Ruak, returned to Timor-Leste from Indonesia, immediately after learning of the F-FDTL’s activities on the internet in the late afternoon of 28 April (OHCHR 2006, p. 29). On 29 April political leaders decided to withdraw the F-FDTL from Dili and its outskirts. The leaders decided to continue joint PNTL and Military Police patrols in the capital city. The withdrawal came into effect on 30 April, but was not achieved until 4 May. Joint patrols ceased when the commander of the Military Police, Major Reinado, decided to abandon his post on 3 May.

Major Alfredo Reinado abandons the F-FDTL Military Police

Major Reinado abandoned his post with both F-FDTL Military Police officers and UIR PNTL officers, taking their arms and ammunition. The group travelled to the district of Ermera and met with the Petitioners. The UN Inquiry report notes that “the two groups did not merge” (OHCHR 2006, p. 29). The so-called Alfredo’s group remained in the district of Ermera until 8 May and then relocated to the district of Aileu.

Major Reinado had joined the resistance movement in the late 1980s, after being forcibly displaced to Indonesia for five years (ICG 2006, p. 10). As a child he had been forced to work for the Indonesian military as a porter, during which he witnessed the brutality of the Indonesian occupation (ICG 2006, pp. 9-10). Reinado sought refuge in Australia in 1995, escaping by boat to Darwin, and returned to Timor-Leste in 1999.
Major Reinado claimed that he had abandoned his post and broken the chain of command because there was no written order which had authorised the activities of the F-FDTL on 28 April or in the days following (OHCHR 2006, pp. 29-30). Reinado claimed that he would protect the Petitioners, fellow loromonu, from violence by lorosa'e F-FDTL soldiers, becoming a hero to the Petitioners and their supporters (Arnold 2009a, p. 432). Reinado reportedly stated that he had abandoned his post “...because, on the day, on the 28th, it was easterners who shot westerners. I am witness to that. I do not want to be a part of the (army) that shot westerners” (Forbes 2006). The ICG (2006, p, 9) notes that Reinado did not witness the violent conflict on 28 May.

Major Reinado called for prime minister Alkatiri to resign and expressed his loyalty to president Gusmão as the Supreme Commander of the F-FDTL (OHCHR 2006, p. 29). However, following Alkatiri’s resignation, Reinado claimed that he and his group would remain armed first, to protect Timorese from further violence by their government and second, to protest the lack of justice for the events of April and May 2006 (Arnold 2009a, p. 438).

The key difference between the Petitioners and Alfredo’s group was that Alfredo’s group had abandoned their posts armed, participating in armed confrontation with the F-
FDTL in May 2006, a raid on the police post the February 2007, and attacks against the political leadership in February 2008 (Arnold 2009a, p. 438). An exception was Lieutenant Salsinha and several more militant members of the Petitioners who also participated in the February 2008 attacks. In the post-crisis period, the Petitioners continued to represent a political and social movement while Alfredo’s group represented a violent movement, intent on much more than merely correcting discrimination within the F-FDTL (Arnold 2009a, p. 439). The UN Inquiry report had recommended that Major Reinado and several members of his group be charged with crimes during the events of April and May 2006 (OHCHR 2006, p. 48).

Nonetheless, Major Reinado represented himself as a Petitioner, while remaining armed (Arnold 2009a, p. 439). He was widely respected by the Petitioners as a commissioned officer as well as a charismatic figure. They believed Reinado was a leader who could stand up to the government and defend their interests. In November 2007 Reinado reportedly stated to a parade of Petitioners that he would “lead my soldiers down to Dili” if they were not reinstated to the F-FDTL (Arnold 2009a, p. 439). He claimed that he was the commander of the Petitioners group (Arnold 2009a, p. 436).

Incident of violence in Gleno

Several hundred people gathered for a protest in Gleno on 8 May (OHCHR 2006, p. 30). They were protesting against the rumoured massacre by the F-FDTL of 60 people on 28 or 29 April. The UN Inquiry report found some evidence the protest was part of the ‘10 District Movement’ led by Major Augusto de Araujo, known as Tara, who had
abandoned his post at the F-FDTL on 4 May. The movement was established to boycott the Timorese Government in the ten western districts.

Government officials met with the protestors in Gleno, escorted by two teams of six armed UIR officers. The protestors, which included members of the Petitioners group, reportedly yelled at the lorosa’e UIR officers that they were the enemy and accused them of firing shots at the Petitioners at Comoro market on 28 April. The officers sheltered from the protestors in the District Administration building, which was then surrounded by protestors armed with knives, sticks, machetes and rocks who yelled death threats against the officers.

Minister Lobato, with the knowledge of general commander Martins, ordered PNTL deputy general commander (Operation), Ismael da Costa Babo, to attend the protest. Deputy general commander Babo was accompanied by a small number of PNTL officers. A negotiating committee, including ex-FALINTIL commander Ernesto Fernandes, known as Dudu, and Father Adriano Ola, was formed to resolve the standoff. Babo disarmed the UIR officers sheltering in the District Administration building, including by removing their flak jackets (OHCHR 2006, p. 30). These officers were escorted to two vehicles, but on departure two of the disarmed officers were stabbed when they either fell or were pulled from a vehicle. One officer was killed and the other was seriously injured. The protestors dispersed when the PNTL officers accompanying Babo fired shots into the air.

Large numbers of UIR officers and the UIR Commander gathered at Dili Hospital, where the body of the deceased had been taken. Lorosa’e officers reportedly threatened
to carry the body through the streets of Dili and to general commander Martins’ house (OHCHR 2006, pp. 30-1). In the evening a lorosa’e PNTL officer blamed Martins and deputy general commander Babo for the death of the officer in a radio announcement (OHCHR 2006, p. 31).

_F-FDTL and PNTL officers are ambushed by Major Reinado and his group_

Both the PNTL and F-FDTL reported intelligence that UNTL URP officers in the Fatu Ahi area were promoting violent conflict of an east-west nature (OHCHR 2006, p. 31). As a result, a joint PNTL and F-FDTL post was established in the area. On 23 May two vehicles carrying nine F-FDTL 1st Battalion soldiers under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Falur arrived in the Fatu Ahi area. The soldiers alighted from the vehicles near the summit of Fatu Ahi and saw men wearing police uniforms behind the school and trees. The men were members of Alfredo’s group and not the PNTL officers they had expected to rendezvous with. Major Reinado had arrived in the area with 11 of his men that morning, accompanied by civilians and 10 URP officers armed with automatic rifles. Based on video footage captured by two journalists doing an interview with Reinado, the armed confrontation between Alfredo’s group and the F-FDTL was initiated by Reinado, after he had warned the F-FDTL to leave and counted down from ten. Lieutenant Colonel Falur ordered the soldiers to return fire. The armed confrontation continued until nightfall.

Lieutenant Colonel Falur called for reinforcements after Alfredo’s group surrounded the F-FDTL, some of whom were unarmed. The first F-FDTL reinforcements arrived
around midday. Five people were killed and ten were seriously injured in the armed confrontation.

*Attack on F-FDTL soldiers in Taci Tolu/Tibar by the Rai Los group, petitioners, and PNLT*

Eight F-FDTL soldiers conducting a patrol in the hills of Taci Tolu and Tibar on the morning of 24 May were attacked from a higher position by a group comprised of PNLT officers from district of Liquiça, members of the Petitioners group and armed civilians of the Rai Los group (OHCHR 2006, p. 32). F-FDTL soldiers sent from the nearby F-FDTL headquarters were also attacked and contained by the group. The armed confrontation continued until late afternoon. The rebel group was forced to retreat under fire from a navy vessel in the nearby Tibar Bay.

Further armed confrontation took place the following day in the morning of 25 May. The rebel group had returned to the hills of Taci Tolu, where they fired upon two F-FDTL squads patrolling the area. Two additional F-FDTL squads were deployed as reinforcements. The confrontation continued until the afternoon. The UN Inquiry report estimates that as many as nine people were killed and three suffered firearm injuries (OHCHR 2006, p. 32).

*Attack on the house of Brigadier General Taur Matan Ruak*

In the morning of 24 May, around ten PNLT officers, including deputy commander Abilio Mesquita, were observed near the house of Brigadier General Taur Matan Ruak,
by an F-FDTL protection unit. The PNTL officers were armed with Steyr weapons and
deputy commander Mesquita carried a F2000 fully automatic machine gun. The group
fired on the house and armed confrontation with the protection unit and reinforcements
from F-FDTL continued until the late in the afternoon. One PNTL officer was killed in
the confrontation. Taur Matan Ruak successfully negotiated a ceasefire to allow the
safe evacuation of his children from the house in a telephone call with Mesquita
(OHCHR 2006, pp. 32-3). The confrontation between the group and the F-FDTL
recommenced the following morning on 25 May and continued until the late afternoon
(OHCHR 2006, p. 32).

Request for international assistance

On 24 May the Timorese Government requested international military assistance. The
following day on 25 May, Australian Defence Force soldiers arrived in Dili. Australia
established the International Stabilisation Force (ISF) in Timor-Leste, which also
included New Zealand Defence Force soldiers and continued until the end of 2012.

The house of in-laws of Minister of the Interior Lobato is burnt

In the morning of 25 May a large group of young men gathered in the Bebonuk area of
Dili and damaged many houses owned by loromonu (OHCHR 2006, p. 37). The group
set alight the house of the da Silva family, relatives of minister Lobato, in the Fomento
1 area and surrounded the house. Six people, including four children, were killed in the
fire. The UN Inquiry report reported that threats had been made against “the family of
the Minister of Interior” for several days (OHCHR 2006, p. 37).
Armed confrontation between F-FDTL soldiers and PNTL officers

The UN Inquiry report described that the relationship between the F-FDTL and PNTL as “one of mutual suspicion” by the evening of 24 May (OHCHR 2006, p. 33). Rumours circulated about an attack by the F-FDTL against the PNTL headquarters, from intelligence gathered from several sources within both the F-FDTL and PNTL. This intelligence was reported to prime minister Alkatiri, minister Lobato, senior PNTL officers and UNPOL and on 25 May chief of operations de Jesus ordered all PNTL officers to return to the PNTL headquarters.

In response to a perceived threat posed by the PNTL to the F-FDTL, the F-FDTL armed more than 200 civilians and PNTL officers and stationed them at various posts throughout Dili in the night of 24 May. F-FDTL soldiers were stationed at the former United Nations Peacekeeping Force (PKF) building near the PNTL headquarters and, by 25 May, 84 soldiers were there.

In the morning of 25 May a convoy of PNTL vehicles at the Leader Store in Comoro were fired upon by two vehicles, one carrying three men wearing uniforms armed with M16 weapons, the other carrying between 15 and 20 men, some wearing uniforms and some wearing civilian clothes, who were armed (OHCHR 2006, p. 34). The men fired on the police vehicles, injuring one PNTL officer. The PNTL officers returned to the PNTL headquarters and where reports of the shooting caused panic. Around 11am a PNTL officer fired a single warning shot at a vehicle approaching the PNTL headquarters, suspecting an attack to be launched from the truck. In response, F-FDTL
soldiers stationed at the former PKF building fired two grenades and armed confrontation broke out (OHCHR 2006, pp. 34-5).

A ceasefire was eventually negotiated by the chief military training officer, Colonel Reis, who visited the site and Brigadier General Taur Matan Ruak, who was inside the former PKF building (OHCHR 2006, p. 35). Following the collection of weapons, the PNTL officers were assembled in lines escorted by UN vehicles (OHCHR 2006, p. 36). Shortly after the ceasefire had taken effect, a soldier was killed by gun fire from within the PNTL building.

After the PNTL officers were assembled, Colonel Reis, carrying the UN flag, led them on foot towards the Ministry of Justice intersection. After most officers had walked through the intersection, there was gun fire from three corners of the intersection. The UN Inquiry report concluded that at least six F-FDTL soldiers were involved in the shooting, which continued for around two or three minutes and used more than 100 rounds of ammunition (OHCHR 2006, pp. 36-7). As a result of the armed confrontation, eight officers were killed and 27 were seriously injured (OHCHR 2006, p. 37). Violent conflict on the streets of Dili broke out between youths. Groups of loromonu youth attacked lorosa’e (Arnold 2009a, p. 432). The UN Inquiry report concluded that there was no evidence PNTL officers were involved in the shooting, including those who had been armed and given uniforms by the F-FDTL (OHCHR 2006, p. 37).
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A shooting occurs at Mercado Lama

In the afternoon of 25 May the Military Police established a roadblock on Avendis Bispo de Menderis, which is around 50 metres south of the roundabout at Mercado Lama, to find and detain armed PNTL officers (OHCHR 2006, p. 38). Oan Kiak, a former FALINTIL soldier and his men, manned the roadblock. Kiak and his men fired on a vehicle which passed the roadblock at speed around 5pm, injuring the driver, and on another vehicle which passed shortly afterwards and accelerated in front of the roadblock, killing one person and injuring another.

The violent conflict between the F-FDTL and PNTL was paralleled in conflict between youth on the streets, which was also of an east-west nature. In the post-independence period, the growth in membership of youth groups was a result of a demographic boom, high youth unemployment, limited opportunities for education or employment and disfranchisement with the Fretilin government. In particular, membership of gangs offered a sense of identity and belonging in the post-independence period (Arnold 2009b, pp. 385-6). Arnold (2009b, p. 386) argues that “participation was a way of seeking personal security and identity in a fluid security and political situation”.

Arnold (2009b, pp. 381-2) argues that there were three phases of street violence between youth during the 2006 crisis: violence relating to the east-west divide; general mayhem which was motivated by retribution-seeking and personal animosities; and electoral-related violence during the 2007 elections. During the period between April and May 2006, loromonu youth were reported to have launched attacks predominantly
against lorosa’e, particularly in heterogeneous areas of Dili where both lorosa’e and loromonu communities resided (ICG 2008, p. 2 and Arnold 2009b, p. 381, pp. 385-6).

Trindade and Castro (2007, p. 11) reported that the streets “...were not safe for either Lorosa’e or Loromonu people”. Gangs set up illegal check points to locate lorosa’e or loromonu who were travelling or living in areas which were considered to be lorosa’e or loromonu only. Similar check points were set up in the districts. Trindade and Castro (2007, p. 11) reported that “Lorosa’e men who were married to Loromonu women left their wives and children in the western districts in search for secure places in Dili or went back to their own districts of origin”. Rumours began to circulate that both lorosa’e and loromonu were preparing for a greater war on national scale.

Political crisis

Tension between prime minister Alkatiri and president Gusmão boiled over. Alkatiri accused Gusmão’s supporters of manipulating the events of April and May and encouraging the Petitioners group to overthrow the Fretilin government. Gusmão sent a letter to Alkatiri on 19 June which requested he resign from office or otherwise be dismissed because of allegations of illegal weapons transfer. Gusmão gave a speech criticising Alkatiri and threatened to resign in protest.

In response to the pressure from president Gusmão, prime minister Alkatiri sacked both minister Rodrigues and minister Lobato. But he remained defiant about resigning. Sensational accusations that Lobato had armed civilian groups to kill the Petitioners, political opponents and senior members of the Catholic Church, and that Alkatiri was
aware of the plot were broadcast on the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) (Four Corners, 19 June 2006). The accusations were made by a commander of one of the civilian groups and general commander Martins. Lobato implicated Alkatiri in the plot and, under immense pressure, Alkatiri agreed to resign. On 26 June Alkatiri resigned and was replaced by minister Ramos-Horta.

Table 3.1: Chronology of significant events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9 January 2006</td>
<td>F-FDTL soldiers submit a written petition to Brigadier General Taur Matan Ruak and president Gusmão.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 February 2006</td>
<td>The petitioners abandon their barracks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 March 2006</td>
<td>The dismissal of 591 petitioners is announced. The effective date is 1 March 2006.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 March 2006</td>
<td>President Gusmão makes a speech criticizing the decision to dismiss and referring to the ‘east versus west’ issue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 April 2006</td>
<td>Violence erupts outside the Government Palace on the last morning of the demonstration. Two civilians are killed, four persons suffer firearm injuries, two persons suffer other serious injuries. More violence occurs at Comoro Market. One civilian is killed, eight persons suffer firearm injuries, four persons suffer other serious injuries. At Raikotu/Taci Tolu violence occurs within the F-FDTL operational area. Two civilians are killed, five civilians suffer firearm injuries. F-FDTL is deployed to assist PNTL to restore order and contain the petitioners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 April 2006</td>
<td>The decision is made to withdraw F-FDTL from responding to the crisis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 May 2006</td>
<td>Joint F-FDTL Military Police and PNTL operations commence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 May 2006</td>
<td>Major Alfredo Reinado abandons the F-FDTL Military Police taking with him other military police officers, PNTL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Chapter three: The 2006 crisis in Timor-Leste: a case study of identity-based conflict

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 May 2006</td>
<td>The withdrawal of F-FDTL from responding to the crisis is completed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 May 2006</td>
<td>Incident of violence in Gleno in which eastern PNTL officers are attacked. One officer is killed, another is seriously injured. Minister of the interior Lobato arms two groups of civilians with weapons and ammunition belonging to the Border Patrol Unit (UPF) of PNTL.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17-19 May 2006</td>
<td>Fretilin Party National Congress held in Dili.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 May 2006</td>
<td>Minister Lobato distributes additional UPF weapons to the Rai Los group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 May 2006</td>
<td>F-FDTL and PNTL officers are ambushed by Major Reinado and his group. Five persons are killed, 10 persons are seriously injured.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 May 2006</td>
<td>Attack on F-FDTL soldiers in Taci Tolu/Tibar by the Rai Los group, petitioners, and PNTL. Five persons are killed two persons are seriously injured. Attack on the house of Brigadier General Taur Matan Ruak. One person is killed, two persons are injured. F-FDTL arms civilians with the knowledge of minister of defence Rodrigues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 May 2006</td>
<td>The house of in-laws of minister Lobato is burnt. Six civilians trapped inside the house are killed. An armed confrontation between F-FDTL soldiers and PNTL officers centred on the PNTL headquarters is followed by the shooting of unarmed PNTL officers escorted under United Nations protection. Nine persons are killed, twenty-seven persons suffer serious gunshot injuries. A shooting occurs at Mercado Lama. One civilian is killed, two civilians are wounded.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 June 2006</td>
<td>Ministers Lobato and Rodrigues resign.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 June 2006</td>
<td>Prime minister Alkatiri resigns.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 July 2006</td>
<td>Ramos-Horta is sworn in as prime minister.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Role of the political leadership

The 2006 crisis reflected political divisions between Fretilin and non-Fretilin groups as well as historical grievances and personal disputes between political leaders. Non-Fretilin groups were frustrated with the authoritarian manner of the Fretilin government, led by prime minister Alkatiri (Simonsen 2006). Growing discontent and disenchantment with the government had been expressed in demonstrations in December 2002 and demonstrations led by the Catholic Church in 2005. The power struggle between Alkatiri and president Gusmão had been exacerbated by Fretilin’s drafting of a Constitution which created a weak presidency. Arnold (2009a, p. 442) describes the political situation of the Petitioners as “less about discrimination in the army and more about political control of the country”.

The UN Inquiry report found evidence that minister Lobato, with at least the knowledge of prime minister Alkatiri, armed two civilian groups (OHCHR 2006, pp. 38-40). Lobato armed a group of 31 civilians under the command of Vicente da Conceição, aka Rai Los, as well as a group of 15 civilians under the command of Antonio Lurdes known as Limalima, 55. He issued the groups with HK33 semi-automatic assault rifles and ammunition. The commander of the UPF, Antonio da Cruz, had ordered 15 lorosa’e UPF officers be disarmed to make these weapons available. Rai Los’ group received 31 URP PNTL uniforms (OHCHR 2006 p. 39). The group participated in the attack against the F-FDLT on 24 May, wearing these uniforms. In addition, the UN Inquiry report found evidence that general commander Martins had authorised the selective training and arming of loromonu PNTL officers during the crisis (OHCHR 2006, p. 41).
The UN Inquiry report also found evidence that, under the order of Brigadier General Taur Matan Ruak and with the knowledge of minister Rodrigues, the F-FDTL armed civilians (OHCHR 2006, p. 41). The report recommended that TMR be prosecuted for illegal weapons transfer (OHCHR 2006, p 52). The F-FDTL armed 206 people, including former FALINTIL soldiers and 64 PNTL officers (OHCHR 2006, p. 40). The former soldiers included Oan Kiak, who participated in a shooting near Mercado Lama on 25 May.

President Gusmão and his supporters were accused of manipulating the security crisis (ICG 2007). Gusmão’s political manoeuvring was evident in the speech he gave on 23 March criticising the Fretilin government’s management of the Petitioners issue and in his call for prime minister Alkatiri to resign. Alkatiri has accused the opposition of manipulating the crisis to overthrow his government (Arnold 2009a, p. 442). Arnold (2009a, p. 442) argues that “...even if Gusmão did not personally encourage armed revolt against the Alkatiri government in 2006, he did not do much to prevent the turbulent situation from overwhelming it politically”. The UN Inquiry report concluded that Gusmão had been in contact with Reinado following his decision to abandon his post (OHCHR 2006, p. 30). However, it also concluded that:

...this contact was no more than an attempt by the President to contain and control Major Reinado. There is no evidence that an armed group of men under the command of Major Reinado carried out criminal actions on the orders or with the authority of the President (OHCHR 2006, p. 30).
Senior officials of the National Congress for Timorese Reconstruction (CNRT), which was established in 2007, had participated in the protests by the Petitioners group in April 2006 (Arnold 2009a, p. 442).

Throughout the election campaigns for the 2007 elections, the security crisis remained unresolved. Several issues were prominent during the campaigns. Arnold (2009a, p. 443) described the issues as “provid[ing] fodder” to non-Fretilin groups in opposition, which criticised the Fretilin government’s management of the 2006 crisis. Arnold (2009a, p. 443) described then president Ramos-Horta’s decision to call off the search for Alfredo’s group as “…the most blatant manipulation of the situation”, because it was part of a deal with the Democratic Party (PD) for political support. PD had a strong political base in the western districts where Alfredo’s group were based. Alfredo’s group’s ongoing freedom was popular among voters in these districts. By leveraging the Petitioners issues, Arnold (2009a, p. 443) concludes that “…there was very little political will among Dili’s political elites to resolve the major problems of the mutineers and petitioners in 2006 and 2007”. Following the 2007 elections, Fretilin was in opposition and its leaders seemed to soften its stance against both the Petitioners and Alfredo’s group. The party was critical of the AMP coalition government’s management of these issues.

Some argue that the escalation of the 2006 crisis was partly a result of the linkages between the political leadership and gangs (Scambary et al 2006, p. 2 and Arnold 2009b, p. 387). Some MAGs had “infiltrated” the F-FDTL and PNTL (Scambary et al 2006, p. 2). For example, Abilio Massoko, a former resistance leader, was the leader of the MAG Sacred Brotherhood of the Lotus Heart (PSHT) and a police commander at
the time of the 2006 crisis, and has been suspected of distributing guns to PSHT members. It is common for gangs to be led by former resistance leaders. Scambary et al (2006, pp. 3-4) argue that, as a result, gang leaders are loyal to different factions within the F-FDTL and PNTL because of “loyalties and enmities dating back to resistance times”. The PNTL has been accused of taking sides in disputes between MAGs. Myrttinen (2008, p. 12) argues that:

A key problem with the PNTL seems to be that some of its members seem to be moonlighting for the gangs, for political parties, or for other groups which command a higher degree of loyalty than the institution of the national police force. Given that their salary tends to be a meagre 80-90 USD a month, this is not entirely surprising.

Scambary et al (2006, p. 5) argue that some gangs and youth groups are divided along regional lines. However, according to Scambary et al’s (2006, p. 26) research, no members of gangs or youth groups interviewed attributed the violent conflict to the east-west divide. Scambary et al (2006, p. 26) report that “it was almost unanimous however, that those responsible for generating and manipulating the violence were ‘higher up’, implying political elites”. Political manipulation also took the form of “tacit approval” by turning a blind eye to violent conflict (Myrttinen 2008, pp. 13-4).
More Timorese were killed during violent conflict between August 2006 and February 2007 than during the events of April and May 2006. Arnold (2009a, p. 433) argues that “an exceptionally large IDP population, chronic youth violence on the streets, and arson attacks centered on property disputes were all conducive to creating an extended, highly volatile environment in Dili”. Major Reinado and his group had refused to disarm or surrender and their ongoing freedom contributed to further volatility. Reinado and 14 members of his group were arrested by Portuguese paramilitary police on 26 July 2006. They were charged with being armed, with murder and with desertion. All escaped from prison on 30 August and went into hiding in the mountains. In February 2007 Reinado raided a border police post, stealing weapons and equipment. Australian ISF soldiers failed to capture Reinado. Following a raid by ISF soldiers of Reinado’s camp on 3 March, there was an outbreak of violent conflict in the streets of Dili in support of Reinado. In response, president Ramos-Horta called off the ISF and established dialogue between the government and Alfredo’s group.

2007 elections

President Ramos-Horta was re-elected in presidential elections held on 9 May 2007 and Prime Minister Gusmão was re-elected in parliamentary elections held on 30 June, with his party, CNRT, forming a coalition government with the Timorese Social Democratic Association (ASDT), PD and the Social Democratic Party (PSD), known as the Alliance of the Parliamentary Majority (AMP). Fretilin, which had ruled with a parliamentary majority since 2002, was ousted to opposition. The political division between Fretilin
and non-Fretilin groups was exacerbated when Fretilin contested the constitutionality of
the AMP coalition government, claiming that Fretilin had won the most seats in the
National Parliament and therefore, had also won the prime ministership. The election
results reflected political divisions along regional lines, with Fretilin having its support
base in eastern districts and the AMP coalition members having their support bases in
central and western districts. Chapter four examines the role played by regionalism in
the 2007 elections.

Successive governments’ efforts to resolve the Petitioners issue were fragmented
(Arnold 2009a, pp. 436-7). Following the 2007 elections, the AMP coalition
government placed the Petitioners issue on the national political agenda, which also
included the return and reintegration of IDPs, security sector reform and ongoing
insecurity relating to Alfredo’s group (Arnold 2009a, p. 436). President Ramos-Horta
established a peaceful dialogue with Major Reinado and his group, which was not
supported by Prime Minister Gusmão (Arnold 2009a, p. 433). Ramos-Horta held
periodic meetings with Reinado until 13 January 2008 (Arnold 2009a, p. 440). Gusmão
attempted to separate Alfredo’s group from the Petitioners and called for negotiations
with and the cantonment of the Petitioners (Arnold 2009a, pp. 436-7). The first call in
November 2007 failed as only 18 members of the Petitioners arrived to participate in
the negotiations. Instead, an estimated hundreds of Petitioners gathered at the camp site
of Alfredo’s group to participate in widely publicised parades. The second call, which
took place after the 11 February attacks, was successful with around 670 Petitioners
participating in the negotiations and cantonment. Arnold (2009a, p. 437) argues that
“those attacks [11 February attacks] seemed to have catalyzed the cantonment of
petitioners because of a fear that the FDTL might attack them if they resisted cantonment or that the Gusmão government would cancel all possibilities for dialogue”.

The government surveyed the Petitioners through questionnaires and developed two policies to offer the Petitioners: a cash payment; or reapplication to join the F-FDTL. An estimated 80 per cent of Petitioners had demanded to be reinstated to the F-FDTL en masse, but were unable to hold a group negotiation with the government and sensing opposition within the F-FDTL towards their return, they universally chose the cash payment (Arnold 2009a, pp. 437-8). The cantonment was concluded in August 2008 and the Petitioners returned to their communities (Arnold 2009a, p. 438).

2008 assassination attempts and the death of Major Alfredo Reinado

Following the 2007 elections, Major Reinado, now a vocal critic of the Timorese Government, became politically alienated (Arnold 2009a, p. 439). On 11 February 2008, Alfredo’s group attempted to assassinate both president Ramos-Horta at his home and Prime Minister Gusmão as he was travelling in a convoy. Ramos-Horta was shot three times but survived following his medical evacuation to Australia. Gusmão’s convoy was fired upon, but he was unharmed. During the attacks Reinado and one of the members of his group were killed.

The circumstances surrounding the attempted assassination remain disputed. Arnold (2009a, p. 434) notes that a wide-range of theories existed about the attack against president Ramos-Horta from an assassination attempt, a kidnapping attempt and a meeting which ended in violence, for unknown reasons. In an interview following the
February 2008 attacks, Ramos-Horta stated that Major Reinado believed he could assume political leadership by assassinating himself and Prime Minister Gusmão, stating that “[Reinado believed] killing me and Gusmão would give him power and make him the strongman of the country” (The Australian, 21 May 2008). The coroner’s report on Reinado’s death sparked controversy by suggesting that he might have been executed or ambushed.

In the aftermath of the attempted assassinations, the Timorese Government declared a state of siege, during which the F-FDTL led a joint command with the PNTL to maintain order and capture the remaining members of Alfredo’s group who had fled to the mountains. The remaining members of Alfredo’s group surrendered shortly after president Ramos-Horta returned to Dili on 17 April. The members were arrested and imprisoned as a criminal investigation took place. However, they received a pardon from Ramos-Horta at the end of 2008.

During my field research, the PNTL appeared to continue to be affected by underlying tension relating to the east-west divide. Several interviewees noted that a senior commander in the PNTL had expressed disgruntlement through a widely circulated pamphlet in 2008 calling for regional balance within the institution. The commander claimed that lorosa’e dominated the leadership of the PNTL, with more lorosa’e officers holding senior positions than loromonu. They characterised the PNTL as a western institution, calling for the position of PNTL commander to be filled by a loromonu to reinstate the group’s dominance within the institution. One peace-building officer said the pamphlet was based on personal grievances and did not reflect systemic regional imbalances within the institution (interviewee no 1, personal communication, 2
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December 2008). But the pamphlet was interpreted by others as a sign of regional
divisions within the PNTL and ongoing discontent among loromonu officers about
perceived discrimination.

The 2006 crisis as an identity-based conflict

The UN Inquiry report concludes that state fragility and weak rule of law were the most
significant causes of the crisis (OHCHR 2006, p. 16). However, the report also notes
that the roots of the crisis were buried underneath Timor-Leste’s historical experience
during periods of Portuguese colonialism and Indonesian occupation, which had both
“created and subsumed” social divisions, stating that:

...many Timorese view the events of April and May 2006 as a continuum starting
from the decolonization process in 1974/75 and encompassing the violence and
factionalism of the Indonesian occupation and the violence that accompanied the

Ongoing impunity for the crimes committed during these periods contributed to
persistence of these divisions. During the resistance movement, Timorese were united
against the common enemy of Indonesia, and nationalism emerged in Timor-Leste. But
in the post-independence period, the common enemy was removed and social divisions
re-emerged. Seixas (2009, p. 78) argues that:

...the problem was more cultural than political and after independence or
restoration of independence (May 20, 2002) the time that followed was one of the
‘returning of rituals’, meaning that, finally, the Timorese had to come to terms with themselves and with all their past identities and ‘otherings’. If not ‘Malae’, ‘Firaku’ or ‘Kaladi’, and also not ‘Portuguese’ (we may even add nor Indonesian)...and not even ‘Maubere’, what were they?

Seixas (2009, p. 78) notes that, in the post-independence period, the term Kafir, a combination of Kaladi and Firaku representing the centre, was introduced in 2003 and 2004 in an effort to reconcile lorosa’e and loromonu identities.

As a result, Timor-Leste was vulnerable to identity-based conflict in the post-independence period. In addition, Timor-Leste’s vulnerability to identity-based conflict was exacerbated by critical institutional weaknesses and rivalries, particularly within the security sector. The 2006 crisis elevated divisive national discourses about the competing roles of different groups during the resistance movement to the national political agenda and they became vulnerable to political manipulation (Arnold 2009a, pp. 444-5).

The emergence of the east-west divide during the 2006 crisis indicates that identity-building in the post-independence period is fragile or even failing. The UN Inquiry report concluded that “the poorly defined national identity, particularly in the absence of a common enemy post-1999, is critical to an understanding of how the east versus west distinction has arisen in recent years” (OHCHR 2006, pp. 20-1). Arnold (2009a, p. 441) describes the actions of the Petitioners and Alfredo’s group as having profound implications for nation-building, because “they catalysed a damaging lag between
nation building – consolidating a national identity – and state-building – solidifying the institutions of government”. Seixas (2009, p. 70) argues that:

...the 2006 Crisis was, a founding moment in which the identity issue was, indeed, at the center of the game. The main question was ‘what is it to be ‘Timorese’ without the Portuguese, the Indonesian or the UN ‘other’?’ Questioning ethnicities, questioning land property on the one hand; questioning sides taken in resistance to Portuguese and Indonesians, questioning languages on another or, finally, questioning the performance and balance of State institutions were no more than symptoms of the big problem of the Timorese identity and, as a consequence, the legitimacy of new ‘big men’, of new Liurai as Nation Translators.

The emergence of the divide during the crisis represents an identity-based conflict relating to ongoing divisive narratives about the role played by lorosa’e and loromonu during the resistance movement. One Fretilin party official argued that the legacy of the resistance movement presented an obstacle to the emergence of new narratives of nationalism which supported reconciliation between ‘east’ and ‘west’ and national unity (interview no 16, personal communication, 23 October 2009). Nation-building is shaped by both material and immaterial structures. Material structures of the state and its institutions can be readily built, often by demolishing old structures and replacing them with new ones. In contrast, immaterial structures cannot be readily built and old structures are layered upon new ones. Those involved in nation-building in Timor-Leste should recognise that, unless nation-building overcomes the legacy of the
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resistance, divisive narratives about the role played by lorosa’e and loromonu during
the resistance, will continue to shape Timor-Leste’s present and future.

Conclusion

The historical origin and nature of the east-west divide are heavily contested. Nonetheless a historical perspective broadens our understanding of the emergence of the divide during the 2006 crisis. Lorosa’e and loromonu identities appear to be latent identities of relatively obscure origin which became politicised during the resistance movement and, to a lesser extent, during periods of urban-rural migration from the 1940s and widespread displacement in Dili following the referendum for independence on 30 August 1999.

In the post-independence period, contemporary lorosa’e and loromonu identities emerged in a divisive national discourse about the competing roles played by both groups during the resistance movement, with loromonu characterised as putting up a weaker fight in the western region, participating in the militia groups and being pro-autonomy. These identities were used during the 2006 crisis to articulate demands for access to state power and resources. This discourse was a part of broader narratives circulating in this period about which groups or individuals were entitled to the benefits of independence.

During the 2006 crisis, the east-west divide was elevated to the national political agenda when the Petitioners protested against discrimination in the F-FDTL and widespread violent conflict relating to the divide broke out between the F-FDTL and PNTL.
symbolising lorosa’e and loronu, as well as between youth and gangs who were also perceived as either lorosa’e or loronu. Political leaders manipulated the divide as they jostled for power in the nation-state. The crisis represented a crisis of national identity as, in the post-independence period, Timorese, who had struggled for independence during the resistance movement, now struggled for national unity.

However, chapter three demonstrates that the nature and historical origins of the east-west divide are heavily contested. Interview research indicates that there is not a consensus about either the nature of the divide or the factors which contributed to its emergence during the 2006 crisis. If these factors are not well understood, it is challenging to develop and implement effective conflict resolution mechanisms to prevent further identity-based conflict. Chapter four examines whether the divide continues to be politically significant in the post-crisis period.
Chapter four: The politics of regionalism and social divisions in Timor-Leste

Introduction

Chapter three examined the emergence of the east-west divide during the 2006 crisis in Timor-Leste. The chapter argued that lorosa’e and loromonu identities appeared to be latent identities of relatively obscure origin which became politicised during the resistance movement. In the post-independence period, contemporary lorosa’e and loromonu identities emerged in a divisive national discourse about the competing roles played by both groups during the resistance movement. These identities were used to articulate demands for access to state power and resources. This narrative was a part of broader narratives circulating in this period about which groups or individuals were entitled to the benefits of independence.

During the 2006 crisis, cracks appeared in the foundation of the Timorese nation-state and it teetered on the brink of collapse. Only four years after Timor-Leste had achieved independence on 20 May 2002, peace and stability were threatened by internal forces and not external ones as had been the case during the periods of Portuguese colonialism and Indonesian occupation. The crisis revealed fundamental weaknesses in the Timorese state, including deep divisions among the political leadership and critical institutional weaknesses, and rivalries, between the FALINTIL Timor-Leste Defence Force (F-FDTL) and Timor-Leste National Police (PNTL). Social fault lines appeared to have been intrinsically woven into the fabric of state institutions. Widespread violent conflict led to a significant loss of life, injury and displacement, as well as the destruction of property and critical infrastructure.
Part two: Regionalism and the emergence of identity-based conflict in Timor-Leste

Chapter four: The politics of regionalism and social divisions in Timor-Leste

Chapter three concluded that the emergence of the east-west divide during the 2006 crisis could be characterised as identity-based conflict. In particular, it represented a crisis of national identity as the current construction of Timorese nationalism was grounded in the resistance movement and, as a result, fractured by social fault lines which emerged during the resistance, including the divide. A developing national political community did not yet exist to contain competing local identities. The divide appeared to become entrenched in the conceptualisation of the political landscape in Timor-Leste the aftermath of the crisis. Underlying insecurity relating to the divide continues to exist and it is significant that one of the aims of the research is to examine whether the divide could re-emerge and contribute to further identity-based conflict.

Some argue that the death of Major Alfredo Reinado, the symbolic rebel leader of the Petitioners group, on 11 February 2008 led to the decline of the east-west divide. In current literature and debate, there seems to be a conventional wisdom that the divide declined as quickly as it rose and is no longer significant (Arnold 2009 and Hicks 2009). Chapter four examines whether the divide continues to be politically significant in the post-2006 crisis period, following the settlement of the Petitioners issue. The first section of the chapter analyses whether the structural factors which contributed to the crisis remain a potential source of social and political conflict. The second section of the chapter examines the role played by regionalism in the 2007 elections and the views of political parties on the divide. The final section of the chapter explores other social fault lines in Timor-Leste which may contribute to identity-based conflict, assessing the relative significance of the divide in the post-crisis period. The chapter analyses interview research undertaken in Timor-Leste in 2008 and 2009 with Timorese and non-Timorese involved in nation-building in both the community and government sectors. It
also analyses political rhetoric relating to the divide through regular monitoring of
government communication, the National Parliament and local media. Part three of the
thesis examines the implications of the ongoing political significance of the divide for
nation-building in Timor-Leste.

The ongoing significance of the east-west divide

Following the death of Major Reinado in 2008, some assumed that the issues which
contributed to the emergence of the east-west divide during the 2006 crisis had been
resolved. Some believed Reinado, as the symbolic rebel leader of the Petitioners group,
was the primary agitator of the lorosa’e-loromonu dichotomy, representing the
grievances of loromonu within the PNTL and, as a fugitive, becoming the symbol of
their struggle for emancipation from perceived discrimination. Reinado’s death
rendered the Petitioners leaderless and the group appeared to disband (Arnold 2009 and
Wilson 2009). They were not able to restructure themselves and continue the struggle.
The Alliance for a Parliamentary Majority (AMP) coalition government, led by Prime
Minister Xanana Kay Rala Gusmão, took measures to address the grievances of the
Petitioners through a cash transfer scheme, which effectively demobilised the group
(Wallis 2013).

The death of Major Reinado and the appeasement of the Petitioners may have
contributed to the resolution of the security crisis facing Timor-Leste, but they did not
resolve the crisis in national identity. I would argue that the east-west divide resonated
more broadly in Timor-Leste, beyond the security sector, because of its correlation with
ongoing divisive national discourse about roles of lorosa’e and loromonu during the
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resistance movement. If the divide is viewed as a symptom of a divisively constructed nationalism, then while the death of Reinado and the disbandment of the Petitioners removed some the key actors in the 2006 crisis, the root cause of the identity-based conflict remains unresolved.

During the 2006 crisis, the violent consequences of the political manipulation of the east-west divide were keenly felt by Timorese. Yet in the aftermath of the crisis, the divide was rarely referred to in public debate or official communication. It disappeared, as if it declined as quickly as it rose. The divide became taboo. During interviews, it was discussed in whispers with nervous glances for fear of being overheard. But the absence of discussion belies a resolution of the divide. It may merely reflect the sensitivity of the issue and concerns about its potential to contribute to further identity-based conflict.

Around half of interviewees questioned in 2008 and 2009 argued that the east-west divide continued to be politically significant in the post-2006 crisis period. Of these interviewees, some argued the divide had been solidified in the post-crisis period. The other half argued that the divide was no longer significant. Some of these interviewees emphasised the artificial nature of lorosa’e and loromonu identities and the role played by political leaders in manipulating the conflict. They rejected the thesis that the divide represented a crisis of national identity. Others believed national unity had been restored.
Root causes of the emergence of the east-west divide

In the post-2006 crisis period, progress has been made towards addressing some of the residual issues of the security crisis. Timor-Leste had achieved relative peace and stability by the end of my field research in 2009. The security situation was generally calm and all of the camps for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) had been closed. But limited progress has been made to address the structural issues which contributed to the crisis, including grievances, disputes and rivalries among Timor-Leste’s small political elite, weak and politicised state institutions, a weak justice sector, poverty and widespread dissatisfaction with the new nation-state (Brady and Timberman 2006, p. 8 and Sahin 2010, p. 345).

Of these structural issues, interviewees highlighted three key issues which contributed to the ongoing significance of the east-west divide in the post-2006 crisis period. First, state institutions remained weak and politicised as maladministration and corruption continued to be endemic. Nepotism may perpetuate the perception that a political leader, who is providing their local community with preferential access to state power and resources, favours not only a district, but an entire region. One interviewee said that regionalism influenced policy making, citing examples of leaders who were perceived to distribute resources and funding to eastern or western regions only (interviewee no 24, personal communication, 23 October 2009). Whether these decisions were affected by regionalism or not, they were used as examples of members of government acting according to personal, family or regional interests and not national ones. Timorese peace-building officers involved in return and reintegration programs reported that the return package was perceived to benefit lorosa’e because the majority
of IDPs were from the eastern region (interviewee no 11, personal communication, 11 September 2009). The government was perceived to be favouring them by providing cash payments to IDPs.

Second, interviewees lamented that the justice sector remained weak and those who committed crimes during the 2006 crisis had not yet been brought to justice. They said impunity for these crimes contributed to the ongoing significance of the east-west divide because victims had not received justice and, from their perspective, lorosa’e and loromonu could not yet be reconciled. Some even argued that impunity had increased the significance of the divide in the post-crisis period as frustrations grew. As a result, some viewed tensions relating to the divide as remaining just underneath the surface. The relationship between impunity and the ongoing significance of the divide is a significant finding of the interview research. Chapter three demonstrated that successive Timorese governments have not taken a strong position against impunity. The United Nations Independent Special Commission of Inquiry into the crisis recommended that then commander of the F-FDTL and now President Taur Matan Ruak (TMR) also be prosecuted for illegal weapons transfer (OHCHR 2006, p 52). Instead the government has sought reconciliation for crimes committed during the crisis through pardons rather than justice. There have been no indications that this position will be revised. However if impunity contributes to the ongoing significance of the divide, how will lorosa’e and loromonu ever be reconciled?

Third, some interviewees argued that the east-west divide had emerged only in the context of widespread poverty and dissatisfaction with the new nation-state – the lorosa’e-loromonu dichotomy in itself could not cause widespread violent conflict. The
United States Agency for International Development (USAID) published a report on the causes of the 2006 crisis which argues that:

widespread poverty, unemployment and the perception of deteriorating living conditions have exacerbated the sense of social injustices and heightened frustrations over unmet – but often unrealistic – expectations of the “development dividend” that would follow the achievement of independence (Brady and Timberman 2006, p. 11).

In the post-2006 crisis period, Timor-Leste remains the poorest country in the Asia-Pacific region. Ongoing poor living conditions have sustained feelings of dissatisfaction towards the new nation-state. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) (2014) estimates that around half of Timorese live below the poverty line. The Timor-Leste Household Income and Expenditure Survey 2011 reported that the mean monthly household income was USD378 (USD634 in urban areas and USD292 in rural areas) (NSD 2011, p. 7). The median per capita monthly income was USD40 (USD64 in urban areas and USD32 in rural areas), meaning that half of Timorese live on USD40 or less per person per month, or USD1.33 per day (NSD 2011, pp. 7-8). The economic situation is exacerbated by Timor-Leste’s youth bulge. According to the 2010 census, 41 per cent of Timorese are aged under 14 (NSD et al 2010, p. xvi) and this percentage is expected to increase steadily with a birth rate of 5.7 births per woman, the highest in Asia (NSD et al 2010, p. 50).

The 2010 census demonstrated that living conditions had not improved for the majority of Timorese in the post-2006 crisis period. Wealth distribution in Timor-Leste is
uneven, in particular between rural and urban areas. The wealthiest proportion of Timorese are estimated to be almost 180 times wealthier than the poorest proportion (IRIN 2014, p. 3). 42 per cent of households in rural areas did not have access to safe drinking water, 35 per cent had no sanitation and only 18 per cent had electricity (NSD and UNFPA 2011, p. xx). While enrolment in pre-secondary and secondary education is high in Dili, it is only 60 per cent for pre-secondary and 35 per cent for secondary in rural areas (NSD and UNFPA 2011, p. xvi).

The cash payment scheme introduced by the AMP coalition government has exacerbated uneven wealth distribution in Timor-Leste. The coalition government used revenues from the petroleum fund to finance a wide-range of cash transfer schemes for veterans of the resistance movement, pensioners and vulnerable social groups and former members of the Petitioners. But buying off peace is not sustainable in the long-term. An estimated 100,000 Timorese are enrolled in the cash payment scheme (IRIN 2014, p. 2). There are large differences in payment amounts. Veterans receive between US$2,760 and US$9,000 per year, pensioners receive US$360 per year and conditional cash transfers are limited to US$240 per year. While payments to veterans accounted for half of the total state budget in 2011, only one per cent of Timorese received those payments (IRIN 2014, p. 3). The 2014 budget allocates US$335 million to cash payments, from a total budget of US$1.5 billion.

Poverty may be exacerbated by a sharp decline in natural resource revenues in the mid-term. Lao Hamutuk estimates that “Timor-Leste has about seven years before its remaining petroleum wealth - the only ship which can take the nation away from poverty - will have sailed” (IRIN 2014, p. 5). 90 per cent of the Timorese
Government’s state revenue is provided by oil and gas revenues. The Petroleum Fund is worth US$16 billion in 2014, but Lao Hamutuk estimates that oil and gas resources could be depleted by 2021 and the fund depleted by 2025.

Unemployment in Timor-Leste remains high. According to the Timor-Leste Demographic and Health Survey 2009-10, two-fifths of Timorese women were employed and 85 per cent of men (NSD et al 2010, pp. 38-40), the majority in the agricultural sector (NSD et al 2010, p. 41). However, of those employed in the agricultural sector, 96 per cent were not paid and, of those employed in the non-agricultural sector, 51 per cent were not paid, indicating that a majority of Timorese were engaged in subsistence activities (NSD et al 2010, p. 43). Of those employed, 43 per cent had seasonal employment and 13 per cent had only occasional employment (NSD et al 2010, p. 44).

Youth were most at risk of unemployment as the percentage of employment rose with age (NSD 2010, pp. 38-40). Eight out of ten youth aged between 15 and 24 in the labour force were engaged in subsistence activities in 2007 (World Bank 2007, p. 4). The economy does not generate enough new jobs for youth entering the labour market each year. Unemployment for youth in Dili aged between 15 and 19 is 62 per cent, which is three times higher than the national average. The World Bank argues that high youth unemployment obstructs nation-building, stating that “the result is disbelief in social institutions, little hope for the future and an expectation that everything will be solved by the State without the participation and responsibility of the people” (World Bank 2007, p. 4).
Widespread poverty and high unemployment may contribute to political instability in Timor-Leste. Chapter two argued that the incapacity of the state to provide for the welfare of its citizens has contributed to widespread discontent and disenchantment with the nation-state and is a potential source of social and political conflict (Richmond and Franks 2007, p. 18). Such dissatisfaction is vulnerable to manipulation by political actors jostling for power in the nation-state. Chapter six examines how these structural issues undermine nation-building. The following sections examine the ongoing political significance of the east-west divide and violent conflict relating to the divide in the post-2006 crisis, as well as the relative significance of other social divisions in Timor-Leste.

**Communal conflict relating to the east-west divide**

There was a broad consensus among Timorese peace-building officers that the east-west divide continued to be significant in the post-2006 crisis period. Anecdotal evidence of ongoing violent conflict relating to the divide at the community level was mixed. Those involved in peace-building programs in communities reported that some communities continued to be affected by such conflict. A roundtable discussion with Timorese peace-building officers involved in return and reintegration programs revealed that underlying tension relating to the divide remained just underneath the surface, but improved policing in communities prevented further violent conflict (interview no 11, personal communication, 11 September 2009). As a result, the tension was described as being controlled, rather than resolved.
In a survey of community perceptions of policing by the Asia Foundation in 2008, Chinn and Everett (2008, p. 20) report that a vast majority of Timorese believed the return and reintegration of IDPs in the aftermath of the 2006 crisis did not cause an increase in communal conflict. Only two per cent of the national public and three per cent of Dili residents cited problems between IDPs and communities relating to regional tensions as their most serious security concern (Chinn and Everett 2008, p. 17).

In comparison, martial arts groups (MAGs) and socio-economic and religious conflict were cited as more serious concerns (Chinn and Everett 2008, p. 17). Both MAGs and socio-economic conflict are affected by the east-west divide. Scambary et al (2006) reports that some MAGs have regional affiliations and some played a role as promoters of conflict during the 2006 crisis. Disputes between lorosa’e and loromonu sellers in the market places in Dili could also be characterised as socio-economic conflict. One interviewee accused lorosa’e of being responsible for disputes in the marketplaces in Dili, arguing that “they don’t belong because Dili is part of the west” (interviewee no 31, personal communication, 30 October 2009). Another interviewee provided anecdotal evidence of some lorosa’e market sellers living in Dili being afraid of travelling to western districts to purchase produce for their market stalls. This anecdotal evidence is significant because, not only acts of violence, but threats of violence, contribute to social or political conflict. The lingering fear of some lorosa’e market sellers about travelling to the western districts entrenches the lorosa’e-loromonu dichotomy as each group, or members within each group, define themselves in opposition to each other.
Chinn and Everett (2008, p. 17) argue that while Timorese continue to express strong concerns about their security, most did not identify specific security issues within their own community. In the Asia Foundation survey, 48 per cent of the national public, 69 per cent of Dili residents and 38 per cent of community leaders said there were ‘no serious problems’ facing their communities. In reviewing this survey, Chinn and Everett (2008, p. 17) conclude that:

...expressions of concern regarding safety demonstrate that even though the widespread violence associated with the 2006 crisis is no longer occurring, many citizens fear that unresolved, latent issues could lead to renewed violence.

The east-west divide was identified as one of these unresolved issues.

In a survey of tertiary students by Leach et al (2013, p. 469) in 2012, students reported that underlying tensions relating to the east-west divide were exacerbated by ongoing urban migration in Dili. Dili is dominated by the Mambai ethno-linguistic group from the western central highlands who consider the capital to be their community of origin. Migrants from the eastern districts, predominantly the Makassae ethno-linguistic group from Baucau were referred to as “outsiders” or “newcomers” (Leach et al 2013, p. 469). Leach et al (2013, p. 469) argue that this attitude was used as grounds for evicting thousands of lorosa’e from their land properties in Dili during the 2006 crisis. Leach et al (2013, p. 469) conclude that “these findings suggest ongoing perceptions among some Dili residents from western districts that the national capital is located in the ‘west’, giving easterners less legitimate claims to ownership of potentially contested urban areas”.

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Violent conflict relating to the east-west divide increased during the state of siege following the attempted assassinations of then president Ramos Horta and Prime Minister Gusmão on 11 February 2008. The joint military police command, which placed the PNTL under the command of the F-FDTL in the aftermath of the attempted assassinations, is widely considered to have been a success. But the operations led to an increase of allegations of human rights violations against security forces. One interviewee noted that some loromonu were distressed by their perceived mistreatment during the state of siege (interviewee no 3, personal communication, 8 December 2008). The F-FDTL was accused of taking revenge against loromonu in Ermera, a support base for Major Reinado, for the attacks.

During the field research in 2008 and 2009, it was evident that concerns about violent conflict relating to the divide remained just underneath the surface. Threats of violence and acts of violence, contributed to the ongoing significance of the divide. Most significantly, these threats entrenched the lorosa’e-loromonu dichotomy. Lingering fear discourages groups, or members of groups, to revise the content or boundary of identity groups which contributes to identity-based conflict. In fact lingering fear encourages groups to solidify the content or boundary of identity groups and, in doing so, contribute to the intractability of an identity-based conflict.

**Political divisions and the significance of the east-west divide**

In the post-independence period in Timor-Leste, a new political system emerged under the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET). Chapter two
argued that this system was based on liberal democratic principles rather than traditional social and political structures or customary governance. It introduced democratic elections and, as a result, formalised political party competition. In this political climate, old political parties and groups re-organised themselves, new ones emerged and political leaders returned from exile. Babo-Soares (2003, pp. 123-6) describes the political situation as “chaotic”, noting that during this period there was an increase in political conflict as well as politically motivated violence. Babo-Soares (2003, p. 145) explains that “with the formation of UNTAET, East Timorese politics experienced an unprecedented revival after being ‘outlawed’ during the 24 years of Indonesian occupation”. The political landscape was crowded with diverse parties and groups jostling for power. Babo-Soares (2003, pp. 145-6) classifies these into mainstream parties and other groups. Political differences were often expressed through violent conflict between supporters at the grass roots level (Babo-Soares 2003, pp. 146-7).

According to Babo-Soares (2003, pp. 145-6), the mainstream political parties included: those which advocated the dissolution of the National Council of Timorese Resistance (CNRT), the umbrella body for the resistance movement in preparations for independence, such as the Revolutionary Front for an Independent Timor-Leste (Fretilin) and Timorese Democratic Union (UDT); those who wished to remain in CNRT such as the Popular Democratic Association of Timor (APODETI Pro-Referendum), Association of Timorese Heroes (KOTA), Democratic Party (PD), Social Democrat Party (PSD), Socialist Party of Timor (PST), Timor Labor Party (Trabalhista) and Christian Democratic Union of Timor/Christian Democrat Party of Timor (UDC/PDC); those rejecting the CNRT and UNTAET political processes such as the Timorese Social Democratic Association (ASDT), Popular Council for the Defence of
the Democratic Republic of East Timor (CPD-RDTL), Timorese Nationalist Party (PNT) and People’s Party of Timor (PPT); and those who did not reject CNRT but acted politically independent such as Christian Democrat Party of Timor (PDC), Maubere Democratic Party (PDM), Timorese National Republic Party (Parentil) and Liberal Party (PL).

The political groups included young political activists, who were usually former university students in Indonesia during the period of Indonesian occupation (Babo-Soares 2003, p. 146). There was a significant generational divide between the older parties and the young activists which likely contributed to competing visions of the resistance movement – the past – and of the nation-building process – the future.

As these diverse political parties and groups reveal, while the referendum for independence on 30 August 1999 reflected a national desire for independence from Indonesia, it did not necessarily reflect a national political consensus or possibly even national unity. Social fault lines remained intact in the post-independence period. Some argue that the introduction of political party competition undermined nation-building by dampening the development of national unity. Babo-Soares (2003, p. 152) argues that this competition resulted in “…a swift change of atmosphere from independence euphoria to factionalism and division”. This competition translated historical disputes and grievances from the resistance movement from the past into the present (Babo-Soares 2003, p. 150). Babo-Soares (2003, p. 150) argues that it was the role played by parties and groups which originally emerged in the 1970s which intensified political conflict. Internal division threatened peace and stability - the enemy was now within. In December 1999, only a few months after the introduction of
party competition, UN Special Representative in Timor-Leste Sergio Vieira de Mello reportedly said “we need to persuade them to stay united to avoid premature political competition” (Matsuno 2008, p. 57).

Timorese quickly became disillusioned with party competition. Babo-Soares (2003, p. 149) captures this sentiment in the first few months of independence:

Such divisions at the top level and fighting among its supporters at the lower level of the society disillusioned the East Timorese at the time. People talked about the unsettled political division of the post-independence period and were dismayed by the fact that the sense of unity was disappearing. Interestingly, most people – particularly ordinary citizens – were not aware of the source that drove the post-independence conflict and divisions among the elite.

Timorese were not aware of these divisions because, as Babo-Soares (2003, p. 149) argues, the Timorese political landscape was not well understood during the resistance movement. In addition, most Timorese were not well informed about the political divisions within the resistance. This part of Timorese history appeared to have been swept under the carpet in the post-independence period.

Chapter two examined the shortcomings of UNTAET’s state-building efforts in Timor-Leste. In terms of state effectiveness, UNTAET is criticised for being exclusively central government oriented. As a result, a centralised top-down state structure was created which undermined effective monitoring and fostered authoritarianism (Chopra 2002, Gorjao 2002, Matsuno 2008, Philpott 2006 and Suhrke 2001). In terms of state

These shortcomings have significant implications for the development of party competition. In a political climate which undermined effective monitoring and fostered authoritarianism, genuine competition was displaced by less transparent means (Matsuno 2008, p. 53). During UNTAET, no genuine democratic forum existed for Timorese to debate internal issues, only consultative bodies for the UN. The Constitution gave neither the parliament nor the president effective powers to scrutinise the executive. As a result, opposition parties and civil society were excluded from political participation. In addition, the recruitment process in the public sector lacked transparency and was highly politicised. Matsuno (2008, p. 53) argues that these shortcomings “…began to plague the whole transitional process” because political divisions from the resistance movement re-emerged in new forms.

*Relationship between political affiliation and region*

A large majority of interviewees believed regional imbalances were embedded in the political party system. The dominance of local identities shaped national politics along regional lines. Regionalism informs an individual’s socialisation and acts as a lens through which the nation-state is viewed and developments within the nation are interpreted. The emergence of the east-west divide during the 2006 crisis had entrenched a negative form of political competition in the post-crisis period.
Babo-Soares (2003, p. 147) argues that the political divisions in Dili were replicated in the districts, creating underlying political tension at the grass roots level. Based on his field research in the districts between 2000 and 2001, Babo-Soares (2003, p. 147) concluded that Timorese associated regional identities with political support, describing them as connecting “who belongs to what” with “who supports whom”. Specific *suko*, districts, and *aldeia*, hamlets, “belonged” to specific political parties (Babo-Soares 2003, p. 147).

Several Timorese and international peace-building officers argued that the political party system had strong regional associations. Some argued that the regional distribution of political support was evidence of the ongoing significance of the east-west divide. One interviewee said “it [the divide] influences the way Timorese conceptualise party politics” (interviewee no 2, personal communication, 6 December 2008 and 19 August 2009). Place and local kinship networks are fundamental elements of Timorese identity and, as a result, had influenced the development of the party system. These interviewees also argued that party competition during election campaigns was influenced by the divide. Political rhetoric about the divide was used in the campaign as a tool to mobilise political support along regional lines. A Timorese peace-building officer argued that the divide affected the party system more than the state and its institutions (interviewee no 2, personal communication, 6 December 2008 and 19 August 2009).

Therefore, it could be argued that elections not only reflect the relationship between political affiliation and region in Timor-Leste, but also the political landscape more generally. If this landscape is fragmented by political divisions along regional lines,
then this should be evident in the analysis of elections, both election campaigns and results. Chapters four and five analyse the role played by regionalism in the 2007 and 2012 elections in Timor-Leste and the potential trajectory of regional polarisation in the post-2006 crisis period.

Political rhetoric regarding the east-west divide did not appear to inflame regional tensions during the campaign for presidential and parliamentary elections held in Timor-Leste in 2007. Prueller (2008, p. 59) notes that “…none of the politicians dared or desired to make an explicit public statement that could be taken as clear Firaku or Kaladi stance any more”. Political leaders called for reconciliation and national unity instead. Presidential candidate Lucia Lobato campaigned with the slogan ‘women are the mother of east and west’. Presidential candidate Fernando de Araujo, known as Lasama, claimed that, if he was elected, he would introduce legislation to regulate the use of the terms lorosa’e and loromonu (Prueller 2008, p. 60). Citing these examples, Prueller (2008, p. 60) concludes that:

…nobody seemed to play the ‘ethnic card’ for seeking supporters and politicians were highly careful to choose the politically-correct words; either because their truest intention was not to trigger any further violence, or because they had changed their strategy and were playing the game much more subtly.

However, political rhetoric about reconciliation between ‘east’ and ‘west’ and national unity neither contributed to a peaceful election – the 2007 elections were marred by violent conflict relating to the divide – nor did it overcome regionalism in political representation.
Table 4.1: Analysis of 2007 parliamentary election results by district

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Districts</th>
<th>Description of political support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aileu</td>
<td>Main parties:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- ASDT/PSD (47.30%); and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- CNRT (20.46%).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ainaro</td>
<td>Main parties:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- ASDT/PSD (29.13%); and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- KOTA (18.69%).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PD, CNRT and Fretilin won around 10% each.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baucau</td>
<td>Main parties:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Fretilin (62.44%).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CNRT won around 13%.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bobonaro</td>
<td>Main parties:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- CNRT (20.56%);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- PD (19.31%);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- ASDT/PSD (16.84%); and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Fretilin (16.09%).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PUN won around 10%.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cova-Lima</td>
<td>Main parties:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Fretilin (28.58%);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- PD (20.70%);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- ASDT/PSD (17.75%); and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- CNRT (15.43%).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dili</td>
<td>Main parties:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- CNRT (45.23%);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Fretilin (22.38%); and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- ASDT/PSD (14.80%).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ermera</td>
<td>Main parties:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- PD (21.97%); and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- PUN (19.67%).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fretilin, CNRT and ASDT won around 13% each.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lautém</td>
<td>Main parties:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Fretilin (45.53%).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CNRT, PD and ASDT/PSD won more than 12% each.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liquiçá</td>
<td>Main parties:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- CNRT (38.96%); and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- ASDT/PSD (19.82%).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PD and Fretilin won around 12% each.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manatuto</td>
<td>Main parties:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Part two: Regionalism and the emergence of identity-based conflict in Timor-Leste
Chapter four: The politics of regionalism and social divisions in Timor-Leste

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Main Parties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Manufahi** | - CNRT (33.18%);  
- Fretilin (17.57%); and  
- ASDT/PSD (17.18%).  
PD won around 12%. |
| **Oecusse** | - CNRT (34.68%); and  
- Fretilin (27.53%).  
PD and ASDT/PSD won around 11% each. |
| **Viqueque** | - Fretilin (59.84%).  
CNRT won around 12%. |
### Table 4.2: Regional analysis of political parties’ support and leadership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political parties</th>
<th>Description of regional support and political representation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ASDT</td>
<td>Aileu is a stronghold for ASDT/PSD. It performed strongly in Ainaro and Manufahi and moderately in Bobonaro, Cova-Lima, Liquiçá and Manatuto. It performed very poorly in Baucau or Viqueque but won modest support in Lautém. Political leadership is concentrated in Aileu, Ainaro, Dili, Manatuto and Manufahi.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNRT</td>
<td>Dili, Manatuto, Liquiçá and Oecusse are strongholds for CNRT. It performed strongly in Aileu and Bobonaro. It only won modest support in the eastern districts of Baucau, Lautém and Viqueque as well as the central and western districts of Ainaro, Ermera and Manufahi. Political representation is diverse but concentrated in Baucau, Lautém, Manatuto and Manufahi.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fretilin</td>
<td>Baucau, Lautém and Viqueque are strongholds for Fretilin. It performed strongly in Cova-Lima, Dili, Manufahi and Oecusse. It performed modestly in Ermera and Liquiçá. It performed poorly in Ainaro and Aileu. Political leadership is concentrated in Viqueque, Baucau, Dili, Lautém, Bobonaro and Ermera.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KOTA</td>
<td>KOTA has its support base and political representation in Ainaro.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PD</td>
<td>PD performed strongly in Bobonaro, Cova-Lima and Ermera. It performed very poorly in the eastern districts of Baucau and Viqueque but won modest support in Lautém. It performed poorly in the western district of Aileu as well as Dili. Political leadership is concentrated in Ermera, Lautém and Viqueque.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDN</td>
<td>PDN has political representation in Bobonaro and Ermera.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSD</td>
<td>Aileu is a stronghold for ASDT/PSD. It performed strongly in Ainaro and Manufahi and moderately in Bobonaro, Cova-Lima, Liquiçá and Manatuto. It performed very poorly in Baucau and Viqueque but won modest support in Lautém. Political leadership is concentrated in Aileu and Ermera, but exists in Baucau and Manufahi.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PUN</td>
<td>PUN has a support base in Ermera. It won its second largest support in Bobonaro. Political leadership is concentrated in Bobonaro, Dili and Ermera.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Analysis of the 2007 parliamentary election results by district (in tables 4.1 and 4.2) does not support an unambiguous line of division between eastern and western districts. However, the relationship between political affiliation and region is strong. This relationship indicates that regionalism within the security sector and the emergence of the east-west divide in 2006 was also reflected in public sentiment (Cotton 2007, p. 465). Fretilin’s share of the vote in the eastern districts is disproportionately high, accounting for 52 per cent of its total vote. The National Congress for the Reconstruction of Timor’s (CNRT) share of the vote in the eastern districts is disproportionately low, accounting for only 15 per cent of its total vote.

Most non-Fretilin party officials perceived Fretilin as a so-called eastern party with its support base in eastern districts. However, no unambiguous line between east and west exists. Fretilin has its support base in eastern districts, but it also performed strongly in some of central and western districts, including Bobonaro, Cova-Lima and Manufahi. The districts in which Fretilin performed modestly include Ermera and Liquiçá and it performed poorly in Aileu and Ainaro.

While Fretilin won the lion share of support in Baucau and Viqueque, CNRT won around 13 and 12 per cent in these districts respectively. While Fretilin won almost half of support in Lautém, ASDT/PSD, CNRT and PD won more than 40 per cent combined.
Therefore, while Fretilin is the strongest party in the eastern region, the so-called western parties also have a modest political presence in the region.

ASDT/PSD, CNRT and PD have their support bases in central and western districts. Dili, Manatuto, Liquiçá and Oecusse are strongholds for CNRT. The party performed strongly in Aileu and Bobonaro. It won only modest support in the eastern districts of Baucau, Lautém and Viqueque as well as the central and western districts of Ainaro, Ermera and Manufahi. PD performed strongly in Bobonaro, Cova-Lima and Ermera. But the party performed poorly in the western district of Aileu as well as Dili. Aileu is a stronghold for ASDT/PSD. It performed strongly in Ainaro and Manufahi and moderately in Bobonaro, Cova-Lima, Liquiçá and Manatuto. Dili, often described as a site for regional competition, in particular in the market places, is a support base for the so-called western parties. Fretilin won 22 per cent, while CNRT 45 per cent and ASDT/PSD 15 per cent. Other minor political parties have a support base limited to one district. KOTA has its support base in Ainaro, the National Unity Party (PUN) in Ermera and the National Democratic Unity of Timorese Resistance (UNDERTIM) in Baucau.

Based on analysis of official biographies of parliamentarians provided by the National Parliament in 2009, only CNRT, Fretilin and PD could claim to have parliamentary representation which genuinely crisscrossed east and west. In the post-2006 crisis period, Fretilin had successfully adopted a strategy to ensure their members of parliament were nationally representative. For the minor parties, the origin of their leaders correlated with their political support, that is, their leaders often originated from their support bases, in particular for ASDT, KOTA, PUN and UNDERTIM. No party
other than Fretilin could claim to have a national structure. Minor parties did not have
the financial or administrative capacity to expand their structure. Legislation on
political parties does not place a heavy burden on parties to ensure that they are
nationally representative. In Chapter 1 Section 13 of Law No 3/2004 on Political
Parties, the registration of a political requires the support of at least 1,500 people
distributed proportionately throughout the country.

Several interviewees said the east-west divide was evident in the formation of the
National Parliament and Timorese Government. A senior PD party official believed
around 75 per cent of government ministers and secretaries of state were lorosa’e. It is
difficult to measure the accuracy of such perceptions. Analysis of official biographies
of parliamentarians provided by the National Parliament in 2009 did not support this
perception. It revealed that approximately 39 per cent of parliamentarians listed their
place of birth in the eastern districts (table 4.3). Dili and Ermera enjoyed high
representation in parliament. This statistic is indicative only because only 89 per cent of
the biographies provided information about place of birth.

Regardless of accuracy, interviewees believed perceived regional imbalances had
significant implications for coalition-building and the formation of government.
National politics was divided between the AMP coalition government, a coalition of so-
called western parties, and Fretilin in opposition. This division appeared to signal a
dividing line between east and west in the National Parliament. But a political observer
questioned whether the so-called western parties functioned as a regional bloc in the
parliament, saying that these parties functioned independently of one another
(interviewee no 12, personal communication, 16 September 2009).
Several interviewees said the perceived regional imbalance in political representation was at the heart of the east-west divide. It contributed to a sense of exclusion for loromonu and was a source of frustration with the new nation-state as well as political conflict. However, these interviewees said balanced political representation would not resolve the issue. It was only a symptom of a deeper problem relating to the construction of nationalism in the post-independence period.

Table 4.3: Regional analysis of parliamentary representation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Districts</th>
<th>Indicative percentage of parliamentarians originating from district</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aileu</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ainaro</td>
<td>6.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baucau</td>
<td>15.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bobonaro</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cova-Lima</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dili</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ermera</td>
<td>14.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lautém</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liquiçá</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manatuto</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufahi</td>
<td>6.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oecusse</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viqueque</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The 2006 crisis undermined Timorese’s trust and confidence in political leadership. During the crisis, some leaders demonstrated that they were serving personal or family and not national interests and attempted to draw political support from groups associated with eastern or western regions. Suspicions about leaders continue to linger in the post-crisis period. Some peace-building officers said some parties represented regional, not national interests, or depicted political leaders as being driven by clan-like affiliations. Fretelin and UNDERTIM were perceived to represent the interests of
eastern districts and the other parties to represent the interests of the central and western districts. Timorese academics said having a support base in only eastern or western districts would encourage parties to represent regional, not national, interests. As a result, leaders would continue to manipulate the east-west divide for political purposes. One political observer gave the example of Fernando ‘Lasama’ de Aráujo, a senior PD party official and then President of the National Parliament, giving a public apology for the human rights violations committed by the joint command in Ermera in 2008 (interviewee no 12, personal communication, 16 September 2009). The observer said Lasama had politicised the issue because he was concerned about losing political support in the district, his home town and a support base for PD.

Several interviewees questioned whether political leaders served regional issues. These interviewees said leaders were more likely to serve personal and family interests instead. In fact, more interviewees reported that leaders represented personal and family interests than those who reported that they represented regional interests. The geographical categories of east and west or lorosa’e and loromonu identities were too broad to encapsulate these narrow individual interests.

Several interviewees argued that political conflict relating to political competition in eastern districts had contributed to the emergence of the east-west divide during the 2006 crisis. A senior political adviser said the Fretilin government held the view that “if you are not Fretilin, you are nothing” (interviewee no 21, personal communication, 20 October 2009). The adviser described loromonu as “pushing back from the centre [Dili]” during the crisis. The divide was manipulated to gain more political territory.
While a few officials from non-Fretilin parties claimed that they had greater freedom to campaign in the eastern districts in the post-2006 crisis period, these officials reported that they continued to be reluctant to campaign in eastern regions because, first, they feared threats and retribution from Fretilin militia groups or, second, they believed efforts to expand their political support base in the traditional stronghold of Fretilin would be futile. A political observer noted that AMP coalition parties were concerned about obstacles to expanding their representation in eastern districts, including about their personal security (interviewee no 12, personal communication, 16 September 2009). These concerns could prevent these parties from expanding their regional representation and becoming nationally representative.

Expanding political support bases across regions could be a potential source of political conflict. However, it would be difficult to determine whether such conflict was primarily related to the east-west divide or Timor-Leste’s developing political culture. In post-conflict societies, where political culture is maturing and is shaped by traditional as well as modern values and practices, political competition may often be viewed through a lens of social divisions.

Political parties and the ongoing significance of the east-west divide

During my field research in 2008 and 2009, Timorese politics was divided between Fretilin and non-Fretilin groups, with the AMP coalition, led by Prime Minister Gusmão, in government and Fretilin in opposition. This division was loosely along regional lines, with the AMP coalition parties’ support base in the central western
districts and Fretilin’s support base in eastern districts – with several exceptions which blurred these lines.

There was a broad consensus among Fretilin and UNDERTIM party members that the significance of the east-west divide had declined in the post-2006 crisis period and was not an issue within these parties. A senior Fretilin party official said the divide was “not in the hearts of the Timorese” (interviewee no 26, personal communication, 23 October 2009). The party official argued that then president Gusmão’s public response to the emerging crisis had stoked regional tensions. During a nationally televised speech on 23 March 2006 Gusmão denounced the then Fretilin government as corrupt and dictatorial and accused it of favouring lorosâ’e. Gusmão’s speech was depicted as the catalyst for the emergence of the divide, sparking the violent conflict which followed. They said that following the death of Major Reinado in February 2008 and the perceived settlement of the Petitioners issue, there was no driving force behind the divide.

Yet other senior Fretilin party officials argued that the emergence of the east-west divide during the 2006 crisis was triggered by economic competition between lorosâ’e and loromonu in the market places in Dili. Such competition was ongoing and the divide continued to exist at the community level. However, these party officials claimed it had not been politicised. The characterisation of the divide as an economic conflict overlooks its deeper roots in national discourse about the resistance movement and the construction of nationalism. In addition, I would argue that the separation of community and political issues is not accurate, because community issues could play a role in national politics, particularly during an election campaign.
There were diverse and sometimes contradictory views among the so-called western political parties about the significance of the east-west divide in the post-2006 crisis period. These parties included: ASDT; CNRT; KOTA; PD; the then newly established National Development Party (PDN); PSD; and PUN\(^4\). PD and PSD were members of the AMP coalition government. A small majority of interviewees from these parties argued that the divide continued to be significant in the post-crisis period, even though as one PD party official stated, political leaders were “doing their best to hide it” (interviewee no 19, personal communication, 19 October 2009 and 28 October 2009).

The divide had become a hidden but entrenched paradigm in national politics. Leaders did not refer to it in official government communication or in public statements, yet the division had not been resolved. The PD party official accused some senior unnamed members of parliament of keeping the *lorosa’e-loromonu* dichotomy alive.

In contrast, a senior PSD party official said, under the new, more inclusive AMP coalition government, the east-west divide was no longer significant (interviewee no 38, personal communication, 6 November 2009). The official said the government, led by Prime Minister Gusmão, represented national, not regional or personal interests. They believed the government would be able to bridge any divide between east and west.

Some interviewees raised their concerns about regionalism within PDN. The political party was established by Fernando Gusmão, one of PSD’s founders, on 30 May 2009 (Shoesmith 2011, p. 43). PDN claims to have national representation. But its primary support base includes the western districts of Bobonaro, Ermera, Cova-Lima, Oecussi

\(^4\) ASDT, KOTA, PDN, PSD and PUN did not meet the three per cent electoral threshold to enter the National Parliament in the parliamentary elections held on 7 July 2012.
and Liquiçá (Shoesmith 2011, p. 44). It also has supporters in Ainaro, Dili and Baucau. PDN is a centrist party. It adopted similar policies to PSD and has no major policy differences with CNRT or Fretilin. PDN claims that it could govern in coalition with these parties.

However, these interviewees associated PDN with the western region and said it represented the interests of western districts. These interviewees accused its leaders of inflaming regional tensions. One party official described PDN as being “verbally abusive about east-west issues” (interviewee no 8, 7 February 2009 and 4 October 2009). Several party officials said there was a significant division between lorosa’e and loromonu within PDN. A political observer noted that at PDN’s National Congress in December 2008, party founder Fernando Gusmão’s rallying cry for support from Timorese from eastern districts caused tension within the party because other members considered PDN to be a so-called western party (interviewee no 12, personal communication, 16 September 2009). They warned that intra-party conflict could cause the party to internally combust.

In stark contrast, the three interviewees from PDN all said the east-west divide was no longer significant. These interviewees depicted the divide as an artificial social division which had been manipulated by political leaders during the 2006 crisis. They said leaders were no longer able to manipulate the divide to mobilise support. Furthermore, leaders were unlikely to attempt to manipulate the divide because they had “learnt their lesson” following the violent conflict during the crisis (interviewee no 2, personal communication, 6 December 2008 and 19 August 2009).
The interview research revealed a wide gap between how PDN was perceived by other parties and how it perceived itself. However, based on the interview research with other party officials, there appeared to be a broad consensus that PDN members privately acted to promote tensions relating to the east-west divide. Nonetheless, the party was unable to expand its political support and its significance declined – it did not overcome the three per cent hurdle to enter parliament in the parliamentary elections held in Timor-Leste in 2012. The decline of PDN reflects the consolidation support for non-FretILin groups into CNRT in the 2012 elections as several micro parties did not overcome the hurdle to enter parliament.

These diverse and contradictory opinions among party officials from so-called western parties may reflect the political sensitivity surrounding the east-west divide during the field research undertaken in 2008 and 2009. In the post-crisis period, the divide became taboo and some interviewees may have been reluctant to discuss the divide openly and freely. In addition, some party officials may have felt pressure to tow the party line and dismiss concerns about the ongoing political significance of the divide.

_The ongoing significance of the east-west divide as a political identity_

While around half of interviewees said the significance of the east-west divide had declined in the post-2006 crisis period, interview research revealed that it continued to shape social attitudes. Several peace-building officers said, regardless of their origins, _lorosa’e_ and _loromonu_ identities had become entrenched in Timorese society as an identity marker in the post-crisis period. Negative stereotypes about _lorosa’e_ and _loromonu_ seem to be prevalent and inform strongly held beliefs about the personal
characteristics of members of these groups. *Loromonu* interviewees raised common stereotypes about *lorosa’e*, describing them as talkative and lazy. Other stereotypes were also raised. Several interviewees depicted *lorosa’e* as resistant to change or external influences. One interviewee described *lorosa’e* as “disempowered” and “guests in their own home”, claiming that they were not engaged in the nation-building process (interviewee no 21, personal communication, 20 October 2009).

Chapter three argued that *lorosa’e* and *loromonu* identities did not correlate with the diverse ethno-linguistic identities in Timor-Leste. Instead they appeared to be latent identities of relatively obscure origin during the Portuguese colonial period which became politicised during the resistance movement (Babo-Soares 2003, Cotton 2007, McWilliam 2007, Scambary, da Gama and Barreto 2007 and Simonsen 2006) and, to a lesser extent, during periods of rural-urban migration from the 1940s and widespread displacement in Dili following the 1999 referendum (Cotton 2007 and Harrington 2007). The resistance movement was strongest in the eastern region of Timor-Leste because of its strategic location. These strategic advantages contributed to inaccurate perceptions that *loromonu* put up a weaker fight, participated more actively in the militias and were pro-autonomy. This divisive narrative of ‘heroes’ and ‘traitors’ has informed antagonism between *lorosa’e* and *loromonu* in the post-independence period. This narrative was one of many in this period about relative sacrifice and suffering during the resistance and, consequently, which groups were entitled to the benefits of independence (Kent, 2010, Sahin 2011 and Wallis, 2013).

Interview research indicated that divisive national discourse about the roles of *lorosa’e* and *loromonu* during the resistance movement had the potential to contribute to further
identity-based conflict. One Timorese peace-building officer emphasised that the roots of the east-west divide lay in the resistance movement and not the 2006 crisis and therefore, remained buried after the crisis (interviewee no 5, personal communication, 17 December 2008). There was a broad consensus that the 2006 crisis represented a crisis of national identity. While national identity was weak, it would not be able to contain strong local identities. The divide was the deep root cause of the crisis and this root had not yet been dug out. One officer said the death of Major Alfredo Reinado “had cut down the trunk of the tree, but had not dug out its roots” (interviewee no 5, personal communication, 17 December 2008). A Fretilin party official claimed that further identity-based conflict would deal a critical blow to nation-building (interviewee no 26, personal communication, 23 October 2009). The 2006 crisis represented a serious challenge to national unity, and a cohesive national political community did not exist to transcend social divisions, or at least contain them, should another crisis occur (interviewee no 26, personal communication, 23 October 2009).

Some interviewees subscribed to negative stereotypes about lorosa’e which related to their contribution to the resistance movement. These interviewees argued that lorosa’e falsely claimed to be the “heroes” of the resistance movement, describing them as cowardly instead. One interviewee said lorosa’e should “accept” the reality that during the resistance lorosa’e took refuge in the mountainous western region, they deserted the border region with West Timor to return to their communities and loromonu had to shoulder the burden of the resistance (interviewee no 31, personal communication, 30 October 2009). This interviewee stated “without the west, they would be finished”.

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A Timorese peace-building officer said the underlying cause of the crisis within the security sector had not yet been resolved: the continuing divisive national discourse about the competing roles of lorosa’e and loromonu during the resistance movement (interviewee no 5, personal communication, 17 December 2008). Some continue to depict the division as: “‘nationalism police’ in the east and ‘autonomy police’ in the west”. Until this discourse is replaced by one of equality and unity, the east-west divide could contribute to further violent conflict within the security sector.

Interviewees expressed concern that many Timorese were susceptible to further political manipulation. Several interviewees said the east-west divide remained significant in the post-2006 crisis period because education had not improved. Without education, Timorese would not think independently of their political leaders and the divide could be further manipulated by leaders. There was a broad consensus that the root causes of the divide were not well understood and had not yet been addressed. In contrast, one peace-building officer said the crisis could be characterised as a social experiment in manipulating the divide to generate identity-based conflict (interviewee no 2, personal communication, 6 December 2008 and 19 August 2009). It was a tried and tested political tactic, and the consequences were felt. Widespread violent conflict had led to a significant loss of life, injury and displacement, as well as the destruction of property and critical infrastructure. Timorese had “learnt their lesson” (interviewee no 2, personal communication, 6 December 2008 and 19 August 2009). The decline of PDN in the 2012 elections may support this view because the party, which promoted tensions relating to the divide, was unsuccessful in expanding its support.
While an overwhelming majority of Timorese voted for independence in the referendum held on 30 August, a national consensus to end the brutality of the Indonesian occupation does not necessarily reflect national unity. Recalling Fox’s (2003, p.1) comment that Timor-Leste is “not one place but many”, the country’s population is ethnically and linguistically diverse, and its history is layered with social divisions inherent in successive periods of resistance to Portuguese colonialism and Indonesian occupation. Existing research on nation-building in Timor-Leste often appears to neglect such diversity and divisions. Myrttinen (2008, p. 1) argues that:

Like the pieces in a kaleidoscope, the conflicts in Timor Leste come in a range of various shapes and sizes. Some are bright and visible, others remain hidden from view. They overlap, link and lock into each other, they are reflected in each other, and with every turn of events, the shape, form, size and colour of the overall pattern produced changes.

In order to assess the relative significance of the east-west divide in the post-2006 crisis period, interviews initially explored views on social divisions in Timor-Leste which had the potential to contribute to identity-based conflict. Interviewees were not asked direct questions about the divide. Instead they were asked to identify divisions which were potential sources of social and political conflict and rank these divisions according to their significance.
In his PhD dissertation, Babo-Soares (2003, pp. 213-4) distinguished between the following social divisions in the early post-independence period:

1. Political divisions
   - Political party competition; and
   - Divisions relating to different roles played by groups during the resistance movement.

2. Non-political horizontal conflict and divisions
   - Residential status: the division between Timorese who remained in Timor-Leste, ‘homestayers’, and the diaspora which fled Timor-Leste and sought refuge in other countries;
   - Racial categories: the division between Indigenous Timorese, *rai nain*, and Timorese of mixed descent, *mestiço*;
   - Language competence: the divisions between speakers of Tetun, Portuguese, English and Bahasa Indonesia;
   - Geographical categories: the division between *lorosa’e* and *loromonu*; and
   - Moturabus versus non-moturabus: the Makassae term *moturabus* means troublemakers and refers to individuals from the Makassae ethno-linguistic group who were involved in most of the violent conflict between gangs in Dili.

The following section examines the social divisions which interviewees identified as the most significant at a later stage of the post-independence period: divisions between pro-autonomy and pro-integration groups, *lorosa’e* and *loromonu*, diaspora and home-stayers and *mestiço* and *rai nain*. All of these divisions relate to constructions of nationalism which establish varying degrees of authenticity and, as a result, are exclusive.
The mestiço-rai nain dichotomy

Interviewees identified the dichotomy between mestiço, Timorese with mixed ancestry, and rai nain, ‘Indigenous Timorese’, as the most significant division within Timorese society which had the potential to contribute to identity-based conflict. These interviewees represented a broad cross-section of political parties. But none of the small number of international interviewees identified this division.

In summary, Timorese interviewees argued that the mestiço-rai nain dichotomy was politicised and had the potential to contribute to identity-based conflict. They described this division as more relevant politically than the lorosa’e-loromonu dichotomy. Like the east-west divide, this division partly stemmed from grievances about the perceived roles of different groups during the resistance movement. Babo-Soares (2003, p. 214) describes mestiço and rai nain identity markers as racial categories. I would argue that these markers are broader ethnic categories, which relate to cultural attributes such as religion, language, customs and shared historical myths.

Given that many mestiço have both Portuguese and Timorese ancestry, the mestiço-rai nain dichotomy is closely related to the linguistic division between Portuguese and non-Portuguese speakers. According to the 2010 census, 25 per cent of Timorese speak Portuguese (NSD and UNFPA 2011, p. xvii). In comparison, 56 per cent speak Tetun, 45 per cent Bahasa Indonesia and 15 per cent English. Many Austronesian and Papuan languages are also spoken. However, the percentage of Portuguese speakers could be over-stated. According to the previous census undertaken in 2004, only 13 per cent of Timorese spoke Portuguese (NSD 2006, p. 69). This significant variation could indicate
some inaccuracy in the census data because it is unlikely Portuguese fluency would increase at such a rapid rate.

The Timorese Government’s decision in 2002 to designate Portuguese as an official language has been met with widespread criticism, with Savage (2012, p. 1) describing it as a “return to its [Timor-Leste’s] colonial heritage”. The government’s decision was reportedly motivated by a strong desire to retain its cultural and political ties with Portugal and other Lusophone countries. Tetun was also designated as an official language and Bahasa Indonesia and English as working languages. The government’s language policy has exacerbated language divisions. As the language of the older generation of political elites, the preferencing of Portuguese contributes to a growing sense of exclusion among youth in the post-independence period. The vast majority of Timorese who do not speak Portuguese are unable to participate in fundamental processes of the nation-state, including the judicial system which operates in Portuguese. This exclusion further erodes the connection between citizens and the state.

_Historical meaning of mestiço_

Babo-Soares (2003) argues that Timorese nationalism is underpinned by perceptions of the colonial period, or, as he and other Timorese refer to it, the days of the ancestors \textit{(beiali sira nia tempo)} or the days of long ago \textit{(tempo uluk)}. Babo-Soares (2003, pp. 52-3) states that “it is in this context that nationalism is defined, and later conflict and division can be understood”. The historical origins of identity markers continue to underpin modern day identity-based conflict and, while these markers may be altered by
current economic, political or social developments, their present and future roots remain grounded in the past.

The Portuguese term *mestiço* was originally used in Brazil during the Portuguese colonial period to describe an individual with both European and Indigenous (from the Indigenous peoples of the Americas) ancestry. As the Portuguese colonial empire expanded to Africa and Asia, *mestiço* was used to describe any individual with mixed race. The term became an identity marker which, across the Portuguese empire, acquired diverse local meanings.

*Mestiço* translates literally to ‘half caste’. Many Timorese interviewees translated the term as “mixed blood”. While these archaic English terms are widely considered to be derogatory, being *mestiço* did not necessarily relegate an individual to the lowest rungs of a social ladder. In some contexts, *mestiço* enjoyed social and political power, were a part of the elites and led a privileged life in terms of their living standards, education and employment.

The term *mestiço* was also used in Timor-Leste during the Portuguese colonial period. The Portuguese arrived in Timor around 1514\(^5\) and almost 50 years later monopolised the sandalwood trade. Dominican missionaries arrived in Timor around this time. The Portuguese further entrenched their presence in the region by building a fort in Solor. Boxer (1947) wrote that, around 20 years after the erection of this fort, a local community of people with both Portuguese and Timorese ancestry and Christian beliefs was established. Many were involved in the sandalwood trade (Boxer 1947).

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\(^5\) ‘Timor’ first appears in Portuguese historical archives in a letter dated 6 January 1514 from Rui de Brito Patalim, who visited the Maluka islands, Timor and Solor, to King Manuel I in Portugal (Matos 1974 and Gunn 1999, pp. 54-55).
The community was referred to as the *topasse*, which is a term used seemingly interchangeably with *mestiço* in Timor-Leste (Babo-Soares 2003, p. 60). The *topasse* were referred to in Dutch historical archives as *Swarte Portugueezen*, literally black Portuguese, from Larantuka as well as *Gente de Chapeo*, literally people wearing hats, possibly because they wore European style clothing or were perceived to be gentile.

The Dutch East India Company also sought to monopolise the sandalwood trade in the region, triggering confrontation between the Portuguese and Dutch colonial powers. The Dutch East India Company took control of the Portuguese fort in Solor in 1613. Most people from the local community around the fort were transferred to Larantuka and again to Lifau on the north western coast of Timor which is now the enclave of Oecussi. The first Portuguese settlement and first capital on mainland Timor was established in Lifau.

The *topasse* played an important economic and political role in Timor between 1630 and 1769. The *topasse* from Larantuka monopolised the sandalwood trade and, as a result, were considered to pose a major threat to Portuguese and Dutch strategic interests in the region (Babo-Soares 2003, p. 60). Babo-Soares (2003, p. 62) described the *topasse* as “both intermediaries and power brokers between the indigenous people and the two European countries”. Gunn (1999, pp. 86-7) wrote that, depending on their interests, the *topasse* shifted alliances, at times joining forces with the Indigenous kingdoms against the Portuguese and, at other times, joining the Portuguese against the Indigenous kingdoms.
The *topasse* successfully deposed of the first Portuguese governor to arrive in Lifau, António de Mesquita, in 1697 (Gunn 1999, p. 79). The rebellion was led by *topasse* leader, Domingos da Costa, the son of Mateus da Costa, a Portuguese man who had married a Timorese princess and was considered to be one of the founders of the *topasse* community. Domingos da Costa also deposed of de Mesquita’s successor, André Coelho Vieira. The *topasse* dominated economic and political power in Lifau and formed strong alliances with several Indigenous kingdoms to bolster their position against the Portuguese and Dutch. They monopolised the sandalwood trade in central Timor (with the exception of the Dutch in the far west). Portugal eventually withdrew its representative from the region.

During the Portuguese colonial period, the *mestiço* (or *niestocos* as they were known during this period) become a part of the political elites. Anderson (1993, p. 4) argues that in Portuguese Timor “the Portuguese ruling stratum were, by rank, wealthy, apolitical Chinese, the then niestizos of mixed African, Arab, Portuguese and local ancestries, and a plethora of ‘native’ ethnolinguist communities”. With Portuguese ancestry, the *mestiço* were considered to be superior to other Timorese. They generally lived a privileged life with higher living standards, education and employment. The *mestiço* held senior positions within the government and were perceived to be complicit in Portuguese colonial rule. In the post-colonial period, the *mestiço* have remained a part of the political elites.

The establishment of the Timorese Democratic Union (UDT) in 1974 by former public servants in the Portuguese colonial government, Catholics and landholders highlighted ongoing strong cultural and political ties to Portugal (Ryan 2007, p. 43).
civil war between Fretilin and UDT in 1975, UDT called for Timor-Leste to become an independent federation of Portugal and the national use of the Portuguese language (Ryan 2007, pp. 43-4). The party described its policy as *mate bandera hum*, in the shadow of the Portuguese flag.

*Simmering tensions between mestiço and rai nain*

The term *mestiço* was frequently used during interviewees as an identity marker. *Mestiço* did not apply only to Timorese with both European and Timorese ancestry, but to any Timorese with mixed race or ethnicity. It did not apply only to the Portuguese colonial period, but to modern day Timor-Leste as well. Kammen (2003, pp. 9-10) argues that the term *malae-hitam* is also used to refer to the majority of Timorese who are *mestiço*. *Malae* is a Tetun term for foreigner, *malae boot* is a Tetun term for a Timorese in a position of power and *hitam* is a Tetun term for an Indigenous Timorese.

Neither the 2007 and 2010 census data nor the socio-demographic surveys conducted in 2003 and 2009-10 identified ethnic diversity, only linguistic diversity. This data sheds some light on diversity within Austronesian and Papuan ethno-linguistic groups but not on other non-Indigenous ethnic groups such as Portuguese or Chinese. As a result, it does not appear to be possible to provide accurate data on the number of *mestiço* in Timor-Leste. The Timorese Government states on its official website that the majority of the Timorese population is of Malay-Polynesian and Papuan ethnic groups but there are also small minorities of Chinese, Arab and European ethnic groups.
While mestiço generally enjoyed high social status in Timor-Leste, interviewees indicated that in the post-independence period, this status had been altered. Discussions about the mestiço-rai nain dichotomy indicated that, as in any society, degrees of ‘Timorese-ness’ existed. The mestiço identity does not conform to one of the dominant constructions of Timorese national identity - indigeneity.

Interviewees observed significant discrimination against mestiço. A senior ASDT party official noted that the mestiço were discriminated against in Timorese society by “backward” individuals (interviewee no 31, personal communication, 30 October 2009). They said if an individual was born in Timor-Leste and was a “good citizen”, they should not be considered mestiço. This line of thinking indicates that, for some Timorese, being a mestiço is a negative identity marker which denotes mestiço as somehow less authentically Timorese than an Indigenous Timorese.

Some interviewees argued that the mestiço-rai nain dichotomy was related to competing narratives about the role played by different social groups during the resistance movement and subsequently, their entitlement to status, power or resources in the post-independence period. A Fretilin member of parliament (MP) provided anecdotal evidence of some Timorese stereotyping mestiço as unpatriotic (interviewee no 26, personal communication, 23 October 2009). The ASDT party official was concerned that the “heroes” of the resistance movement, Timorese who fought with the Armed Forces for the National Liberation of East Timor (FALINTIL), were being marginalised or forgotten (interviewee no 31, personal communication, 30 October 2009). The ASDT party official lamented the fact that those who did not fight, including some mestiços living overseas during the resistance, were being given highly paid positions
within the government. They warned that if this situation continued, mestiços could become targets of violent conflict. The official constructed a dichotomy between “traitors” and “real heroes”. Within this dichotomy, mestiço appeared to be classified as the “traitors” and rai nain as the “heroes”. This dichotomy appeared to encompass a wide-range of identity markers, including lorosa’ e and loromonu. The narrative of “traitors” and “heroes” translates to a narrative of those who are more entitled to the benefits of independence than others.

Some interviewees said the mestiço-rai nain dichotomy was evident at the national level in competition for access to state power and resources. An ASDT party official depicted mestiço as continuing to “govern and colonise” Timor-Leste (interviewee no 31, personal communication, 30 October 2009). The official described the group as “opportunists”. They said Prime Minister Gusmão and then president Ramos Horta had appointed mestiço in government in an effort to promote reconciliation between the two groups. The official viewed this policy as preferential treatment which had only served to exacerbate the division and deepen political tension. A peace building officer said the mestiço-rai nain dichotomy was a potential source of political conflict and warned that political leaders and parties could mobilise militia groups using rhetoric relating to this dichotomy (interviewee no 2, personal communication, 6 December 2008 and 19 August 2009).
Divisions within the resistance movement

Pro-independence, pro-autonomy, pro-integration

Some interviewees identified other divisions within the resistance movement, in particular the divide between pro-autonomy and pro-integration groups, as having the potential to contribute to identity-based conflict. A Fretilin MP said “the roots of another crisis lie on the other side of the border in West Timor” (interviewee no 26, personal communication, 23 October 2009). The MP described pro-integration groups as actively promoting integration between Timor-Leste and Indonesia, particularly online. They believed pro-integration groups had viewed Timor-Leste as their “retirement package”, that is, a site to spoil and plunder after they had defeated the resistance movement.

Chapter two argued that nationalism in the post-independence period in Timor-Leste was grounded in the resistance movement. According to Wallis (2013, pp. 137-8), the current construction of nationalism depicts resistance fighters as “victors” in the post-independence period. A discourse of victory juxtaposes a victor with a villain and Wallis (2013, pp. 137-8) argues that the “logical implications” of the official narrative characterise pro-integrationists as these villains. This narrative has contributed to a deep sense of exclusion for pro-integrationists in the nation-state (Wallis 2013, p. 138). She describes the pro-independence-pro-integration dichotomy as the most significant social division within Timor-Leste and many interviewees shared this view.
The Commission for Truth, Reception and Reconciliation (CAVR) was established in 2001 to investigate human rights violations during the Indonesian occupation and promote reconciliation between victims and offenders. Efforts to reconcile pro-independence and pro-integration groups were concentrated on the CAVR process in the post-independence period. However, a large population of Timorese remain in West Timor, with estimates varying between 100,000 and 200,000 (ICG 2011, p. 3). Wallis (2013, p. 138) argues that most of these Timorese have not put down deep roots in West Timor. Most are not well integrated into local communities, are landless and unemployed. On these grounds, Wallis (2013, p. 138) argues that many may eventually return to Timor-Leste, seeking welfare and land and property rights. The ICG (2011, p. 8) noted the “unsustainability of the uneasy status quo” in West Timor. Any returns would highlight the infant state of reconciliation between pro-independence and pro-integration groups (Wallis 2013, p. 138).

Wallis (2013, p. 139) argues that a correlation exists between the divide between pro-independence-pro-integration groups and the east-west divide. Given that the resistance movement was strongest in the eastern region of Timor-Leste, lorosa’e are generally associated with pro-independence groups and loromonu with pro-autonomy groups. Wallis (2013, p. 139) argues that:

The official historical narrative based on the resistance to the Indonesian occupation contributed to the increased salience of the Lorosa’e–Loromonu division, as it recognized resistance fighters as the ‘heroes’ or ‘victors’ who represented and were ‘true custodians’ of independent Timor-Leste. As resistance fighters – particularly FRETILIN – are associated with eastern regions, they are
Part two: Regionalism and the emergence of identity-based conflict in Timor-Leste
Chapter four: The politics of regionalism and social divisions in Timor-Leste

often characterized as Lorosa’e. By contrast, integration supporters are often stereotyped as Loromonu, and are consequently marginalized as ‘villains’ who were Indonesia’s ‘accomplices’ in its occupation.

Kammen (2003) argues that the metaphor of master and slave has played an historical role in Timorese society and continues to have implications for identity politics in the post-independence period. Timor-Leste was not only a part of the slave trade during the Portuguese colonial period, but slavery was also practiced during the pre-colonial period (Kammen 2003, pp. 3-4). The master-slave metaphor is a key theme of nationalist discourse, with Kammen (2003, p. 3) arguing that “Portuguese “masters” colonised and exploited East Timorese “slaves”, and that these “slaves” responded by struggling for freedom with the objective of becoming “masters” of their own destiny”. In his autobiography, Prime Minister Gusmão evoked metaphors of master and slave, stating that, “the people of East Timor were oppressed by Portuguese colonialism for 450 years, a century longer than the Dutch colonization of Indonesia” (Niner 2000, p. 208) and that the Timorese were “…enslaved by Portugal and kept in complete underdevelopment for centuries” (Niner 2000, p. 103). But within this discourse, the history of slavery in indigenous social structures is unacknowledged, as the master-slave metaphor rejects Portuguese colonialism and the exploitation of the Timorese by the Portuguese rather than the “real history of slavery” in Timor-Leste and the exploitation of Timorese by Timorese (Kammen 2003, pp. 4-6).
Kammen (2003, p. 9) argues that the divide between pro-independence and pro-autonomy groups parallels the master-slave dichotomy. Kammen (2003, p. 9) states that:

Pro-autonomy does not simply connote a political preference, but also an inferior relationship to a foreign master. And the term is not restricted to high-level collaborators and militia members...Pro-independence, of course, means freedom from colonial “slavery” and becoming “masters” of one's own future.

In the post-independence period, Kammen (2003, p. 9) argues that the master-slave metaphor has evolved into a dichotomy between opportunists and the oppressed, referring to Timorese who have benefited from independence and those who have not. This dichotomy reflects the power imbalance of the master-slave metaphor.

Diaspora and ‘home stayers’

Some interviewees argued that there was significant division between the diaspora and non-diaspora or ‘home stayers’ (Babo-Soares 2003). At the heart of this division lies a divisive national discourse based on relative sacrifice and suffering made during the resistance movement and entitlements to the benefit of independence. Those who stayed and fought are privileged over those who fled and sought refuge in other countries or those who collaborated with the Indonesian occupation. This division was exacerbated by social jealousy as the diaspora generally enjoyed higher living standards, education and employment opportunities in other countries.
In the post-independence period the returning diaspora, who had greater education opportunities, were appointed to most official positions, exacerbating the division between the diaspora and home stayers. Former president Ramos-Horta described the underlying tension as:

The Timorese diaspora suddenly found itself holding the reins of power. We had been away from our country for 24 years and we were unfamiliar with the new reality on the ground, which was very different from the one we had known in 1974–1975. But in 1999–2000 we returned and, despite being a minority, it was us who gathered most of the power, thus creating from the outset a strong feeling of resentment, which was reinforced when the new political elite came to be perceived as arrogant and alienated from the new reality in Timor-Leste (cited in Gonzalez 2012, p. 107).

Ramos-Horta argued that the recruitment imbalance reflected a “political error” which marginalised some political groups and contributed to resentment (cited in Gonzalez 2012, p. 107).

The three divisions raised by interviewees between mestiço and rai nain, pro-autonomy and pro-integration groups and diaspora and home-stayers all relate to constructions of nationalism which establish varying degrees of authenticity and, as a result, are exclusive. These varying degrees of authenticity inform competing claims to access to state power and resources as well as social status. Those who are portrayed as truly Timorese are also portrayed as being most entitled to state power and resources. Those who are portrayed as having made the greatest sacrifice during the resistance movement...
are also portrayed as being most entitled to the benefits of independence. These two concepts are inter-related because those who are portrayed as ‘heroes’ are also portrayed as truly Timorese. While these divisive national discourses remain salient, Timor-Leste will remain vulnerable to identity-based conflict. The implications of these discourses for nation-building are examined in chapter six.

_Ema Dili and ema foho_

Some argue that the growing rural-urban divide between _ema Dili_, Dili residents, and _ema foho_, Timorese living in the districts, literally mountain people, is one of the most significance social divisions in Timor-Leste (Hicks 2009). According to the 2010 census, 70 per cent of Timorese live in rural areas (NSD and UNFPA 2011, p. xvi). The divide between rural and urban areas is two-fold: first there is a wide socio-economic gap and second, there are divergent ways of life. Hicks (2009, p. 89) argues that:

This contrast, which can be represented as Dili/foho, though it has generated far less attention than _lorosa’e/ema loromonu or firaku/kaladi_, is more fraught with political potential than either, since it corresponds to political, cultural, and social differences between the capital and its hinterland that may not bode well for the unity of the nation-state.

But this division was not raised at all during interviews, possibly because all interviews were conducted in Dili.
Despite this the rural-urban divide represents a deep socio-economic fault line in Timor-Leste. Wealth distribution in Timor-Leste is uneven, in particular between rural and urban areas, which has been exacerbated by the cash payment scheme. According to the 2010 census, children in urban areas are four times more likely than children in rural areas to be enrolled in secondary education (NSD and UNFPA 2011, p. xvi). 57 per cent of rural households had access to safe drinking water compared to 91 per cent of urban households (NSD and UNFPA 2011, p. xx). Only 24 per cent of rural households had improved sanitation compared with 80 per cent of urban households. In addition, only 18 per cent of rural households had electricity compared with 87 per cent of urban households (NSD and UNFPA 2011, p. xix). The rural-urban divide is exacerbated by the relative isolation of some rural communities, with poor transport infrastructure and low levels of car and motorbike ownership in rural areas (2 per cent and 7 per cent respectively) (NSD and UNFPA 2011, p. xx). Creating even socio-economic development supports the developing national political community and should be a key priority of nation-building.

**Conclusion**

The interview research revealed that the east-west divide continued to be politically significant in the post-2006 crisis period. Limited progress has been made towards addressing the structural issues which contributed to the crisis, including weak and politicised state institutions, a weak justice sector, poverty and widespread dissatisfaction with the nation-state. In particular, the incapacity of the state to provide for the welfare of its citizens exacerbates dissatisfaction with the nation-state and is a potential source of social and political conflict.
Around half of interviewees believed the east-west divide continued to be significant in the post-crisis period and a small majority believed Timorese were vulnerable to further political manipulation. A minority argued that the divide had been solidified in the post-crisis period. Views on the significance of the divide were diverse and sometimes contradictory within parties and between the so-called western parties. Evidence of ongoing violent conflict relating to the divide at the community level was mixed, but interviewees reported community concern about underlying insecurity relating to the divide.

Interviewees expressed concern that identity-building in the post-independence period was fragile. The developing national political community was weak and could not contain competing local identities. These local identities had contributed to the fragmentation of the political landscape, dividing it along regional lines. Regional imbalances were embedded in the political party system. However, there are diverse and contradictory opinions among party officials from so-called western parties about the east-west divide. While a large majority of interviewees argued that regional imbalances were embedded in the political party system in Timor-Leste, this embedding is possibly uneven, with greater politicisation in some districts than others. Nevertheless, the emergence of the divide during the 2006 crisis had entrenched a negative form of political competition pitting ‘east’ against ‘west’ which continued to affect the party system.

A regional analysis of the 2007 parliamentary election results indicated that there was a strong relationship between political affiliation and region. Fretilin’s share of the vote
in the eastern districts is disproportionately high, accounting for 52 per cent of its total vote. CNRT’s share of the vote in the eastern districts is disproportionately low, accounting for only 15 per cent of its total vote. The minor parties had regional political support bases, with ASDT, KOTA, PD, PSD and PUN having their base in western districts and UNDERTIM in eastern districts. Fretilin was often characterised by non-Fretilin officials as a so-called eastern party which exclusively represented the interests of the eastern districts. Interviewees from non-Fretilin parties expressed concern about obstacles to expanding their political representation in eastern districts.

There was broad consensus that the root causes of the east-west divide were not well understood and had not yet been addressed. In particular, ongoing divisive national discourse about the competing roles of *lorosa’e* and *loromonu* during the resistance movement had the potential to contribute to further identity-based conflict. As a result, some viewed tensions relating to the divide as remaining underneath the surface.

Some interviewees argued that the significance of the east-west divide had decreased and other social divisions were more likely to contribute to violent conflict, including the *mestiço* and *rai nain* dichotomy. However, like the divide, this division partly stemmed from grievances about the perceived roles of different groups during the resistance movement.

The interview research supports the argument that the east-west divide continues to be politically significant in the post-2006 crisis. The divide did not decline as quickly as it rose. The divide represents a crisis of national identity and, as a result, has resonated more broadly beyond the security sector, because of its correlation with ongoing
divisive national discourse about roles of *lorosa’e* and *loromonu* during the resistance movement. As a result, the emergence and persistence of the divide requires further investigation, in particular about its implications for nation-building.
Part three: Regionalism and the rhetoric of national consensus in Timor-Leste
Chapter five: Diminishing regionalism in Timor-Leste: the 2012 elections

Introduction

Chapter four examined the ongoing political significance of the east-west divide in the post-2006 crisis period and following the death of the symbolic rebel leader of the Petitioners, Major Alfredo Reinado, in 2008. Around half of interviewees believed the divide continued to be significant in the post-crisis period and a small majority believed Timorese were vulnerable to further political manipulation. Ongoing divisive national discourse about the competing roles of lorosa’e and loromonu during the resistance movement remained a potential source of identity-based conflict. Interviewees expressed concern that identity-building in the post-independence period was fragile. The developing national political community was weak and could not contain competing local identities. These local identities had contributed to the fragmentation of the political landscape, dividing it along regional lines. Regional imbalances were embedded in the political party system. The emergence of the divide during the 2006 crisis had entrenched a negative form of political competition pitting ‘east’ against ‘west’.

Chapter four analysed the role played by regionalism in the 2007 elections in Timor-Leste. A regional analysis of the election results did not support an unambiguous line of division between eastern and western districts. However, significant regional imbalances were evident in each party’s representation: the Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor (Fretilin) had its support base in the eastern districts of Baucau, Lautém and Viqueque, with more than half of its total vote concentrated in these three districts, and the National Congress for the Reconstruction of Timor (CNRT) and its
coalition partners in the Alliance for a Parliamentary Majority (AMP) had their support base in the central and western districts. Non-Fretilin interviewees often characterised Fretilin as a so-called eastern party which exclusively represented the interests of the eastern districts.

Part three of the thesis examines the long-term implications of the ongoing political significance of the east-west divide for nation-building in Timor-Leste. Following the overwhelming vote in favour of independence in the referendum on 30 August 1999, Timor-Leste was assumed to have a strong sense of national unity based on the resistance movement. Timorese had resisted Indonesian occupation and won, but what had they won in terms of national unity? The international community’s nation-building efforts appear to have taken the existence of a national political community for granted. The emergence of the divide during the 2006 crisis brought this assumption into question by revealing the enduring significance of local identities.

Chapter five examines the significance of the 2012 elections for identity-building in Timor-Leste – developing a unifying national political community. Chapters three and four of the thesis argued that the emergence of the east-west divide during the 2006 crisis and the role played by regionalism in the 2007 elections indicate that identity-building in Timor-Leste is weak or even failing. This chapter poses the question of how identity-building identity has progressed since this period, particularly in view of the success of the 2012 elections.

Chapter five investigates the political legacy of the east-west divide. The chapter examines the role played by regionalism in the 2012 elections. It analyses the
relationship between political party affiliation and region, compared with the 2007 elections, and critically assesses the development of regionalism in Timor-Leste. The chapter examines political rhetoric about the divide and national unity during the election campaigns. It explores the implications of regionalism for democratic consolidation in Timor-Leste, in particular for the development of the political party system. The chapter analyses Timorese print, television and radio media and provides a review of literature on the elections. It provides a comparison to the findings of my field research which I undertook in 2008 and 2009 and potentially a trajectory of the development of regionalism in Timor-Leste.

The 2012 elections and state-building

The presidential and parliamentary elections held in Timor-Leste in 2012 were a significant milestone for the new nation-state. The Timorese Government had restored peace and stability following the turbulent political and security crisis between 2006 and 2008 and the relatively peaceful elections were considered to be evidence of further progress towards political stability. The elections resulted in significant political change: the election of a new president, José Maria de Vasconcelos, known as ‘Taur Matan Ruak’ (TMR). They also resulted in political continuity: the re-election of Prime Minister Xanana Kay Rala Gusmão; the re-election of his party, CNRT, as the senior partner of a coalition government; and the return of Fretilin to opposition.

The Timorese Government assumed primary responsibility for running the elections, which consequently were viewed as a litmus test of state-building – developing the capacity of the state and its institutions – as well as democratic consolidation. The
presidential elections on 17 March and 16 April and the parliamentary election on 7 July were intersected by another milestone, the anniversary of one decade of independence on 20 May. The withdrawal of United Nations (UN) and International Stabilisation Force (ISF) from Timor-Leste at the end of 2012 had been made contingent on successful elections.

There is a broad consensus that the 2012 elections were a resounding success. The UN welcomed both the presidential and parliamentary elections, describing the presidential elections as “an important milestone for the consolidation of peace and stability in Timor-Leste, and a reflection of the Timorese commitment to democracy and the rule of law” (UN, 25 April 2012 and UN, 8 July 2012). The UN commended the National Election Commission (CNE) and the Technical Secretariat for Electoral Administration (STAE) for their successful administration of the elections as well as the Timor-Leste National Police (PNTL) for ensuring a peaceful and stable environment during the electoral process (UN, 25 April 2012 and UN, 8 July 2012). In a press statement, the Timorese Government described the presidential elections as “showing the world a nation committed to stability, peace and national unity” (Timor-Leste Government, 20 April 2012). It also commended the presidential candidates:

It was a sign of political maturity that Presidential candidates conducted themselves throughout their campaigns with integrity and dignity. In the run off both candidates campaigned with great passion whilst encouraging their supporters to act responsibly. In this way they have shown their willingness to prioritize the welfare and stability of Timor-Leste (Timor-Leste Government, 20 April 2012).
International observers declared both the presidential and parliamentary elections in Timor-Leste in 2012 successful. The Australia Timor-Leste Friendship Network (AusTimorFN) concluded that the parliamentary elections “substantially complied with internationally recognised standards for free and fair elections...” (AusTimorFN and CCDHR 2012, p. 2). Election observers reported that the election was held in a calm and orderly manner and voters were free from intimidation or disturbances (EUEOM 2012, p. 5 and AusTimorFN and CCDHR 2012, p. 2). Polling operations and closing and counting procedures were evaluated as good or outstanding in a large majority of polling centres (EUEOM 2012, p. 5). District tabulation was evaluated as transparent or very transparent in most cases (EUEOM 2012, pp. 5-6). Unlike the 2007 elections, the political and security situation in Timor-Leste was relatively peaceful and stable during the 2012 elections. The AusTimorFN (2012, p. 2) confidently declared that “it is clear that Timor-Leste is now able to run its own electoral process”.

State-building does not contribute to identity-building – while inextricably linked, both processes have different means and ends. Chapter one of the thesis argued that literature on nation-building had a disproportionate focus on state-building. This literature often failed to take into account that, in addition to state-building, identity-building is a fundamental process of nation-building. State-building without identity-building could undermine the nation-building project by weaving social divisions into the fabric of the new nation-state. The ongoing significance of these divisions in post-conflict societies could undermine the development of a national political community which transcends social divisions. As a result, the nation-state may be vulnerable to
identity-based conflict and further violent conflict. In order to assess such vulnerability, the scope of research on nation-building should extend beyond the capacity of the state and its institutions.

Literature on the 2012 elections in Timor-Leste also appears to disproportionately focus on their implications for state-building. The Timorese Government’s successful administration of the 2012 elections was viewed as progress towards democratic consolidation. However, elections alone are not evidence of consolidation (Kingsbury 2012, p. 1 and Kingsbury 2014a, pp. 18-9). In the post-independence period, governments and political leaders have been held accountable to citizens by regular elections, with a change of government in 2007 and change of president in 2012 (Kingsbury 2012, p. 3). But Timor-Leste is a relatively new democracy. In addition to elections, democratic consolidation requires the widespread institutionalisation of democratic values and practices, the widespread acceptance of informal rules of democracy and the internationalisation of democratic values by citizens in the long-term.

**Regional analysis of the 2012 elections**

In Timor-Leste the president is elected by an absolute majority using a two-round system. The president is elected to serve a five year term. There are 65 seats in the National Parliament. Members are elected using a closed list proportional representation system, with one national constituency. Members are also elected to serve five year terms.
Part three: Regionalism and the rhetoric of national consensus in Timor-Leste
Chapter five: Diminishing regionalism in Timor-Leste: the 2012 elections

Presidential election campaigns

The presidential elections attracted a wide range of candidates, with 13 Timorese contesting the first round of presidential elections held on 17 March. To stand as a candidate, an individual required a minimum of 5,000 supporters, with a minimum of 100 supporters in each district. Candidates included:

- Manuel Tilman, member of parliament and president of the Association of Timorese Heroes (KOTA);
- TMR, veteran and former Commander of the FALINTIL Timor-Leste Defence Force (F-FDTL), who ran as an independent;
- Francisco Guterres, known as ‘Lú-Olo’, President of Fretilin;
- Rogério Lobato, former minister of the interior from 2002 to 2006;
- Maria do Céu Lopes da Silva, an active member of the resistance movement and co-founder of Timor Aid;
- Angelita Maria Francisca Pires, Vice President of the National Democratic Unity of Timorese Resistance (UNDERTIM), who had a relationship with Major Alfredo Reinado, the symbolic rebel leader of the Petitioners group, before his death;
- José Manuel Ramos-Horta, President of Timor-Leste since 2007, who also ran as an independent candidate;
- Francisco Gomes, President of the Aileba People’s Liberty Party (PLPA);
- José Luís Guterres, former deputy prime minister from 2007 to 2012 and member of Frente-Mudança;
- Abílio de Araújo, President of the Timorese Nationalist Party (PNT);
Lucas da Costa, MP, member of the Democratic Party (PD) and rector of the University of Peace (UNPAZ); and

Fernando de Araújo, known as ‘Lasama’, President of PD and former speaker of the National Parliament from 2007 to 2012 (UNMIT and UNDP 2012, pp. 20-2).

In the lead up to the election, only four of the twelve candidates, Lasama, Lú-Olo, Ramos-Horta and TMR were viewed as competitive.

In early 2012 the Timorese Government was actively engaged in initiatives to promote peace and stability as well as national unity in the lead up the three rounds of elections. The CNE ran a campaign, ‘Pact for Peaceful Elections 2012’, to contribute to conflict prevention, which involved dialogue with key actors involved in the electoral process, including representatives of political parties, traditional leaders, civil society representatives, district authorities, suco council members and security forces (UNMIT and UNDP 2012, p. 9). Presidential candidates participated in matan malirik, a ritual oath ceremony, conducted by the STAE on 20 February to demonstrate their commitment to maintaining peace and stability and supporting national unity during the campaign (Independente, 20 February). A Commissioner of CNE, Angelina Sarmento, stated that “the main objective is not only to promote the formal system, regulation and the law we have, but to lead our president candidates and politicians to maintain peace during their political campaign...we are trying to strengthen our tradition we have from our ancestors so that people can respect each other and have good will to maintain unity, peace and stability in the country” (Independente, 20 February 2012). On 28 February the CNE hosted a final meeting for presidential candidates and political parties to sign a “peace and unity pact”. In a media interview, the CNE Commissary, Martinho Gusmão,
stated that by signing the pact, political leaders had an opportunity to demonstrate their political maturity (Radio Timor-Leste, 24 January 2012). The ceremony incorporated traditional customs with modern democratic processes of elections. CNE reportedly gave political leaders betel nut to chew together as a traditional symbol of peace (Independente, 29 February 2012). Similar peace initiatives were also held at the district level.

The Catholic Church was also actively engaged in initiatives to promote peace and stability. During the first week of Lent, the Catholic Relief Services (CRS) in Timor-Leste and the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission (JPC) launched a program called ‘111 Days of Prayer for a Peaceful and Democratic Election in Timor-Leste’ which involved religious and political leaders (Independente, 23 February 2012). The program commenced with a ‘Journey for Peace’ walk in Dili which reportedly attracted almost 10,000 Timorese. The Bishop of the Dili Diocese, Alberto Ricardo da Silva, stated that:

“All Timorese live in one household, one family from Tutuala to Oe-Cusse, and from the North to the South Sea – just one. That’s why we must give each other a hand to make this election successful with peace, calm, unity progress to find prosperity, to thrive and make Timor-Leste richer” (Independente, 23 February 2012).

In the lead up to the three rounds of elections, political leaders repeatedly called on Timorese to maintain peace and stability during the campaigns.6

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Gusmão reportedly reminded political parties of their “obligation” to contribute to peace and stability (Radio Timor-Leste, 3 January 2012) and called on them to abide by electoral legislation and processes (Radio Timor-Leste, 4 January 2012). He stated that political positions were not as important as peace and stability (Diario Nacional, 4 June 2012). Independent candidate Ramos-Horta and PD candidate Lasama, called on fellow presidential candidates not to pressure, intimidate or threaten people during the election campaign, emphasising that each Timorese had the right to freely vote for whichever candidate they chose (Diario Nacional, 16 January 2012 and Independente, 22 March 2012). Following the first round of the presidential elections, Fretilin candidate Lú-Olo and independent candidate TMR were admitted to the second round of voting.

Throughout both the presidential and parliamentary election campaigns, there was widespread condemnation by civil society organisations of political rhetoric and debate which exacerbated political tension. In a statement, the non-governmental organisation (NGO) Fundasaun Mahein (26 January 2012) noted that, before the campaign had officially commenced, “numerous attacks” in the media had been made against rival candidates or political parties which were “aggressive in nature”. Fundasaun Mahein (26 January 2012) expressed concern about these attacks, stating that “Timor-Leste is a very young democracy, attempting to mature in a post-conflict environment. It is important that people not intensify existing tensions and divisions by launching verbal attacks onto political rivals”. Political leaders echoed these condemnations of political attacks (Diario Nacional, 16 January 2012).

Throughout both the presidential and parliamentary campaigns, there was zero tolerance of political rhetoric or debate which incited violent conflict or even exacerbated political
tension. While the relative absence of such rhetoric contributed to a political atmosphere of peace and stability at the national level, it is unlikely to have had a similar effect at the local level, in particular because poor communications infrastructure and high levels of illiteracy among Timorese pose a significant challenge to political communication. Fundasaun Mahein (20 March 2012) expressed its concern that while “there is little or no desire at the leadership level to provoke violence”, such public statements may not reach the ears of those who were most likely to be involved in violence: youth and the unemployed.

Following the announcement of the presidential election results, Fretilin leaders undermined their earlier rhetoric on peace and stability by launching political attacks against winning candidate TMR. Fretilin candidate Lú-Olo reportedly stated that he accepted the ruling of the Appellate Court but questioned the result of the second round, as did Fretilin Secretary General Alkatiri, who claimed that Timorese felt too intimidated and scared to attend polling centres (Independente, 25 April 2012). He also accused TMR’s campaign team of vote buying.

_Narratives of national unity_

National unity was a key narrative of the presidential election campaign. Political leaders encouraged Timorese to overcome political divisions and unite. They also encouraged other leaders to put aside their historical grievances and disputes. In this political atmosphere, there was limited space for conflict promoters or the political manipulation of social divisions such as the east-west divide, as occurred during the 2006 crisis and 2007 elections.
The key theme of Fretilin candidate Lú-Olo’s election campaign was national unity. In his election campaign platform, Lú-Olo identified the unity of the state and nation as his first priority (Guterres 2012, pp. 2-3). He stated that the president had a constitutional role to unite all Timorese and not discriminate based on political party affiliation, religion, ethnicity, race or socio-economic status (Guterres 2012, p. 3). Lú-Olo declared that “during my term as President, I will do everything to strengthen the sense of national identity. I will devote myself to guiding the whole of society towards the great national objectives, through strengthening the cooperation among all sovereign bodies” (Guterres 2012, p. 6). He called for unity among Timor-Leste’s political leadership, stating that:

I look forward to a positive and constructive campaign from everyone, and have called on all candidates to ensure that we campaign and win or lose in a way that contributes to strengthening peace, stability and national unity. What our people want most of all and fully deserve is peace and stability (Fretilin, 31 January 2012).

During the campaign, Lú-Olo emphasised that Fretilin was a party which represented all Timorese from all districts. In his statement to announce his candidacy, Lú-Olo claimed that his nomination was supported by signatures from voters “from every district and sub-district in the country” (Fretilin, 31 January 2012). In a media statement, he declared that “I start out as my party’s candidate, but will be President for all the People of Timor-Leste. As president I will do my utmost to be the symbol and promoter of our
national sovereignty and unity” (Fretilin, 31 January 2012). In his election campaign platform, Lú-Olo declared that he would “place myself above all party-political disputes” (Guterres 2012, p. 5). The theme of national unity was interlaced with Fretilin’s historical role in uniting Timorese against Indonesian occupation during the resistance movement. In a press conference on 13 January, Lú-Olo stated that:

For all of my life, I have always been ready to receive the trust of our people and to serve and to lead them. Indeed I have done this from 1974 to today. From the beginning FRETILIN fought for all the Maubere people. Many FRETILIN cadres and militants gave their lives to serve the people. For this reason I want to serve once again all of my fellow Timorese, all of the people (Fretilin, 13 January 2012).

Lú-Olo’s strong emphasis on national unity throughout the presidential election campaign may have been in an effort to mitigate Fretilin’s image as a so-called eastern party which had its support base in eastern districts and exclusively represented the interests of these districts. It may also have been in an effort to allay concerns about Fretilin repeating its role in the 2006 crisis and the violent conflict following the announcement of the results of the 2007 elections.

National unity was also a key theme of independent candidate TMR’s election campaign. His independent status bolstered his calls for national unity. Gregorio Saldanha, President of the parliamentary committee to commemorate the Santa Cruz massacre, stated that “I choose Ruak because he is an independent person and friendly
with everyone” and argued that as an independent candidate, TMR would be able to unite all Timorese (Timor Post, 20 January 2012). TMR’s campaign evoked nostalgia about national unity during the resistance movement which appeared to strongly resonate with Timorese. Powles (27 April 2012) described his campaign slogan – “Together with you in the past, our blood intertwined towards our independence. Together again with you today, we toil towards a better future” – as a “concept of a renaissance in the independence struggle”.

TMR’s independent status and inexperience in government worked in his favour by distancing him from the policy failures of successive governments in the post-independence period. His campaign tapped into growing frustration with progress towards social and economic development and targeted veterans and youth, two groups which have vocally expressed their dissatisfaction with their living conditions in the post-independence period (Powles, 27 April 2012). Powles (27 April 2012) argues that TMR’s campaign resonated most strongly with voters who were discontent and disenchanted with government, stating that:

By calling upon Timorese to reject passivity and take an active role in everyday political decision-making, Taur Matan Ruak sought to invoke a sense of empowerment among the disenfranchised and positioned himself as the leader to lead the next wave in Timorese self-determination.

The narratives of national unity in the presidential election campaigns highlight that the construction of nationalism grounded in the resistance movement also remains the
dominant construction of national unity in Timor-Leste. Both Lú-Olo and TMR have strong credentials from the resistance – TMR as the last commander of the Armed Forces of National Liberation of East Timor (FALINTIL) and Lú-Olo as the last General Coordinator of the Presidential Council of Fretilin, a senior position in the resistance government. Their interpretation of national unity in the post-independence period is grounded in the past, evoking a utopian view of nationalism and national unity during the resistance. Such an interpretation does not take into account the divisions inherent in the resistance and does not distinguish the concept of national unity in the post-independence period from these divisions.

Presidential election results

The first round of presidential elections was held on 17 March. Voter turnout was 78.2 per cent (UNMIT and UNDP 2012, p. 23). Fretilin candidate Lú-Olo and independent candidate TMR were admitted to the second round of voting with 28.76 per cent and 25.71 per cent respectively.

Table 5.1: Results of the first round of the presidential election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>Number of votes</th>
<th>Percentage of votes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lú-Olo</td>
<td>133635</td>
<td>28.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TMR</td>
<td>119462</td>
<td>25.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>José Ramos-Horta</td>
<td>81231</td>
<td>17.48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lasama</td>
<td>80381</td>
<td>17.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rogério Lobato</td>
<td>16219</td>
<td>3.49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abílio de Araújo</td>
<td>6294</td>
<td>1.35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>José Luis Guterres</td>
<td>9235</td>
<td>1.99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manuel Tilman</td>
<td>7226</td>
<td>1.56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucas da Costa</td>
<td>3862</td>
<td>0.83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Francisco Gomes</td>
<td>3531</td>
<td>0.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maria do Ceu Lopes da</td>
<td>1843</td>
<td>0.40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The second round of presidential elections was held on 23 April. Voter turnout was 73.12 per cent (UNMIT and UNDP 2012, p. 26). TMR won a majority of votes, with 61.23 per cent. Lú-Olo won 38.77 per cent.

Table 5.2: Regional analysis of the results of the second round of presidential election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Lú-Olo</th>
<th>TMR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aileu</td>
<td>29.24%</td>
<td>70.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ainaro</td>
<td>32.80%</td>
<td>67.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baucau</td>
<td>52.07%</td>
<td>47.93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bobonaro</td>
<td>29.99%</td>
<td>70.01%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cova-Lima</td>
<td>37.42%</td>
<td>62.58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dili</td>
<td>34.21%</td>
<td>65.79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ermera</td>
<td>32.94%</td>
<td>67.06%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lautém</td>
<td>49.60%</td>
<td>50.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liquiçá</td>
<td>35.82%</td>
<td>64.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manatuto</td>
<td>26.45%</td>
<td>73.55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufahi</td>
<td>45.82%</td>
<td>54.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oecusse</td>
<td>24.08%</td>
<td>75.92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viqueque</td>
<td>66.08%</td>
<td>33.92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>38.77%</td>
<td>61.23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: www.staetl.com

Regional analysis of presidential election results

The results of the presidential elections reveal that independent candidate TMR won a majority of the vote in all the central and western districts, and Fretilin candidate Lú-Olo won a majority of the vote in the eastern districts of Baucau and Viqueque, which are strongholds for Fretilin. The election in the eastern district of Lautém was closely
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Chapter five: Diminishing regionalism in Timor-Leste: the 2012 elections

contested, with TMR winning a slim majority of 50.4 per cent. TMR won overwhelming majorities in all districts except for the three eastern districts.

Table 5.3: Summary of political alliances in second round of presidential elections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lú-Olo</th>
<th>TMR</th>
<th>Undeclared</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fretilin</td>
<td>ASDT</td>
<td>Ramos-Horta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KOTA</td>
<td>CNRT</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frente-Mudança</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PSD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While TMR’s national vote of around 61 per cent is as a popular mandate, a regional divide is evident in a district analysis of the result. Although Lú-Olo, as the President of Fretilin, could be associated with the eastern region of Timor-Leste, TMR, as an independent candidate, could not be exclusively associated with either region. On the one hand, his status as a hero of the resistance movement and last commander of FALINTIL, could have enhanced his support in the eastern districts and attracted votes from Fretilin supporters.

On the other hand, TMR’s political alliance with Prime Minister Gusmão could have also enhanced his support in the central and western districts, which are strongholds for CNRT, as could the political backing he received from other so-called western parties following the first round. Following its national conference on 8 January, CNRT announced that it would not nominate a presidential candidate, as it was focusing its efforts on the parliamentary election, and it would only support a candidate independent of a political party (Diario Nacional, 9 January 2012). On 24 February CNRT officially announced its support for independent candidate TMR (Radio Timor-Leste, 27 February
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2012). In a press conference, the Secretary General of CNRT, Dionisio Babo-Soares, stated that TMR had met the party’s main criteria for candidacy and called on CNRT members to vote for him in the presidential elections (Radio Timor-Leste, 27 February 2012). Gusmão even appeared at some of TMR’s campaign events (Diario Nacional, 10 April 2012). Following the presidential election, Leach (2012c p. 4) suggests that “the CNRTs decision to back Ruak – the only major party to do so formally – seems to have paid strategic dividends”. The political alliance between two heroes of the resistance movement appeared to be popular and TMR’s election placed CNRT on a solid footing in the lead up to the parliamentary election.

Unsuccessful independent candidate Ramos-Horta and PD candidate Lasama encouraged their supporters to vote freely in the second round of the presidential election (Radio Timor-Leste, 29 March). Lasama reportedly stated “both Mr. Taur Matan Ruak and Francisco “Lu-Olo” Guterres are good leaders and they are working for national unity” (Radio Timor-Leste, 29 March). He reportedly declared that PD would give votes to both TMR and Lú-Olo in the second round, but the president-elect should guarantee PD the next prime ministership (Diario Nacional, 20 March 2012). But prior to the election, PD announced its support for TMR’s presidential candidacy. The Secretary-General of PD, Mariano Sabino Lopes, known as ‘Asanami’, reportedly called on supporters to vote for TMR in the second round (Diario Nacional, 13 April 2012). The party coordinator of PD, Sesurai, explained that PD supported TMR because of the role he played during the resistance movement (Diario Nacional, 2 April 2012), a characteristic which did not distinguish TMR from Lú-Olo. Unsuccessful presidential candidates, KOTA candidate Tilman and independent candidate Lobato, announced their support for Lú-Olo’s candidacy (Diario Nacional, 21 March 2012). As
a former senior minister in the Fretilin government, led by former prime minister Mari Alkatiri, Lobato’s support for Lú-Olo was expected. However, Lobato’s support was problematic given that his own candidacy had been overshadowed by allegations that he illegally transferred weapons to citizens during the 2006 crisis and consequently, served as a reminder of the role played by senior Fretilin leaders in manipulating the crisis.

ASDT, Frente Mudança and PSD announced their support for TMR’s presidential candidacy and called on their supporters to vote for him in the second round of presidential elections (Radio Timor-Leste, 15 March 2012, Radio Timor-Leste, 4 April 2012 and Diario Nacional, 2 April). The President of Frente Mudança, Luis Guterres, explained that his party supported TMR because of the role he played during the resistance movement (Radio Timor-Leste, 4 April 2012). He described TMR as a political leader capable of strengthening national unity in Timor-Leste. These political alliances do not support an unambiguous line of division between so-called eastern and western political parties, with KOTA, which has its support base in the western district of Ainaro, giving its support to Fretilin.

Some former members of the Petitioners, which could be generally associated with the western districts, announced their support for TMR’s presidential candidacy (Radio Timor-Leste, 28 February 2012). A representative of the group, Antonio Savio, stated that their decision to support TMR was based on the role he played as commander of the F-FDTL in the post-independence period. TMR was perceived to be a strong political leader who could oversee progress towards social and economic development in Timor-Leste. Savio described TMR as “like our father” and stated that “the time has come for us to support him as we trust in him” (Radio Timor-Leste, 28 February 2012).
Veterans of the resistance movement, who could be generally associated with the eastern districts, also announced their support for TMR (RTTL, 30 March 2012).

An analysis of political alliances during the presidential election campaign does not reveal an unambiguous regional division. As a result, it is more likely the results of the presidential elections indicate a consolidation of the political division between Fretilin and non-Fretilin groups. This division was also evident in the results of the parliamentary election, which are examined in the following section.

**Parliamentary election campaign**

21 political parties contested the parliamentary election, many of which were newly established micro parties. Key election issues included: the management of Timor-Leste’s sovereign wealth fund, a petroleum fund worth an estimated USD 10 billion; development; and peace and stability. Political parties did not deliver well defined election platforms and, in particular, opposition parties did not present clear policy alternatives. Instead, the campaign was dominated by personality politics, with CNRT relying heavily on the charisma of incumbent Prime Minister Gusmão to win support.

The management of the petroleum fund was one key policy differentiator between the incumbent Alliance for a Parliamentary Majority (AMP) coalition government, led by CNRT, and Fretilin. The AMP coalition government had used revenues from the petroleum fund to finance a wide range of cash payment schemes for veterans of the resistance movement, pensioners and vulnerable social groups and former members of the Petitioners. During the campaign, CNRT promised to increase the existing three per
cent limit on the fund’s contribution to the state budget as well as to attract foreign loans. Prime Minister Gusmão intended to use the additional petroleum revenues and loans to fund his Strategic Development Plan (PEDN) which envisages large scale infrastructure projects, including new roads, ports and an airport.

Fretilin opposed CNRT’s policies to increase public spending. The party claimed such increases had caused an 18 per cent increase in inflation, would deplete the petroleum fund in ten years and had exacerbated socio-economic divisions in Timor-Leste by benefiting only one fifth of the population (The Economist, 30 June 2012). The increase in public spending has led to an increase in allegations of maladministration and corruption and one of Fretilin’s key election promises was to tackle corruption.

While international observers declared that the 2012 elections complied with international standards for free and fair elections, some critical weaknesses in Timor-Leste’s political party system were evident during the parliamentary campaign. Goldstone et al (2000, p. 34) argue that a state’s vulnerability to failure or collapse primarily relates to its regime type and the nature of recruitment and political participation in the political system. Goldstone et al (2005, pp. 18-9) conclude that states which are undergoing democratic consolidation, such as hybrid political orders, are at the highest risk of instability. Cotton (2007, p. 462) argues that “if ‘mixed’ regimes are less stable, then as regimes change type, and in particular as they evolve during what is generally a protracted process from autocracy towards democracy, they face increasing risks”. Goldstone and Ulfelder (2004, p.17) argue that:
The transition from autocracy to democracy is not a simple process; indeed, the highest risk of political crisis lies in the middle ground, in autocracies with some political competition and in nominal democracies with factional competition and/or dominant chief executives. These types of regimes appear most vulnerable to the outbreak of large-scale violence, antidemocratic coups, and state collapse.

The emergence of political factionalism through political patronage and electoral clientilism poses a significant threat to stability. Goldstone and Ulfelder (2004, pp. 19-20) argue that:

By far the worst situation in terms of risks of instability were for a political landscape that combined deeply polarized or factionalized competition with open contestation. The combination of a winner-take-all, parochial approach to politics with opportunities to compete for control of central state authority represents a powder keg for political crisis.

According to CEPAD (2012, p. 2), the weaknesses in the party system included the absence of clear party ideologies and policies, allegations of illegal campaign fundraising and the provision of incentives, cash and in kind, for support. CEPAD (2012, p. 3) argues that the absence of election platforms distorts democratic processes by encouraging political patronage, stating that:

In the absence of widely disseminated – and at times, clear - programmatic policy platforms, both individual leaders and political parties risk reducing the electoral
process to a show of populism based on historical, familial and political allegiances, which have often been formed in the period prior to independence. Undermining due democratic process, such allegiances play a key role in influencing extensive ‘closed door’ pre- and post-electoral ‘deals’ between stakeholders vying for ministries and positions of power in the formation of political coalitions and the new Government. The result is a somewhat chaotic and frequently changing political landscape of fleeting party alliances.

Illegal campaign fundraising and incentives entrench the immaturity of the political party system. CEPAD (2012, p. 4) argues that these activities impede the development of election platforms because, in an effort to win support, political parties engage in political patronage and electoral clientilism instead, through patron-client networks, which it describes as *aman sarani, oan sarani*, godparents, godchildren, relationships in Timor-Leste.

Despite the political rhetoric of national unity, some divisions between political leaders were manifest during the parliamentary election campaign. A public spat between then president Jose Ramos-Horta, Prime Minister Gusmão and CNRT emerged in the lead up to the parliamentary election. The political alliance established between Gusmão and Ramos-Horta in 2007 had broken down after Ramos-Horta became outspoken and critical of the AMP coalition government’s performance. During the campaign, Ramos-Horta reportedly called on Timorese not to vote for CNRT, but PD instead, because of alleged corruption among CNRT members (Diario Nacional, 14 June 2012). In response, a CNRT spokesperson, Aderito Hugo da Costa, declared that Ramos-Horta
was no longer a symbol of national unity or deserving of the title of Nobel Peace Prize laureate (Independent, 15 June 2012). Referring to Ramos-Horta’s recent statement, da Costa stated that “the recent declaration he made does not reflect the concept of national unity and reconciliation” (Independent, 15 June 2012).

**Regional analysis of campaigning**

During the parliamentary election, political parties campaigned door-to-door or held community dialogues (EUEOM 2012, p. 4). Due to financial constraints, they held few large rallies. In what the European Union Election Observer Mission (EUEOM) (2012, p. 4) described as “the exception to this general rule”, CNRT, which was better financed than other parties, held a series of rallies attended by Prime Minister Gusmão. Unlike the 2007 elections, in which parties reported threats and intimidation for campaigning in other regions, there was no evidence of regionalism influencing campaigning during the election.

There was no evidence of regionally based political alliances in the lead up to the parliamentary election. The so-called western political parties of the incumbent AMP coalition government, ASDT/PSD, CNRT and PD did not campaign in partnership or as a regional bloc. Then president Ramos-Horta announced his support for both ASDT and PD, signing a memorandum of understanding with the parties (Radio Timor-Leste, 11 June 2012 and Diario Nacional, 13 June 2012). Ramos-Horta stated that he was following his conscience and believed these parties would strengthen peace and stability as well as national unity (Radio Timor-Leste, 11 June 2012). He claimed that his support for PD was based on his desire to cultivate a new generation of political leaders
in Timor-Leste (Diario Nacional, 13 June 2012). Many of PD’s members were young activists during the resistance movement and represented a younger generation of Timorese political leaders.

Parliamentary election results

The parliamentary election was held on 7 July. Voter turn out was 74.78 per cent, compared with 81.79 per cent in the 2007 elections. No party won a parliamentary majority of 33 seats. The election revealed widespread public satisfaction with Prime Minister Gusmão and the performance of his party, CNRT. CNRT won 30 seats, with 36.66 per cent, Fretilin 25, with 29.87 per cent, PD 8, with 10.31 per cent, and a new party, Frente-Mudança, 2, with 3.11 per cent. In comparison with the 2007 elections, CNRT won an additional 12 seats and Fretilin an additional four seats. PD retained its eight seats.

The Timorese electoral system sets a three per cent threshold to win seats in the National Parliament, to limit the fragmentation of the political party system. Many of the new micro parties failed to meet this threshold, ruling out around 20 per cent of the vote. Many parties lost seats in the election, including junior partners in the AMP coalition government. ASDT/PSD lost their 11 seats, PUN lost its three seats, KOTA/People’s Party of Timor (PPT) lost their two seats and UNDERTIM lost its two seats.
Table 5.4: Results of the parliamentary election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political party</th>
<th>Percentage of vote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Alliance (AD) of Association of Timorese Heroes (KOTA) and Labour (Trabalhista)</td>
<td>0.56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timorese People's Monarchy Association (AMPT)</td>
<td>0.84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timorese Social Democratic Association (ASDT)</td>
<td>1.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Congress for Timorese Reconstruction (CNRT)</td>
<td>36.66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Front for National Reconstruction Timor-Leste - Change (Frente Mudança)</td>
<td>3.11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fretilin</td>
<td>29.87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrich the National Unity of the Sons of Timor (KHUNTO)</td>
<td>2.97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Party (PD)</td>
<td>10.31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Democratic Party (PDC)</td>
<td>0.19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Liberal Party (PDL)</td>
<td>0.47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Development Party (PDN)</td>
<td>1.99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Popular Development Party (PDP)</td>
<td>0.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coalition of Aileba People’s Liberty Party (PLPA) and Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste Party (PDRT)</td>
<td>0.85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proclaimer Bloc of Millennium Democratic Party (PMD) and National Republic of Timor-Leste Party (PARENTIL)</td>
<td>0.66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republican Party (PR)</td>
<td>0.91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Democratic Party (PSD)</td>
<td>2.15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialist Party of Timor (PST)</td>
<td>2.41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Timorese Party (PTD)</td>
<td>0.54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Unity Party (PUN)</td>
<td>0.68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timorese Democratic Union (UDT)</td>
<td>1.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Democratic Unity of Timorese Resistance (UNDERTIM)</td>
<td>1.49%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: www.staeltl.com

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Coalition negotiations

During the parliamentary election campaign, political parties had not publicly committed to potential coalition formations. Political leaders discussed the concept of a ‘national unity government’ between CNRT and Fretilin. Fretilin Secretary General Alkatiri had called on political leaders to resolve political divisions of the post-independence period through a national unity government, declaring:

I am calling on brother Gusmao and Horta to come together (with us) to better develop the country and to give positive development to the people because we separated in ten years and also the people, therefore the time has come for us to be together and to be a good example for the new generations (Diario Nacional, 25 June 2012).

Leach (2012d, p. 3 and 2012c, p. 9) argues that a national unity government would represent a “symbolic unification” of the eastern and western regions of Timor-Leste, describing the concept as a “prudent solution” to ease “another political legacy of the 2006 crisis”.

After casting his vote, Fretilin Secretary General Alkatiri reportedly claimed that Fretilin would win the elections overwhelmingly, but would not govern alone (Timornewsline, 7 July 2012). He stated that Fretilin wanted to participate in the next government and invited other political parties to form a coalition government with his party. Following the parliamentary election, Alkatiri confirmed that Fretilin had
contacted informally other parties to discuss potential coalition building (Radio Timor-Leste, 11 July 2012).

Following the parliamentary election, CNRT held a party conference on 15 July to discuss potential coalition building. The conference was televised nationally (Timornewsline, 15 July 2012). The majority of party members rejected a proposal to form a national unity government with Fretilin. Instead, they voted in favour of forming a coalition government with PD and Frente-Mudança. The vote was reportedly unanimous. The new 5th Constitutional Government was sworn in on 16 August with Prime Minister Gusmão appointed as prime minister and PD President Lasama as vice prime minister.

Some electoral violence broke out following the announcement of a coalition government which excluded Fretilin. The violence was exacerbated by inflammatory rhetoric used during the CNRT party conference which denigrated the historical role of Fretilin and its contribution to the resistance movement. Some political observers suggested the violence was also exacerbated by an unrealistic expectation among Fretilin supporters that Fretilin would be able to negotiate a coalition with other political parties.

The formation of a coalition government which excludes Fretilin provides further evidence of the consolidation of a political division between Fretilin and non-Fretilin groups. This division was also apparent in the coalition negotiations following the 2007 elections. At this time the coalition could have been construed as a coalition between so-called western political parties because the members of the AMP coalition
government, ASDT/PSD, CNRT and PD had their support bases in the central and western districts. However, the political division between Fretilin and non-Fretilin groups no longer correlates with a division between so-called eastern and western political parties. While PD could have been portrayed as a western party following the 2007 elections, its distribution of support has evolved, with its largest support base now in the eastern district of Lautém. Therefore, the coalition government could not be characterised as a coalition of western parties.

*Post-election violence*

Political attacks also occurred following the parliamentary election. Fretilin Secretary General Alkatiri and Fretilin President Lú-Olo attributed the outbreak of violence to the defamatory comments made by CNRT party members at their national conference (Timornewsline, 16 July 2012 and Diario Nacional, 18 July 2012) and Alkatiri demanded a public apology from CNRT (Timornewsline, 16 July 2012). Prime Minister Gusmão was defiant, stating that CNRT would not apologise for the comments (Independente, 23 July 2012). Gusmão acknowledged that some party members had defamed Fretilin during the conference but said Fretilin should not have responded to the verbal attacks with violence. He claimed Fretilin had made verbal attacks against CNRT during the campaign, reportedly stating that “we cannot say Fretilin's criticisms of CNRT during the campaign do not matter but the words said in conference do” (Independente, 23 July 2012).

President TMR summoned the leaders of CNRT, PD, Frenti-Mudança and Fretilin on 17 July to discuss the deteriorating security situation and to urge them to take measures
to restore peace and stability, including by calming down their supporters (Timor Post, 17 July 2012). On the same day, Fretilin Secretary General Alkatiri called on political leaders to contribute to peace, while also calling on CNRT to take responsibility for the outbreak of violent conflict, citing the serious offence caused by the defamatory comments (Radio Timor-Leste, 17 July 2012). Meanwhile Prime Minister Gusmão called on Fretilin to control its supporters who were involved in violent conflict in Dili, Baucau and Viqueque (Diario Nacional, 17 July). The hostile rhetoric between Alkatiri and Gusmão would have contributed little to restoring peace and stability and rendered their long-standing calls for national unity throughout the election campaigns seemingly insincere.

In a televised appeal, the Commander of the F-FDTL, Major General Lere Anan Timor, called on political leaders to resolve any violence without the use of force (Timornewsline, 17 July 2012). Major General Lere reportedly stated that “I am calling all political leaders to use all forms of way which is fair and acceptable to calm down the situation” (Timornewsline, 17 July 2012). Lere urged political leaders and youth to cooperate with security forces to restore peace. He warned that the UN handover would not occur without peace and stability.
### Regional analysis of parliamentary election results

Table 5.5: Comparative analysis of 2012, 2007 and 2001 parliamentary election results

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aileu</td>
<td>52.54%</td>
<td>+32</td>
<td>20.5%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1.38%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>14.94%</td>
<td>+7</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>-13</td>
<td>21.2%</td>
<td>6.02%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
<td>+5</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ainaro</td>
<td>37.19%</td>
<td>+25</td>
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<td>1.81%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>13.29%</td>
<td>+3</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
<td>-18</td>
<td>27.6%</td>
<td>15.05%</td>
<td>+3</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
<td>+7</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Baucau</td>
<td>23.05%</td>
<td>+10</td>
<td>13.4%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4.74%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>51.38%</td>
<td>-11</td>
<td>62.4%</td>
<td>-20</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>3.96%</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bobonaro</td>
<td>37.65%</td>
<td>+17</td>
<td>20.6%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2.30%</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>17.77%</td>
<td>+2</td>
<td>16.1%</td>
<td>-41</td>
<td>57.4%</td>
<td>14.53%</td>
<td>-5</td>
<td>19.3%</td>
<td>+8</td>
<td>11.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cova-Lima</td>
<td>31.83%</td>
<td>+16</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3.05%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>26.42%</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td>-33</td>
<td>61.4%</td>
<td>19.77%</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>20.7%</td>
<td>+15</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dili</td>
<td>49.54%</td>
<td>+4</td>
<td>45.2%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1.97%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>28.4%</td>
<td>+6</td>
<td>22.4%</td>
<td>-32</td>
<td>54.6%</td>
<td>7.05%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>+2</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ermera</td>
<td>40.67%</td>
<td>+27</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2.82%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>19.92%</td>
<td>+6</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
<td>-18</td>
<td>31.9%</td>
<td>6.95%</td>
<td>-15</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>+2</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lautém</td>
<td>20.24%</td>
<td>+6</td>
<td>14.6%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1.84%</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>43.86%</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>45.5%</td>
<td>-17</td>
<td>62.8%</td>
<td>20.64%</td>
<td>+7</td>
<td>13.7%</td>
<td>+4</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Liquicá</td>
<td>41.99%</td>
<td>+3</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4.18%</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>23.79%</td>
<td>+12</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>-60</td>
<td>72.4%</td>
<td>12.71%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
<td>+7.5</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manatuto</td>
<td>45.39%</td>
<td>+12</td>
<td>33.2%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1.42%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>20.52%</td>
<td>+3</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
<td>-30</td>
<td>47.6%</td>
<td>12.06%</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manufahi</td>
<td>31.37%</td>
<td>+18</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1.67%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>31.86%</td>
<td>+6</td>
<td>25.4%</td>
<td>-29</td>
<td>54.6%</td>
<td>8.09%</td>
<td>-4</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
<td>+8</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Oecusse</td>
<td>38.98%</td>
<td>+4</td>
<td>34.7%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10.37%</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
<td>-9</td>
<td>27.5%</td>
<td>-11</td>
<td>38.6%</td>
<td>12.15%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
<td>+4</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viqueque</td>
<td>16.29%</td>
<td>+4</td>
<td>12.6%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2.51%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>59.52%</td>
<td>-0.5</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>-15</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>8.43%</td>
<td>+5</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>36.66%</td>
<td>+13</td>
<td>24.01%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3.11%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>29.87%</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>29.02%</td>
<td>-28</td>
<td>57.37%</td>
<td>10.31%</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
<td>+3</td>
<td>8.72%</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: www.staetl.com; Fox 2003, p. 18
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political parties</th>
<th>Description of regional support in 2012</th>
<th>Description of regional support and political representation in 2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ASDT</td>
<td>Lost representation</td>
<td>Aileu is a stronghold for ASDT/PSD. It performed strongly in Ainaro and Manufahi and moderately in Bobonaro, Cova-Lima, Liquiçá and Manatuto. It performed very poorly in Baucau or Viqueque but won modest support in Lautém. Political leadership is concentrated in Aileu, Ainaro, Dili, Manatuto and Manufahi.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNRT</td>
<td>CNRT has strongholds in the central and western districts of Dili and Aileu and, to a lesser extent, Ermera and Liquiçá. It performed strongly in all districts except Viqueque where it performed moderately. Dili, Manatuto, Liquiçá and Oecusse are strongholds for CNRT. It performed strongly in Aileu and Bobonaro. It only won modest support in the eastern districts of Baucau, Lautém and Viqueque as well as the central and western districts of Ainaro, Ermera and Manufahi. Political representation is diverse but concentrated in Baucau, Lautém, Manatuto and Manufahi.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frente-Mudança</td>
<td>Frente-Mudança performed modestly in Oecusse and very poorly in other districts.</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fretilin</td>
<td>Baucau, Lautém and Viqueque remain strongholds for Fretilin. Fretilin performed strongly in the central and western districts of Cova-Lima, Dili, Liquiçá, Manatuto and Manufahi and moderately in the western districts of Bobonaro, Ermera and Oecusse. Baucau, Lautém and Viqueque are strongholds for Fretilin. It performed strongly in Cova-Lima, Dili, Manufahi and Oecusse. It performed modestly in Ermera and Liquiçá. It performed poorly in Ainaro and Aileu. Political leadership is concentrated in Viqueque, Baucau, Dili, Lautém, Bobonaro and Ermera.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KOTA</td>
<td>Lost representation</td>
<td>KOTA has its support base and political representation in Ainaro.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PD</td>
<td>PD performed strongly in the eastern district of Lautém and moderately in the western districts of Ainaro and Cova-Lima. It PD performed strongly in Bobonaro, Cova-Lima and Ermera. It performed very poorly in the eastern districts of Baucau</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
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Performing very poorly in the eastern district of Baucau. and Viqueque but won modest support in Lautém. It performed poorly in the western districts of Aileu and Dili. Political leadership is concentrated in Ermera, Lautém and Viqueque.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PDN</th>
<th>-</th>
<th>PDN has political representation in Bobonaro and Ermera.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PSD</td>
<td>Lost</td>
<td>Aileu is a stronghold for ASDT/PSD. It performed strongly in Ainaro and Manufahi and moderately in Bobonaro, Cova-Lima, Liquiçá and Manatuto. It performed very poorly in Baucau and Viqueque but won modest support in Lautém. Political leadership is concentrated in Aileu and Ermera, but exists in Baucau and Manufahi.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PUN</td>
<td>Lost</td>
<td>PUN has a support base in Ermera. It won its second largest support in Bobonaro. Political leadership is concentrated in Bobonaro, Dili and Ermera.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDERTIM</td>
<td>Lost</td>
<td>UNDERTIM has a support base in Baucau. Political leadership is concentrated in Baucau and Lautém.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.7: Regional distribution of political support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Districts</th>
<th>Description of political support in 2012</th>
<th>Description of political support in 2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aileu</td>
<td>Main parties:</td>
<td>Main parties:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- CNRT (52.54%).</td>
<td>- ASDT/PSD (47.30%); and CNRT (20.46%).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fretilin won around 14%.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ainaro</td>
<td>Main parties:</td>
<td>Main parties:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- CNRT (37.19%).</td>
<td>- ASDT/PSD (29.13%); and KOTA (18.69%).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fretilin and PD won around 13% and 15% respectively.</td>
<td>PD, CNRT and Fretilin won around 10% each.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Main parties:</td>
<td>CNRT won around 13%.</td>
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<tr>
<td>------------</td>
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<td>-----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baucau</td>
<td>Main parties:</td>
<td>- Fretilin (51.38%); and - CNRT (23.05%).</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Main parties:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Fretilin (62.44%).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bobonaro</td>
<td>Main parties:</td>
<td>- CNRT (37.65%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CNRT won around 13%.</td>
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</table>
In comparison with the 2007 elections, the parliamentary election in 2012 indicated that CNRT had significantly expanded its political support. The party has strongholds in the central and western districts of Dili and Aileu and, to a lesser extent, Ermera and Liquiçá. CNRT won its largest increase in support in the western districts of Aileu, Ainaro and Ermera. The party’s performance in the eastern districts of Baucau, Lautém and Viqueque improved modestly or slightly. But its share of the vote in the eastern districts remained disproportionately low, accounting for only around 14 per cent of its total vote, compared with 15 per cent in the 2007 elections. The party performed strongly in the central and western districts of Cova-Lima, Dili, Liquiçá, Manatuto and Manufahi and moderately in the western districts of Bobonaro, Ermera and Oecusse.

Fretilin’s performance in the eastern districts of Baucau, Lautém and Viqueque deteriorated modestly or slightly. But the party’s share of the vote in the eastern districts remains disproportionately high, accounting for around 43 per cent of its total vote, compared with 52 per cent in the 2007 elections. Its share of the vote in the eastern districts continues to decrease, compared with the 2001 Constituent Assembly elections, but the rate of decrease has eased to an extent. These districts remain a stronghold for Fretilin. The party has made some gains in expanding its support. Fretilin’s performance in the central and western districts improved modestly or
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slightly, except for Cova-Lima and Oecusse, where its performance deteriorated modestly or slightly.

PD performed strongly in the eastern district of Lautém and moderately in the western districts of Ainaro and Cova-Lima. It performed very poorly in the eastern district of Baucau. While modest, PD won its largest increase in support in the eastern districts of Lautém and Viqueque. PD’s share of the vote in the eastern districts of Baucau, Lautém and Viqueque accounts for around 22 per cent of its total vote, which is significantly higher than CNRT’s.

Overall PD has consolidated its support from the 2001 Constituent Assembly elections, except for a moderate decrease in support in Ermera, a traditional stronghold and source of political leadership. But in comparison with the 2001 elections, its share of the vote remained the same or increased in all other districts. Some political observers had predicted a potential backlash from PD supporters in Ermera in response to Lasama’s role, as President of PD and former president of the National Parliament, in approving of the joint military police command during the state of siege following the attempted assassinations against Prime Minister Gusmão and president Ramos-Horta on 11 February 2008. The Joint Command was accused of committing serious human rights violations in the western districts in their pursuit of Major Reinado, particularly in Ermera which was a support base for the Petitioners. Interview research in 2008 and 2009 revealed ongoing concerns about this mistreatment.

Taking into account the 50,000 new votes in the 2012 elections, SEARCH (2012, p. 2) determines that Fretilin’s vote increased by around three per cent and CNRT’s by 59 per
SEARCH (2012, p. 2) argues that CNRT’s increased vote was not at the expense of Fretilin, but minor political parties which were a part of the AMP coalition government, including ASDT, PSD and UNDERTIM, which lost their seats. KOTA, a minor party which formed a political alliance with Fretilin in the 4th Constitutional Government, failed to win a seat in the parliament. SEARCH (2012, p. 2) concludes that “...Gusmao has consolidated the anti-FREITILIN vote around his party, wiping out several of his coalition partners in the process; but has failed to make any inroads into FREITILIN’s own support base”.

Districts with majority support for a single party include: Aileu (CNRT); Baucau (Fretilin), as in 2007; and Viqueque (Fretilin), as in 2007. Dili almost falls into this category with 49.5 per cent support for CNRT. The remaining eastern district of Lautém experienced a higher degree of political competition, with Fretilin receiving around 44 per cent of the vote, CNRT around 20 per cent and PD around 20.5 per cent. Some districts are closely contested between CNRT and Fretilin, including the central district of Manufahi and the western district of Cova-Lima. CNRT continues to politically dominate the western districts of Ainaro, Bobonaro, Ermera, Liquiçá, Manatuto and Oecusse.

The relationship between political party affiliation and region remains strong. But Leach (2012e, p. 4) argues that while Fretilin continues to dominate the eastern districts and the other parties the western and central districts, the regional distribution of votes has “moderated slightly” compared with the 2007 elections. Leach (2012e, p. 4 and 2012b, p. 7) concludes that the results of the 2012 elections could represent “a very welcome weakening in links between party affiliation and region, and one that bodes
well for national harmony” or at least an easing of the “peak” of regional political alliances.

There is some evidence for this view, but a detailed analysis of the 2007 and 2012 election results shows that the relationship between party affiliation and region has moderated only very slightly. Any moderation appears to be uneven as a regional analysis of each of the major political parties’ vote tells a different story. CNRT’s share of the vote in the eastern districts remains disproportionately very low, accounting for only around 14 per cent of its total vote in the 2012 elections and 15 per cent in the 2007 elections. The party’s share of the vote in these districts has been consistently very low since it first contested the 2007 elections, despite the fact its leader, Prime Minister Gusmão, is considered to be a political leader capable of uniting all Timorese. While CNRT has made gains in expanding its support in the central and western districts, it has not made gains in the eastern districts. A regional analysis of CNRT’s national vote does not support the argument that the peak of regional political alliances is easing.

Fretilin’s share of the vote in the eastern districts remains disproportionately high, accounting for around 43 per cent of its total vote in the 2012 elections and 52 per cent in the 2007 elections. The party’s share of the vote in these districts has been consistently high since the 2001 Constituent Assembly elections. While the eastern districts remain a stronghold for Fretilin, its share of the vote in these districts further declined by nine per cent in the 2012 elections, which does support the argument that the peak of regional political alliances is easing. If a regional analysis of Fretilin’s national vote includes the 2001 Constituent Assembly elections, the trajectory of
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decline is relatively steep. Fretilin’s share of the vote in Baucau has decreased from 82 per cent in 2001 to 51.38 per cent in 2007. Its share of the vote in Lautém has decreased from 62.8 per cent in 2001 to 43.86 per cent in 2007, where it has lost the support of a majority of voters. Its share of the vote in Viqueque has decreased from 75 per cent in 2001 to 59.52 per cent in 2007. However, while Fretilin’s gains in the central and western districts remain moderate or slight, an easing of regionalism is unlikely to occur. Such easing would involve the major political parties, CNRT and Fretilin, building genuine national representation which is evenly distributed between eastern and western districts.

PD’s share of the vote in the eastern districts accounts remains disproportionately low, accounting for around 22 per cent of its total vote in the 2012 elections and 13 per cent in the 2007 elections. The party, which has traditional strongholds in the western districts of Bobonaro, Cova-Lima and Ermera, increased its share of the vote in Lautém by seven per cent and in Viqueque by five per cent. In the 2012 elections, the party performed strongly in the eastern district of Lautém and moderately in the western districts of Ainaro and Cova-Lima. A regional analysis of PD’s national vote indicates that the party has overcome regionalism to an extent.

The legacy of the 2006 crisis and political rhetoric about the east-west divide

Narratives of the 2006 crisis

During both the presidential and parliamentary election campaigns political leaders often reflected on the political legacy of the 2006 crisis and the east-west divide. Prime
Minister Gusmão spoke frequently about the crisis during his campaign. He identified security sector weakness as one of the root causes of the crisis. At the tenth anniversary of the F-FDTL’s navy, Gusmão called on the F-FDTL and PNTL to support reform of the security sector to ensure a security crisis would not re-emerge (Radio Timor-Leste, 13 January 2012). He also called on the F-FDTL to not become involved in politics during the campaigns.

Prime Minister Gusmão also identified political disunity, including historical grievances and disputes between political leaders, as another root cause of the 2006 crisis (Radio Timor-Leste, 3 February 2012 and Radio Timor-Leste, 27 February 2012). Gusmão said the crisis had emerged because of poor social and economic development in the post-independence period in Timor-Leste. Ongoing political disunity had undermined successive governments’ efforts to improve social and economic conditions. During the presidential election campaign, Gusmão called on candidates to not criticise each other for past behaviour (Independente, 6 February 2012).

During the election campaigns, political leaders provided reassurances that they would support national unity in order to prevent another crisis. In the lead up to the second round of presidential elections, Fretilin Secretary General Alkatiri reassured Timorese that there would not be a repeat of the 2006 crisis following the announcement of the election result (Independente, 13 April 2012). He stated that a “crisis will not happen again in our country because our comrade Lu-Olo does not carry gun, our (former) major general Taur Matan Ruak does not carry gun anymore. (There is) no need to be afraid” (Independente, 13 April 2012).
Despite such reassurances, the events of the 2006 crisis were sometimes lobbed like political grenades between competing groups. In his presidential election campaign platform, Fretilin candidate Lú-Olo characterised the crisis as a power struggle between the institution of the president and prime minister. He criticised Prime Minister Gusmão for departing from his constitutional role as president in a semi-presidential system, stating that:

We all know that the crisis in 2006/07 emerged at the height of continuous institutional conflicts between the then President of the Republic, Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão, and the elected government led by the Prime Minister, Dr. Mari Alkatiri. On one side we had a President of the Republic who considered himself the epitome of a supra-partisan and INDEPENDENT figure, but who could never accept his appropriate place as Head of State and work together with the Government, a Government based on nearly a supermajority in the National Parliament. In summary the President of the Republic did not understand his role as Head of State in the semi-presidential system as prescribed in the Constitution of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste. He therefore did not accept the system established by our Constitution, a Constitution approved by the Constituent Assembly (Guterres 2012, p. 1).

Lú-Olo committed himself to the rule of law, to defending the Constitution and to ensuring that institutional conflict would not contribute to violent conflict. In a veiled criticism of Gusmão’s actions during his term as president, he stated that:
I, “Lú-Olo”, will not be a President who leads the opposition, I will not create opposition to the Government or the Parliament. I will not demand the revision of the Constitution or of the recommended political system because I believe it is the system best suited to our social and political reality. I will support institutional solidarity and respect the powers of each sovereign body. All of my actions will be based on the Constitution of the Republic and the nation’s laws (Guterres 2012, p. 1).

Lú-Olo declared that, should he be elected president, he would be the president for all and would not divide the nation into east and west, stating that he would embrace all Timorese from Tutuala to Oecusse as descendants from one people (Diario Nacional, 2 April 2012). He declared that he would not follow in Gusmão’s footsteps who, he alleged, had divided the nation into east and west during his term as president.

Prime Minister Gusmão appeared to be immune from such political attacks. Criticism of his role during the 2006 crisis did not appear to tarnish his parliamentary election campaign. While opinion polls were not available during the campaign, Gusmão received limited criticism in the Timorese media and appeared to enjoy high levels of trust and confidence, which was eventually reflected in the steep increase in support for CNRT in the election result.

Some political observers expressed concern that two presidential candidates, independent candidate and former minister of interior Rogério Lobato and the successful candidate TMR, had been accused of committing serious crimes during the 2006 crisis. During the presidential election campaign, Angela Freitas, President of the
Labor Party, called on Prime Minister Gusmão and president Ramos-Horta to address the issue of an accused or convicted person nominating themselves for a position in government or public office (Labor Party, 12 January 2012). Lobato was sentenced to seven and a half years in prison in 2007 for transferring weapons to civilians during the crisis. The United Nations Independent Special Commission of Inquiry into the crisis recommended that TMR also be prosecuted for illegal weapons transfer (OHCHR 2006, p 52). However, this recommendation was not adopted by the Timorese Government which sought reconciliation for crimes committed during the crisis through pardons rather than justice.

However, while some brought the suitability of TMR’s presidential candidacy into question, others quickly came to his defence. A Timorese political observer, Filipe Rodrigues, made a counter claim, holding then prime minister Alkatiri and then president Gusmão, as the leaders of the government at the time, solely responsible for the 2006 crisis (Independente, 28 February 2012). He called on both leaders to declare that the crisis was their fault and not to blame others, stating that: “I think that the leaders who ruled this country at that time should declare that they were wrong and they should not shift blame to one person who to be responsible for the crises in 2006, because people are blaming or putting burden on Presidential Candidate Taur Matan Ruak’s shoulders” (Independente, 28 February 2012). Prime Minister Gusmão remained relatively silent on this issue of justice during the election campaigns.

During both the presidential and parliamentary election campaigns, Timorese who had been displaced during the 2006 crisis functioned as a type of lobby group, as though their victimisation had become politicised. An estimated 150,000 Timorese were
displaced during the crisis and, in the post-crisis period, the Timorese Government and NGOs had been preoccupied with the return and reintegration of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and closing IDP camps. The AMP coalition government had provided cash payments to IDPs for compensation and their return and reintegration to their communities of origin. By providing these payments, the Timorese Government had also entrenched their political status. More than 3,000 former IDPs reportedly held protests threatening to boycott the presidential and parliamentary elections, should the Timorese Government not address their concerns about further compensation (Independente, 16 January 2012).

Former members of the Petitioners also functioned as a type of lobby group during the election campaigns. The AMP coalition government had also provided cash payments to former Petitioners for their return and reintegration to their communities of origin. Some political leaders represented themselves as close allies of the former Petitioners, possibly in an effort to win their political support. During the presidential election campaign, independent candidate TMR reportedly declared that former members of the Petitioners were innocent (Independente, 2 March 2012). He claimed that the 2006 crisis within the security sector was a result of “smeared politics” between political leaders (Independente, 2 March 2012). Using an analogy, TMR warned that if the Timorese Government did not pay attention to “its children”, then one day these children would rebel against the government (Independente, 2 March 2012), absolving individual officers of any responsibility for the events of the crisis. TMR claimed that he gave orders not to shoot members of the Petitioners during the Joint Command (following the attempted assassinations of president Ramos-Horta and Prime Minister Gusmão on 11 February 2008), stating that:
You heard in 2008 that the Parliament decided to shoot dead the petitioner group members, but I told my soldiers…not to shoot them…it is impossible that I [would] use gun to shoot my children. My soldiers threw away their gun[s] and said General you come and resolve this case (Independente, 2 March 2012).

TMR even hired Vicente da Conceição, known as Rai Los, the former leader of the Rai Los militia which was armed by former minister Lobato during the crisis, as a member of his campaign team. Fretilin Secretary General Alkatiri reportedly described former Petitioners as “victims” of the crisis, who had fallen into a political trap set by some leaders (Timor Post, 9 April 2012). Some political leaders also made election promises to the former Petitioners. During the presidential election campaign, Alkatiri promised that Fretilin would prioritise defining the status of former soldiers from the Petitioners to expedite any compensation claims.

In the post-2006 crisis period, former IDPs and former members of the Petitioners have become politicised and function as a kind of lobby group. Their politicisation has secured political status and preferential access to state power and resources, in particular through the cash payments scheme. The Timorese Government’s preferential treatment of these groups could potentially exacerbate social divisions. Such treatment could entrench a negative form of political competition in which groups to threaten peace and stability are appeased and ultimately rewarded.
Politically motivated violence

The presidential and parliamentary elections were relatively peaceful with few cases of serious violent conflict. Despite a spike in violence in May 2012, reported incidences of violence remained relatively stable throughout the year. There was no evidence of electoral violence relating to the east-west divide during this period. The security situation had markedly improved in comparison with the 2007 elections.

Table 5.8: Summary of violent incidences from November 2011 to November 2012

Source: BELUN 2012
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Table 5.9: Summary of violent incidences from January to September 2012

![Incidents Per Month (January - September 2012)](image)

Source: Belun and CICR 2012, p. 20

During the presidential and parliamentary election campaigns, Belun monitored electoral violence in Dili and the districts through its network of Early Warning and Response (EWER) Program monitors. Table 5.8 reflects the number of reported cases of violence in Timor-Leste throughout 2012 and table 5.9 reflects the number of cases during the election period. These figures suggest that reported cases of violence were steady during the presidential election campaign and elections in March and April. They also suggest that cases of violence steeply increased during the parliamentary election campaign in May, decreased in June and increased again around the parliamentary election in July.

While the incidents of electoral-related violence during the 2012 elections were lower than the 2007 elections, the number of incidents was still significant and was concentrated in Dili, the centre of violent conflict during the 2006 crisis and 2007
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elections. EWER monitors determined that 20 per cent of reported cases of violence (63 of 330 incidents) were electoral-related during the presidential election campaign and election and 25 per cent (70 of 284 incidents) were electoral-related during the parliamentary election campaign and election (Belun and CICR 2012, pp. 7-8).

Between February and May, the highest incidences of violence occurred in Dili, Viqueque and Liquiça (Belun and CICR 2012, p. 8). Between June and September 2012, the highest instances occurred in Dili, Viqueque and Oecusse.

In the lead up to the presidential elections, minor cases of violence were reported, including stone throwing, verbal threats, property damage and physical assault between party supporters (Belun 2012c, p. 1). Several incidents of campaign material being damaged or destroyed were also reported. Some reported cases of violence were serious. On 20 February three violent incidents took place: a Molotov cocktail was thrown at the STAE office; another at the CNE office; and another at the vehicle of an UN Police (UNPOL) officer (Belun 2012b, p. 1), mirroring a similar incident during the 2007 election when the STAE office in Lospalos in the district of Lautêm was targeted and an STAE officer killed.

During the presidential election campaigns, some cases of pressure, threats and intimidation were reported. Some supporters had reportedly threatened to riot if their candidate did not win (Tempo, 30 March). President Ramos-Horta reported that many Timorese had complained to him about electoral violence during the presidential election campaign. He stated that “many people are scared now about what will come in Suai, Bobonaro. Why are some people campaigning with guns and uniforms? Some (people) have entered some people’s homes and threatened them” (Independente, 23
March 2012). He stated that he had received many text messages from Timorese complaining about such threats (Tempo, 30 March). Ramos-Horta made repeated calls for an election campaign free of pressure, threats and intimidation (Independente, 23 March 2012). The Timorese Government’s security council expressed concern about these reports and summoned the two candidates of the second round of presidential elections, Fretilin candidate Lú-Olo and independent candidate TMR, to discuss the security situation on 29 March (Tempo, 30 March).

The parliamentary election was marred by violent conflict which broke out following the announcement of the election result. According to Fundasaun Mahein (15 July 2012), there was a “swift and violent reaction” within “only a few minutes” after CNRT made its decision to form a coalition government with PD and Frente-Mudança. The NGO reported that “the situation became very tense in the capital, with attacks in Komoro, Becora, Kintal Boot and Santa Cruz neighbourhoods injuring some and damage to public, private, police and UN vehicles” (Fundasaun Mahein, 15 July 2012). In a press conference, PNTL Commissioner Monteiro confirmed that a young male, Armando Pereira Alves, a Fretilin supporter, was killed in the violence on 16 July (Timornewsline, 16 July 2012). In addition, reportedly 63 cars were destroyed, seven houses were torched and five police officers seriously wounded. A group accompanying the funeral procession of Alves reportedly damaged two PNTL vehicles, two UNPOL vehicles and a police station in Uatulari, Viqueque (Radio Timor-Leste, 20 July 2012). But the violence did not affect the UN’s decision to withdraw at the end of 2012.
During the 2012 elections, the security sector remained relatively de-politicised. There was no evidence of a re-emergence of a crisis within the security sector. The Timorese Government delivered consistent, strong messages about the independent role of the security forces. The Ministry of Defence and Security organised a meeting between the PNTL and F-FDTL on 5 January to develop a joint plan to maintain peace and stability during the 2012 elections and to assume full responsibility for security following the departure of the United Nations Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) (Timor-Leste Government, 10 January 2012). During the meeting Prime Minister Gusmão called on the security forces to remain neutral and not engage in partisan conflict. The Secretary of State for Defence, Júlio Tomás Pinto, also called on the forces to undertake their roles and responsibilities according to the law in order to “reflect their neutrality towards society” (Timor-Leste Government, 10 January 2012). Gusmão reminded the F-FDTL and PNTL that members of the security forces were banned from joining political parties in the Timorese Constitution, stating that “our Constitution does not give space to the police and the defence force members to join political parties” (Radio Timor-Leste, 5 January 2012). In a meeting with both F-FDTL and PNTL members, Gusmão stated that the impartiality of security forces would guarantee peace and stability during the election campaign.

Throughout the presidential and parliamentary election campaigns, the leadership of both the PNTL and the F-FDTL reiterated their independent role. On 25 January the PNTL Deputy Commander, Afonso de Jesus, reportedly stated that “principally, we treat all people equally” and confirmed that the PNTL would provide equal protection for all political parties’ throughout the campaign (Timor Post, 25 January 2012). F-FDTL Commander Lere called on military officers to remain impartial and reminded
them that any officers involved in politics should resign to become a politician (Tempo, 28 March 2012).

UNMIT reported that security forces appeared to comply with human rights and electoral legislation in most cases during the presidential elections (UNMIT and UNDP 2012, p. 38). It noted some incidents of PNTL officers breaching the regulations to remain more than 25 meters away from polling centres and to not carry weapons into these centres. UNMIT described F-FDTL as maintaining a “low profile” during both rounds of presidential elections, but noted some reports of F-FDTL officers displaying weapons outside polling centres when voting and one report of a weapon being carried into a centre (UNMIT and UNDP 2012, p. 38).

The impartiality of the security sector was brought into question by some candidates’ use of military uniforms in campaign material. During the presidential election campaign, MP Faustino dos Santos, known as Renan Selak, expressed his concern about TMR and his political ally Prime Minister Gusmão wearing military uniform in campaign posters, claiming that many Timorese in his district of Lautém did not vote freely because they felt intimidated by the use of the uniform (Independente, 21 March 2012). Renan Selak stated that “many voters were asking one another, they were scared that if they did not vote for the uniform and it lost, difficult circumstances or a war might arise in our country” (Independente, 21 March 2012). He also claimed that, by wearing the military uniform, these political leaders were bringing into question the impartiality of the F-FDTL. Powles (27 April 2012) concludes that the presidential election campaign signified the “resurgence” of the F-FDTL in national politics.
Rumours of intimidation by uniformed soldiers at polling stations and strong imagery throughout the campaign of independent presidential candidate TMR and Gusmão in uniform demonstrated the ongoing role of the security sector in politics. But this resurgence of the F-FDTL, underpinned by the valourisation of the resistance movement in the post-independence period, did not contribute to any serious instances of violence during the 2012 elections, let alone the scale of violent conflict seen during the 2006 crisis.

Conclusion

While international observers declared the 2012 elections in Timor-Leste to be free and fair, and the UN and ISF upheld their decision to withdraw from Timor-Leste, the elections alone are not evidence of democratic consolidation. Weaknesses within the political party system, including underdeveloped party platforms, electoral clientilism and political patronage, present significant challenges to consolidation.

The relationship between political party affiliation and region continues to be strong in the post-crisis period in Timor-Leste. The presidential and parliamentary elections in Timor-Leste in 2012 were not as afflicted by regionalism and violent conflict relating to the east-west divide as the 2007 elections. However, the relationship between party affiliation and region has moderated only very slightly. Any moderation appears to be uneven. Analysis of the 2012 elections supported the view of several interviewees that strong local identities divided national politics along regional lines.

Media reported that soldiers participated in TMR’s campaign launch in Dili as well as other campaign events in districts, including Baucau (Sky News, 7 March 2012). Media also reported that soldiers were handing out election pamphlets in support for TMR in Same in the district of Manufahi (Sky News, 7 March 2012). Witnesses claimed that the soldiers were in uniform, armed and arrived in F-FDTL vehicles (Sky News, 7 March 2012).
A district analysis of the parliamentary election results indicates that CNRT’s share of the vote in the eastern districts remains disproportionately low and Fretilin’s share of the vote in these districts remains disproportionately high. CNRT’s share of the vote in the eastern districts has stagnated. Fretilin’s share of the vote in the eastern districts has declined and the party has made some moderate or slight gains in the central and western districts. A regional analysis of PD’s national vote indicates that the party has overcome regionalism to an extent. The 2012 elections revealed that the potential trajectory of regional polarisation, as indicated in the 2007 elections, has declined to an extent.

The two major political parties, CNRT and Fretilin, will continue to be afflicted by regionalism in the medium to long-term. The ongoing significance of regionalism in Timor-Leste has negative implications for nation-building. It exacerbates political patronage and electoral clientilism by politicising lorosa’e and loromonu identities and entrenching a negative form of political competition which pits ‘east’ against ‘west’. While the relationship between party affiliation and region remains strong, Timor-Leste remains vulnerable to identity-based conflict relating to the east-west divide.

Following the 2012 elections, the most significant political division appeared to be between Fretilin and non-Fretilin groups. CNRT’s coalition building with minor political parties Frente-Mudança and PD does not represent an alliance of so-called western parties, as the AMP coalition government may have. It more likely represents a consolidation of non-Fretilin groups against Fretilin. The outbreak of violent conflict following the announcement of a coalition government which excluded Fretilin
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highlights the potential for this division to undermine peace and stability in Timor-Leste.

During the 2012 election campaigns, the 2006 crisis was predominantly remembered by political leaders as a crisis of disunity among themselves. Impunity for serious crimes allegedly committed during the crisis did not deter a majority of Timorese from voting for independent presidential candidate TMR. However, chapter four argued that impunity for such crimes contributed to the ongoing significance of the east-west divide. National unity was considered to be essential to preventing a repeat of the crisis and became a key election theme. However, the dominant construction of national unity during the campaigns evoked a utopian view of unity during the resistance movement. Such a construction of national unity could be fractured by social fault lines which emerged during the resistance and undermine identity-building.

Groups associated with the 2006 crisis, including IDPs and former members of the Petitioners group, functioned as lobby groups during the 2012 election campaigns. Their politicisation has secured political status and preferential access to state power and resources, in particular through the cash payment scheme. The Timorese Government’s efforts to appease or demobilise these groups could contribute to further violent conflict. Such treatment could entrench a negative form of political competition in which groups to threaten peace and stability are appeased and ultimately rewarded. Long-term peace and reconciliation in Timor-Leste cannot be bought with money from the petroleum fund.
State institutions such as the security sector remained relatively de-politicised during the elections, but the valourisation of the resistance movement did potentially blur the lines between the military and national politics in some instances. Given that political party platforms remained underdeveloped, the use of symbols of valour to attract political support could contribute to ongoing populism and political patronage for groups such as veterans.

Strong narratives of national unity appear to have reduced the potential for identity-based conflict in the 2012 elections and represent some progress towards identity-building in Timor-Leste. Political leaders and civil society organisations actively engaged in rhetoric which supported national unity as well as peace and stability during the election campaigns. As a result, regional divisions were unlikely to be inflamed by political manipulation, as had been the case during the 2006 crisis and 2007 elections. However, while such rhetoric contributed to a more peaceful and stable security situation, it did not appear to substantially affect political representation, which remained largely divided along regional lines.
Chapter six: Regionalism, nationalism and state legitimacy in Timor-Leste

Introduction

Chapter five examined the role played by regionalism in the presidential and parliamentary elections held in Timor-Leste in 2012. The 2012 elections were not as afflicted by violent conflict relating to the east-west divide as the 2007 elections. Political rhetoric about reconciliation between ‘east’ and ‘west’ and national unity contributed to relatively peaceful elections, but this did not overcome regionalism in political representation. In order to overcome regionalism, the major political parties – the National Congress for Timorese Reconstruction (CNRT) and the Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor (Fretilin) – would need to build genuine national representation which is substantially distributed across eastern and western districts.

The relationship between political party affiliation and region in Timor-Leste remains very strong. Analysis of the 2012 election results indicates that CNRT’s share of the vote in the eastern districts remains disproportionately low and Fretilin’s share of the vote in these districts remains disproportionately high. These results support the view of some interviewees that strong local identities have divided national politics along regional lines. The ongoing political significance of regionalism in Timor-Leste has exacerbated the effects of political patronage and electoral clientilism by politicising lorosa’e and loromonu identities and entrenching a negative form of political competition which pits ‘east’ against ‘west’. While the relationship between party affiliation and region remains very strong, Timor-Leste will be vulnerable to identity-based conflict relating to the east-west divide.
Chapter six examines the implications of the ongoing political significance of the east-west divide for nation-building in Timor-Leste, in particular for identity-building. The chapter analyses interview research undertaken in Timor-Leste in 2008 and 2009 with Timorese and non-Timorese involved in nation-building in academic, community and government sectors. The first section of chapter six examines the implications of regionalism for the connection between citizens and the state and the transfer of citizens’ allegiance from local to central authority – two criteria of identity-building which are fundamental to the legitimisation and consolidation of the state (Talentino 2004). Chapter one argued that a state which lacks legitimacy may become a site for competition between social groups. This section examines competing claims to state legitimacy in Timor-Leste, including claims made by some of the non-state actors which have challenged the legitimacy of the state.

The second section of chapter six examines the implications of regionalism for the development of a common sense of purpose and the erosion of social divisions in Timor-Leste – two other criteria of identity-building (Talentino 2004). This section explores whether strong local identities obstruct the development of a national political community which transcends social divisions. Chapter one argued that such an inclusive identity is fundamental to guarding the nation-state against further fragmentation.

The final section of chapter six examines the implications of the ongoing significance of the east-west divide for the development of civic nationalism in Timor-Leste, which defines the nation in terms of citizens’ commitment to the state and its institutions as well as civil society. This section explores the political and social conditions for the
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development of civic nationalism. It analyses interviewees’ views on citizenship and how these views relate to the pre-conditions for civic nationalism.

Regionalism and challenges to state legitimacy

State capacity and local identity

Interviewees were asked to identify the major challenges to nation-building in Timor-Leste. Weaknesses in state-building which were most reported by interviewees related to poor socio-economic development and to weak governance, in particular maladministration, corruption, weak rule of law and a weak justice sector. Chapter four argued that these challenges contributed to the emergence of the east-west divide during the 2006 crisis.

These weaknesses in state-building undermine identity-building, in particular the connection between citizens and the state and the transfer of citizens’ allegiance from local to central authority – two criteria of identity-building which are fundamental to the legitimisation and consolidation of the state. Chapter two argued that UN nation-building efforts, which were exclusively central government oriented, excluded many Timorese from the nation-building process and undermined the development of a cohesive national political community. The United Nations Transitional Authority in East Timor (UNTAET) is widely regarded as assuming that a power vacuum existed in Timor-Leste and attempting to construct a new state which marginalised traditional social and political structures and customary governance. A Timorese academic said that Timor-Leste was not a “blank piece of paper” upon independence (interviewee no
40, personal communication, 17 November 2009). A Timorese peace-building officer said that UN nation-building efforts had impeded the development of a Timorese vision for the nation-state and, as a result, Timorese could not “find their own identity” (interviewee no 36, personal communication, 6 November 2009). UN nation-building efforts excluded Timorese in rural areas in particular, where around 70 per cent of Timorese live. During the field research in 2008 and 2009, it was evident that some interviewees felt a sense of alienation and marginalisation from the nation-building project in Timor-Leste. Such alienation and marginalisation contributed to a disconnection between Timorese and the new nation-state. The rejection of a UN, and not Timorese, vision for the nation-state underpinned this disconnection. However what did a Timorese vision for the nation-state look like? The ongoing significance of traditional political and social structures and customary governance was reported by interviewees as the most significant obstacle to the connection between citizens and the state. Chapter two argued that there was a broad consensus among scholars and practitioners that, while the state was based on modern liberal democratic values and practices, traditional structures and customary governance continued to underpin social understandings in Timor-Leste. Local traditions in Timor-Leste are based on the *uma lulik*, sacred house, and entrenched local identities which are rooted in family networks and specific places (Mearns 2008, p. xvii). These traditions bestow cultural, political and religious authority on the head of an ancestral line and a ritual leader. Mearns (2008, p. xvii) argues that “critical to many East Timorese people’s sense of who they are then is this sacred attachment to particular land and a particular place”. In addition, he argues that rural-urban migration has not weakened this attachment to land and place. The nation-state is comprised of citizens who have “highly localised religious and ritual
practices that placed people in a special relationship to their particular villages and land” (Mearns 2008, p. xvii, McWilliam 2005 and McWilliam 2008).

Interviewees emphasised that modern liberal democratic values and practices clashed with traditional culture in Timor-Leste. Liberal democratic values lacked cultural resonance in Timor-Leste. These values are based on the concept that individuals are equal and should have equal representation and participation in a state. This concept is in stark contrast to traditional social and political structures which are based on a holistic system of hierarchical relationships relating to ancestral legitimacy. The liberal peace project in Timor-Leste has resulted in ‘virtual peace’, which is reflected in the fact that the state, while having an appearance of a liberal democratic state, lacks substance (Richmond and Franks 2007, pp. 17-18). The introduction of liberal democratic values and practices relating to political party competition and multi-party elections disrupted traditional political structures. A senior CNRT party official said democratic values were not broadly accepted by Timorese (interviewee no 8, personal communication, 7 February 2009 and 4 October 2009). Several interviewees emphasised that democratic consolidation in Timor-Leste, including the internalisation of democratic values, constitutes a long-term process. The emphasis on the long-term nature of democratisation in Timor-Leste is a significant finding of the interview research. These interviewees remind those involved in nation-building that democratic values and processes remain unconsolidated until they are internalised and establish deep roots in Timorese society. During this period of consolidation, the new liberal democratic state in Timor-Leste is vulnerable to identity-based conflict as political leaders and interest groups jostle for power in the nation-state.
The clash of paradigms between traditional and modern structures has resulted in competing sources of authority and legitimacy in Timor-Leste. Traditional leaders enjoy authority and legitimacy which is defined by traditional social understandings based on the *uma lulik* and family networks. There is a broad consensus that in the post-independence period these traditional understandings continue to inform social relations, in particular in rural areas where the state has limited reach and appears distant, geographically as well as psychologically (Cummins and Leach 2012, p. 96-7 and Loch 2009). Cummins and Leach (2012, p. 101) conclude that competing sources of authority and legitimacy may exacerbate social and political tensions, stating that:

> It is clear that local people are negotiating the two systems in ways intended to confer legitimacy through both worldviews. This act of negotiation is a pragmatic one, seeking to find local leaders who will be able to fill a diverse range of community needs that encompass the temporal and the sacred. However, this act of negotiation carries internal tensions that become increasingly important when considering how authority is exercised.

A large majority of interviewees argued that political leaders were not representative, but pursued personal, family or regional interests rather than national ones, reflecting a distrust of politicians observed in many countries. Several interviewees argued that corruption had exacerbated growing frustration with the state and further eroded citizens’ connection to the state and support for its civic values, in particular the rule of law. A Fretilin MP identified overcoming corruption as one of the key priorities of nation-building (interviewee no 16, personal communication, 14 October 2009 and 15
October 2009). The role played by leaders in manipulating the 2006 crisis had damaged, possibly critically, public trust and confidence in their leadership.

Interviewees did not express pride in the state and its institutions or political leaders, with the exception of Prime Minister Xanana Kay Rala Gusmão and former president Jose Ramos-Horta. Such sentiment is remarkable following the creation of a long-desired independent nation-state.

The disconnection between citizens and the state and citizens’ ongoing allegiance to local authority is exacerbated by the incapacity of the state and its institutions to provide for the welfare of citizens. This incapacity has contributed to widespread discontent and disenchantment with the state. Chapter four argued that the east-west divide had emerged primarily in the context of widespread poverty. Ongoing poor socio-economic development has sustained feelings of dissatisfaction and disillusionment in the post-2006 crisis period. Chapter two demonstrated that living conditions had not improved, with around half of Timorese living below the poverty line. Wealth distribution in Timor-Leste remains uneven, in particular between rural and urban areas.

Some interviewees argued that the transfer of citizens’ allegiance from local to central authority had not yet taken place because local communities, not the state, primarily provided for the welfare of their members. As a result, there appeared to be limited tangible benefits of cooperation with the state and between different groups. The majority of Timorese live in rural areas, but the reach of the state and its institutions is limited beyond the capital of Dili. In rural areas, the state is limited to administrative posts, district police stations and possibly health centres (Myrttinen 2013, p. 210). Basic services are underdeveloped and symbols of the state such as national monuments
rarely dot the landscape. In Dili, however, there are many prominent government buildings such as the Palácio do Governo, the presidential palace and the ministry of foreign affairs where prominent representatives of government work, which display the national flag and are often sites for national commemorations or state visits. There are also many state-sponsored banners and murals displayed around the city promoting national unity as well as peace and stability. Basic services are more developed in Dili than in rural areas. Dili residents are given daily reminders of the state and its existence by, for example, seeing political leaders’ convoys of state vehicles halting traffic in the streets of the city. Mears (2008, p. 45) argues that “life has never been lived ‘nationally’ by most of Timor-Leste’s population. Even in this era of speed of light virtual experience, most people in Timor-Leste live out their lives in largely ‘local’ universes”. Several interviewees noted that government did not have the capacity to deliver basic services to citizens, and a majority of these services were delivered by non-state actors instead.

The majority of violent conflict during the 2006 crisis occurred in Dili. This is related to the fact that state power and resources are concentrated in the capital city. Dili is a significant site of competition for these resources between different groups which have migrated to the city. In the post-independence period, rapid rural-urban migration has taken place because there are far greater economic opportunities in Dili than in the districts. If the city is conceptualised by its economic significance, this may partly explain why Timorese in Dili, and not the districts, were predominantly mobilised during the crisis. In particular, long-standing economic competition between lorosa’e and loromonu in the market place in Dili may have fuelled such mobilisation, because the crisis was framed in terms of the east-west divide.
Several interviewees argued that uneven development, in particular economic disparity between districts and regions in Timor-Leste, undermined identity-building. There was a broad consensus that unequal levels of socio-economic development created an environment for further social and political conflict. Several interviewees highlighted the growing disparity between rural and urban areas. A Fretilin MP said nation-building was taking place only at the national level in Dili (interviewee no 16, personal communication, 14 October 2009 and 15 October 2009). Power and resources were concentrated in Dili and had not yet spread to the districts. A Timorese peace-building officer said in the post-independence period, socio-economic development should be even, resources should be distributed equally and services experienced equally across regions to support the nation-building process because competition between groups for scarce resources undermined this process (interviewee no 2, personal communication, 6 December 2008 and 19 August 2009). A Fretilin MP said that the state was not perceived to represent all citizens equally (interviewee no 16, personal communication, 14 October 2009 and 15 October 2009). Such a perception weakened the connection between citizens and the state. Some interviewees criticised successive governments for enhancing social divisions through political patronage and electoral clientilism. The relationship between socio-economic development and the ongoing significance of the east-west divide is a significant finding of the interview research. Even development and the equal distribution of resources across regions would not only address one of the root causes of the emergence of the divide during the 2006 crisis, but enhance the connection between citizens and the state and therefore support the consolidation and legitimacy of the state and safeguard it against further identity-based conflict.
Chapter two argued that the incapacity of the state to provide for the welfare of citizens had contributed to widespread dissatisfaction and disillusionment with the state and was a potential source of social and political conflict (Richmond and Franks 2007, p. 18). Such dissatisfaction is vulnerable to manipulation by political actors jostling for power in the nation-state. Leach (2012a, p. 221) argues that poor socio-economic development exacerbates social divisions as groups compete for scarce resources, stating that “regional and clan identities are more likely to be seen as effective political vehicles in the absence of a functional state”. Several interviewees identified social jealousy as the most significant cause of conflict in the post-independence period. These interviewees extrapolated that the instrumentalisation of social divisions to articulate demands for scarce resources entrenched such divisions. In the post-2006 crisis period, competition for scarce resources has been heightened by the return and reintegration of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), with conflict over land and property, as well as by the AMP coalition government’s introduction of a cash payment scheme, which exacerbated uneven wealth distribution.

*State legitimacy*

Chapter one argued that a state which lacks legitimacy and authority may become a site for competition between social groups. Interview research indicates that in the post-independence period in Timor-Leste the connection between citizens and the state and the transfer of citizens’ allegiance from local to central authority is weak and, as a result, the state lacks local legitimacy and has not yet been consolidated. In this political context, non-state actors have emerged to directly challenge the legitimacy of the state. A senior CNRT party official argued that the state needed deep roots in
society in order to be able to withstand such challenges to its legitimacy (interview no 2, personal communication, 6 December 2008 and 19 August 2009). Such deep roots contributed to widespread acceptance of and commitment to the state. Such acceptance and commitment strengthened the resilience of the state against challenges to its legitimacy. Furthermore, groups which made such challenges were more likely to be located at the periphery, rather than the centre, of the nation-state and represent small interest groups.

These non-state actors include martial arts groups (MAGs), ritual arts groups (RAGs) and veterans’ organisations (Myrttinen 2013, p. 209). MAGs define themselves using imported martial arts skills, such as the Sacred Brotherhood of the Lotus Heart (PSHT), Sacred Monkey and Kung Fu Master. RAGs define themselves using traditional rituals and spirituality, such as 7-7, Colima 2000 and Wise Children of the Land (Korka or KORK). Veterans’ organisations represent discontent, particularly as expressed by disaffected former members of the resistance movement, such as Sagrada Familia and the Popular Council for the Defence of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste (CPD-RDTL). CPD-RDTL has a significant national profile. In particular, the group rejects the demobilisation of the military wing of the resistance movement, the National Liberation Forces of Timor-Leste (FALINTIL), and the establishment of the FALINTIL Timor-Leste Defence Force (F-FDTL). Many of these groups have their roots in the resistance movement. Myrttinen estimates that the number of Timorese participating in such groups reaches tens of thousands.

MAGs, RAGs and veterans’ organisations have adopted the narrative of the resistance movement to bolster their legitimacy and moral and political authority as well as to
articulate their demands to access state power and resources (Myrttinen 2013, p. 217). Myrttinen (2013, p. 215) argues that “no small number of them feel marginalised by and disaffected with the post-conflict settlement”. These groups have tended to attract members who were marginalised during the resistance. Based on his interviewees with members, Myrttinen (2013, p. 215) reports that:

This paradox is especially apparent when looking at those who were members of the civilian resistance, who were of the younger resistance generation, or those who were politically marginalised through factional struggles within the Falintil – such as the members of the CPD-RDTL and the Sagrada Familia.

The narrative of the resistance movement is grounded not only in the past and present – seeking recognition for past contributions to the resistance and compensation in the post-independence period – but also in the future. The resistance is often characterised as *a luta continua*, the struggle continues (Myrttinen 2013, p. 216). There is growing dissatisfaction among many Timorese about the lack of economic benefits from independence and the petroleum fund. Some veterans’ organisations believe that the struggle must continue until these benefits are delivered.

Myrttinen (2013, p. 209) describes the relationship between the state and MAGs, RAGs and veterans’ organisations as “complex and ambiguous”. They share some “visions and myths” which the state uses to claim its legitimacy, while contesting the legitimacy of the state in three key ways: questioning the state’s legal basis; criticising the state’s effectiveness; and providing basic services which parallel services provided by a state,
such as security and social services (Myrttinen 2013, p. 209). Myrttinen (2013, pp. 217-8) states that:

Both the state and non-state actors subscribe to a founding myth of the nation in which the resistance and its role in the struggle play a central role. What remains contested, however, is who gets to define this myth and the symbols and rituals linked to it. This is not only a debate about the past, but also one about access to economic benefits, social standing and political power in the present. Importantly, however, the centrality of the struggle narrative and of its protagonists is also projected into the future: it is in the hands of the past, present and future resistance fighters to fulfil the dreams of a truly independent, just, harmonious, developed nation-state of Timor-Leste.

The existence of a state is evident through material elements, including governmental structures, the presence of its representatives and symbols as well as immaterial elements (Myrttinen 2013, p. 210). Myrttinen (2013, p. 210) argues that in Timor-Leste “these languages of stateness are mimicked by non-state actors to contest the state’s authority and hegemony. By ‘becoming like the state’ the non-state actors seek to undermine the state while also reinforcing it”. Like the state, MAGs, RAGs and veterans’ organisations manifest themselves through material elements such as buildings marked with flags, signs or logos and immaterial elements such as graffiti, uniforms, parades, ID cards, ritual scars and tattoos (Myrttinen 2013, pp. 210-1). In addition, these groups provide basic services for communities such as informal security and, in the case of veterans’ organisations, pensions and other services for veterans (Myrttinen 2013, p. 211). By usurping the central role of the government in delivering
basic services, the non-state actors contribute to the erosion of state legitimacy and authority. Hansen and Stepputat (2006, p. 306) argue that the contestation of the state by non-state actors contributes to a ‘fragmented system of authority’.

Chapter one argued that the disconnection between citizens and the state undermines the legitimacy and consolidation of the state. Nation-building efforts in Timor-Leste have adopted a state-centric approach which has failed to take into account the local context and consequently, resulted in a state and institutions which lack local legitimacy. In the post-independence period in Timor-Leste, non-state actors have emerged which contest the legitimacy of the state. These actors perform some of the functions of the state at the community level, in particular by providing for the welfare of citizens.

Localism, regionalism, and nationalism

Common sense of purpose and erosion of social divisions

Chapter two argued that traditional culture in Timor-Leste was grounded in strong local identities based on kin based systems and specific places. Interview research indicates that local identities remain strong in the post-independence period. Analysis of both the 2007 and 2012 elections supports the view of some interviewees that strong local identities have divided national politics along regional lines. The relationship between political party affiliation and region remains very strong.

Leach et al’s (2013, pp. 455-7) survey of tertiary students in Timor-Leste in 2012 revealed strong affiliations at the village level (79.5 per cent reported feeling very close
or close) as well as the national level (92.5), and less strong affiliations at the sub-national level (63 for sub-district and 62.5 for district). The strong affiliation with the national level may reflect the fact that the emergence of the east-west divide during the 2006 crisis did not represent a challenge to the existence of the nation-state, rather to the roles played by different groups within that nation-state. In a comparative study of surveys undertaken in 2002, 2007 and 2010, Leach (2012a, p. 234) argues that affiliation to the district or sub-district level peaked in 2007 but steeply declined by 2010, potentially reflecting that the politicisation of lorosa’e and loromonu identities during the 2006 crisis had subsequently declined. However, analysis of the 2012 elections indicates that the relationship between political party affiliation and region remains very strong. Leach et al’s (2013, pp. 466-7) survey also revealed that a majority of students surveyed (62.4 per cent) preferred to ‘maintain their distinct languages, customs and traditions’, rather than ‘adapt and blend into one society’, which could indicate that local identities are stronger than a national identity.

Strong local identities in themselves do not undermine the development of a national political community as individuals may have multiple identifications. However, chapters three and four argued that local identities in Timor-Leste closely relate to a divisive national discourse about the competing roles of lorosa’e and loromonu during the resistance movement. The resistance was strongest in the eastern region of Timor-Leste because of its strategic location, contributing to a perception the eastern region put up a stronger fight. While this discourse is built on stereotypes about the role played by lorosa’e and loromonu during the resistance, it has informed antagonism between both groups in the post-independence period as well as competing claims over relative sacrifice and suffering during the resistance. Sahin (2011, p. 237) argues that:
It should, however, be noted that the issue here is not about whether or not the east-west divide is a real, long-standing or artificial, politically manipulated identity problem or merely a stereotype. It is, in fact, a subject for endless academic debates whether or not collective identities are real or artificial phenomena (see, for example, Anderson 1991; Gellner 1983; Hobsbawm 1990; Smith 1991) or, more specifically, what makes an identity be perceived as real and others as mere fabrications. What matters more in the case of Timor-Leste is the emergence of regionalism, albeit somewhat unexpectedly, as a divisive political issue that exemplifies the intrinsically power-ridden nature of democratic nation-state-building as a socio-political process of transformation.

Several interviewees identified the strength of local identities as one of the most significant challenges to the development of a unifying national political community. The emergence of the east-west divide during the 2006 crisis was depicted by these interviewees as evidence of strong local identities subsuming a weak or even failing national political community.

Interview research indicates that identity-building in Timor-Leste is affected by narratives of nationalism which have emerged in the post-independence period. Around half of interviewees questioned the legitimacy of the current construction of nationalism, which is grounded in the resistance movement. Interviewees identified two key issues relating to this construction of nationalism: first, it is exclusive; and second, it lacks local legitimacy. Some interviewees argued that this construction of nationalism contributes to identity-based conflict.
Such narratives of nationalism are part of a framework used to view and interpret the world, in particular to make sense of balances of social and political power and hegemony. Ozkirimli (2005, p. 163) argues that nationalism is not only a political discourse, but a “way of thinking that impinges upon our entire view of the world”. Discourses of nationalism divide the world into “us” and “them” and present a version of the nation which is “authentic”, and, as Ozkirimli (2005, p. 164) argues, “the nationalist discourse does not arise in a social vacuum, but makes ample use of state and civil society institutions to sustain and reproduce itself”.

While narratives of nationalism present a version of the nation which is unified and homogeneous, they also “enable rivals of the nascent nation-state to construct alternative forms of political and even national identity”, because the state can “never eliminate alternative constructions of the nation among its constituent communities” (Ozkirimli 2005, p. 168). Verdery argues that, in order to overcome this criticism of nationalism, scholars should view the nation as a symbol and discourses of nationalism as “…having multiple meanings, offered as alternatives and competed over by different groups manoeuvring to capture the symbol’s definition and its legitimising effects” (cited in Ozkirimli 2005, p. 169). As a result, scholars become more aware of the social divisions which underpin social and political conflict. These divisions are used as “a form of currency” within the nation and are used to trade in social and political conflict over issues which might not relate to the nation at all (Verdery, cited in Ozkirimli 2005, p. 169).
Narratives of nationalism are informed by spatial, temporal, symbolic and everyday dimensions (Ozkirimli 2005, pp. 179-94). In terms of the temporal dimension, interpretations of the past play an important role in informing the present and future. Such collective remembering and forgetting is described as “a kind of amnesia”, as past events and symbols which undermine the official historical record are excluded (Ozkirimli 2005, p. 190). Ozkirimli (2005, p. 184) argues that “we can easily unmask these claims once we see the past as providing a legacy of traditions and symbols for individuals and groups, and not as a fixed inheritance”. National history is in a constant state of being re-written and this re-writing process reflects current balances of social and political power and hegemony. Ozkirimli (2005, p. 184) argues that:

…nations do not have a single history: there are competing narratives to be told. Different factions, classes, religions, genders or ethnicities always struggle for the power to speak for the nation, and to present their particular voice as the voice of the whole nation, defining the history of other subsections accordingly. In other words, ‘the voice of the nation’ is a fiction.

Divisive narratives of nationalism undermine progress towards the erosion of social divisions because they prevent reconciliation between different groups. Sahin (2011, p. 238) argues that reconciliation plays an important role in nation-building, in particular in identity-building, because it transforms divisive national discourses which inform antagonism between groups. Reconciliation is conceptualised as a:
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…point of encounter where individuals and groups voluntarily come together to communicate and reflect on their experiences of conflict in the search for an interdependent and just society through acknowledging what happened in the past and envisioning a common future. It therefore provides a significant nation-building exercise that includes the promotion of social communication and compiling the narrations of a national political and social history (Sahin 2011, p. 238).

However, interview research indicates that divisive national discourse about the competing roles of lorosa’e and loromonu during the resistance movement has not yet been reconciled.

Chapter one argued that constructions of nationalism reflected social and political hierarchies. Diverse historical narratives exist in Timor-Leste in the post-independence period and reflect intergenerational fault lines between those who were involved in the resistance movement during Portuguese colonialism and those during Indonesian occupation (Leach 2008, p. 145), as well as the other social divisions identified in chapter four, including between mestiço and rai nain, pro-autonomy and pro-integration groups and diaspora and home-stayers. These divisions all relate to constructions of nationalism which are used by various actors to establish varying degrees of authenticity and, as a result, are exclusive. These varying degrees of authenticity inform competing claims to access to state power and resources as well as social status. Those who are deemed to be truly Timorese are deemed to be most entitled to state power and resources. Those who are deemed to have made the greatest sacrifice during the resistance movement are deemed to be most entitled to the benefits of independence.
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These two concepts are inter-related because those who are portrayed as ‘heroes’ are also portrayed as truly Timorese. Leach (2008, p. 145) describes these competing claims as “wider ‘history wars’ within the former independence movement over the symbolic ‘ownership’ of the independence struggle, and its core historical narratives”. Claims of authenticity “imply that there is a single genuine interpretation of a national culture, whereas all the others are factitious and invalid” and may be used as instruments of social oppression (Ozkirimli 2005, pp. 168-9). Ozkirimli (2005, p. 169) concludes that narratives of nationalism may become “…a vehicle for silencing dissident voices and moulding the entire society in a particular image with all its authoritarian and repression implications”, stating that:

…given the existence of multiple competing definitions of national identity, we should be able to ask which version will be victorious and why. In other words, we should investigate the process through which a successful version presents itself as authentic, camouflaging all traces of construction and competition.

Chapter three argued that in the post-independence period in Timor-Leste, when the hard fought war against Indonesia had been won, lorosa’e claimed to have to have won the war through their sustained resistance in the eastern region of Timor-Leste. This narrative demonised loromonu for putting up a weaker fight than lorosa’e. In addition to putting up a weaker fight, this narrative demonised loromonu for participating in the militia groups, the proxies of the Indonesian military, which reigned terror in the lead up to and following the referendum for independence on 30 August 1999, and also portrayed loromonu as being more in favour of autonomy than independence.
This narrative about the role played by *lorosa’e* and *loromonu* during the resistance movement is part of a broader narrative which has emerged in the post-independence period in Timor-Leste relating to economic, social and political competition over relative entitlement of particular individuals and groups to the benefits of independence. Frustration over slow and uneven socio-economic development and discontent and disenchantment with the state has grown in the post-independence period. In this political context, narratives of sacrifice and suffering become a political commodity used to articulate demands for access to state resources and power – scarce resources. Political parties and leaders used their contribution to the resistance movement to bolster their legitimacy and moral and political authority, with some claiming that *lorosa’e* should receive more positions in the new state than *loromonu*. This narrative about the role played by *lorosa’e* and *loromonu* during the resistance is one thread woven into a broader narrative of entitlement.

Chapter two argued that during the 2006 crisis Timor-Leste was described as a state in search of a nation. The current construction of Timorese nationalism is grounded in the resistance movement. Resistance is central to national story telling in Timor-Leste, but this story telling has divided, rather than united, Timorese in the post-independence period. This construction of nationalism is layered with the divisions inherent in the resistance against Indonesian occupation, one of which is the east-west divide. Not only did the emergence of the divide during the crisis in Timor-Leste have significant implications for state-building within the security sector, it indicated that the identity-building process was fragile or even failing. Interviewees argued that the emergence of the divide during the crisis had undermined the development of a cohesive national
political community. A CNRT MP said that “in the crisis everything that was built was destroyed. We need to start everything again” (interviewee no 33, personal communication, 3 November 2009).

Some interviewees argued that the emergence of the east-west divide during the 2006 crisis had contributed to the realisation of a new national consciousness. A senior UNDERTIM party official argued that the emergence of the divide had encouraged Timorese to “join hands, hearts and minds for the future, for the new generation” (interviewee no 23, personal communication, 22 October 2009, 23 October 2009 and 26 October 2009). The official believed that Prime Minister Gusmão and former president Ramos-Horta were political leaders who were capable of overcoming regionalism and building national unity. However, analysis of the 2012 elections reveals that, while political rhetoric about reconciliation between ‘east’ and ‘west’ and national unity contributed to relatively peaceful elections, it did not overcome regionalism in political representation. This would require the major political parties, CNRT and Fretilin, to build genuine national representation, which is substantially distributed across eastern and western districts.

Interview research has confirmed that the current construction of nationalism in Timor-Leste, which is based on the resistance movement and layered with the divisions of the resistance, is exclusive and lacks local legitimacy. Such a construction of nationalism denies the equality of citizens, who should have equal representation and participation in the state. Most significantly, it denies that all citizens are entitled to the benefits of independence, regardless of competing social divisions. Ongoing exclusion would only exacerbate growing frustration with the state. Long-term peace and stability is
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contingent on the development of a unifying national political community. There is potential for civic nationalism to redress the imbalance of power reflected in the current construction of nationalism in Timor-Leste.

Regionalism and civic nationalism

Nationalism theory identifies three broad models of nationalism: ethnic nationalism (also labelled as cultural, collective or organic nationalism); ethno-symbolism nationalism; and civic nationalism (also labelled political, individualistic or voluntary nationalism) (Ozkirimli 2005, p. 22, Smith 1991 and Smith 2008). These models of nationalism relate to an individual’s membership in the nation (Ozkirimli 2005, p. 22). Civic nationalism defines the nation in terms of citizens’ commitment to the state and its institutions as well as civil society (Ozkirimli 2005, p. 23). Pitty and Leach (2004, p. 94) argue that civic nationalism defines the nation as a “legal-political community of people” who are united by a common state and its institutions, rights and responsibilities, civic values such as the rule of law and human rights, and a historical identification with a political territory. According to Ignatieff, civic nationalism means that “the nation should be composed of all those – regardless of race, colour, creed, gender, language or ethnicity – who subscribe to the nation’s political creed” (cited in Ozkirimli 2005, p. 23). Civic nationalism is subjective, individualistic and, as a result, voluntary and inclusive.

In contrast, ethnic nationalism defines the nation in terms of citizens’ common descent and culture and is exclusive. Unlike civic nationalism, ethnic nationalism is not based on shared rights and responsibilities, but on shared language, religion, customs and
traditions. Unlike civic nationalism, ethnic nationalism is objective, collective and involuntary. Ozkirimli (2005, p. 23) argues that “ethnic nationalism claims that an individual’s deepest attachments are inherited, not chosen; hence membership in the nation is not a matter of will. It can only be acquired by birth, through blood”.

Ethno-symbolism critiques modernist interpretations of nationalism which argue that concepts of nation and nationalism, both ideology and movement, are modern and are products of modernisation. In contrast, ethno-symbolism places symbolic, rather than structural, elements at the centre of the analysis of nations and nationalism. Ethno-symbolism argues that cultural elements, including symbols, myths, memories, values, rituals and traditions, play a significant role in shaping political and social structures and a “common consciousness” within a community (Smith 2008, p. 25). Cultural elements provide a community with distinctive “symbolic repertoire” relating to language, religion, customs and institutions and such repertoire may be used to define the nation, in particular to delineate one nation from another (Smith 2008, p. 25). Such elements connect members of a community with their ancestors and past. This sense of continuity promotes widespread acceptance of and commitment to the nation. It also contributes to the creation and sustainability of a national identity. Like ethnic nationalism, ethno-symbolist nationalism is objective, collective and involuntary.

One of the main criticisms of ethno-symbolism is that it fails to recognise the role played by political elite in constructing or manipulating pre-modern cultural elements because it assumes that such elements exist and are homogenous, rather than heterogeneous. However, their significance could be based on their use by political elite, rather than simply their existence.
The distinction between ethnic, ethno-symbolist and civic nationalism is heavily contested. There are two main criticisms of this distinction. First, the distinction between culture and politics is problematic. If ethnic nationalism is interpreted narrowly as presuming common descent, few nations could be defined as models of ethnic nationalism, but if ethnic nationalism is interpreted widely as based on a common culture, nations defined as models of civic nationalism, which have a shared political culture, could also be defined as models of ethnic nationalism (Ozkirimli 2005, p. 24).

The distinction between ethnic and civic nationalism has an “oxymoronic quality” (Ozkirimli 2005, p. 24). Ozkirimli (2005, p. 29) states that “what gives nationalism its power is its ability to bring the cultural and the political together”. Yet political culture can evolve and is not limited by an exclusive ethnic bias. Second, the distinction between voluntary and inherited membership of a nation is problematic. Whether a nation is defined by a model of ethnic or civic nationalism, citizenship is generally acquired by birth, rather than an act of will (Ozkirimli 2005, p. 25). Third, this distinction may be a normative one, which defines one model as morally acceptable or good and another as immoral or bad (Ozkirimli 2005, p. 26). Ozkirimli (2005, p. 26) notes that civic nationalism is generally associated with liberal democratic states in the “West” and ethnic nationalism with the “Rest”. Pitty and Leach (2004, p. 94) argue that nationalism may be influenced by both ethnic and civic forms of nationalism, but the “relative emphasis” on either model “…is crucial in determining the character and implications of a particular nationalist ideology”.

Some interviewees argued that an ethnic model of nationalism would unify and include all Timorese. Trindade (2008, p. 163) argues that, while diverse ethno-linguistic groups
exist in Timor-Leste, they are united by a shared traditional culture rather than divided by ethno-linguistic differences. These shared cultural practices of contemporary Timorese communities include: feto – uma mane, marriage exchange relationships; uma lulik, sacred houses; mamah bua malus, chewing of betel nut by elders; tais, traditional cloth; and traditional dance such as tebe-tebe and kore-metan, to commemorate the first anniversary of a community member’s death. The traditional culture shared by diverse ethno-linguistic groups in Timor-Leste could overcome other social divisions. Trindade (2008, p. 172) states that the construction of a national identity based on such a shared culture would encourage Timorese to “...view themselves as one people, descended from one common ancestor and coming from one founding uma lulik”. Trindade (2008, p. 173) criticises UN nation-building efforts in the post-independence period for marginalising traditional culture. A Timorese academic said that nationalism had been constructed by a small group comprising a Portuguese-speaking political elite to the exclusion of all others (interviewee no 15, personal communication, 9 October 2009). The elite were disconnected from traditional culture, which they viewed as backward. They espoused modern liberal democratic values and principles and, as a result, as argued by Trindade and others, the state had marginalised traditional culture. Several interviewees argued that nationalism should be based on language, in particular Tetun. A PD MP even described Tetun as the only common identity marker in Timor-Leste (interviewee no 19, personal communication, 19 October 2009 and 28 October 2009). A senior UNDERTIM party official argued that Tetun unified the country “from east to west and south to north” (interviewee no 23, personal communication, 22 October 2009, 23 October 2009 and 26 October 2009). However, I would argue that such ethnic nationalism could exclude some Timorese, in particular two groups: first, the urban diaspora who may have been separated from their local or ancestral communities; and
second, the Chinese, Arab and European minority ethnic groups which may not share a similar culture.

Civic nationalism, which defines the nation in terms of citizens’ commitment to the state and its institutions, could be more inclusive. However, interview research indicates that the pre-conditions for civic nationalism do not yet exist in Timor-Leste, when considering the connection between citizens and the state and the transfer of citizens’ allegiance from local to central authority. In addition, interview research indicated that a legal-political community of people did not yet exist in Timor-Leste as citizens were not yet united by a common state and its institutions, rights and responsibilities and civic values such as the rule of law and human rights. But it did indicate that citizens had a strong a historical identification with the territory of Timor-Leste.

In a survey of tertiary students in Timor-Leste and Melanesian countries, Leach et al (2013, p. 461) reported that speaking the official national language of Tetun (88.5 per cent of respondents reported as very important) and ‘feeling’ Timorese (88.5) were the most important indicators of ‘being Timorese’. Other important indicators included being a citizen (85.5), being born in Timor-Leste (84.5), having respect for custom (83.5) and having respect for law (82.5) (p. 461). The least important indicators included speaking Portuguese (52), having lived in Timor-Leste (60.5) and being Christian (78) (p. 461). However, while citizenship and civic values such as respect for law are identified as important indicators by students in the survey, interview research indicates that such liberal democratic values and practices have not yet been internalised by Timorese. A senior political adviser said that “Timorese understand democracy in
their minds, but do not yet accept it in their hearts” (interviewee no 21, personal communication, 20 October 2009).

In a survey of tertiary students in 2012, Leach et al (2013, p. 464) reported that less students were proud of the way democracy worked (79.5 per cent) and the fair and equal treatment of all social groups (76.7) than Timor-Leste’s unique culture (96) and history (97.5). These figures reflect the fact that nationalism in Timor-Leste is grounded more in society than the state. While the results “show high levels of respect for political institutions and the law in principle, these figures demonstrate a relative lack of faith in contemporary democratic performance in practice, and in the formal state’s capacity to ensure the equal treatment of all groups” (Leach et al 2013, p. 464). The survey findings in relation to national pride reflected a significant recovery compared with a steep decline in national pride in a survey undertaken in 2007 following the 2006 crisis (Leach et al 2013, p. 465).

Several interviewees emphasised that nation-building in Timor-Leste was in its infancy. There was broad consensus that democratic consolidation constituted a long-term process. Interviewees from a wide range of political parties and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) argued that citizens acceptance of, and commitment to, the state was weak. A senior UNDERTIM party official argued that the formation of the nation-state in the period immediately following independence was not the end of the nation-building process, but only the beginning (interview no 23, personal communication, 22 October 2009, 23 October 2009 and 26 October 2009). A senior ASDT party official argued that the concept of nationalism was not yet well understood in Timor-Leste, in particular among youth (interviewee no 31, personal communication, 30 October 2009).
The official argued that a Timorese consciousness of one nation, and not multiple, had not yet been realised. As a result, several interviewees described Timor-Leste as a ‘virtual’ nation, as opposed to a ‘real’ nation. A senior CNRT party official also said “there is not yet a strong national consciousness...when there is one, there will be no-one to deceive or behave in a manner which could once again destroy this nation” (interviewee no 33, personal communication, 3 November 2009). Such a lack of acceptance of and commitment to the state obstructs the development of civic nationalism in Timor-Leste.

Interview research indicates that social divisions present not a challenge to nationalism, but a challenge to its consolidation in the post-independence period. Timorese nationalism is underpinned by a shared desire for sovereignty as well as peace and stability (interview no 16, personal communication, 14 October 2009 and 15 October 2009). While there are competing visions of nation-building, there is a shared desire for to achieve peace and stability in the nation-building project (interview no 23, personal communication, 22 October 2009, 23 October 2009 and 26 October 2009). This shared desire could build the foundation for civic nationalism in Timor-Leste. Civic identity and values could co-exist with social divisions in Timor-Leste because a civic identity could transcend these divisions which impact the relationship between citizens, but not the relationship between citizens and the state.

Prospects for national political consensus

Interviewees discussed their views on whether national unity was supported by the Timorese political system and culture. A large majority of interviewees argued that
political leaders served personal, family or regional interests rather than national ones, reflecting a distrust of politicians observed in many countries. Interviewees raised three key issues about prospects for national unity. First, leaders were not perceived to genuinely support national unity. Several interviewees argued that while political leaders supported reconciliation and national unity in their rhetoric, historical grievances and disputes between leaders prevented national political consensus. These interviewees called on political leaders to address the political legacy of the resistance movement as a key priority of nation-building.

Second, political leaders were perceived to behave in a way which undermined the development of civic values, in particular the rule of law. Several interviewees argued that leaders believed they were above the rule of law, citing allegations made against some leaders for crimes committed during the 2006 crisis. As a result, citizens were unlikely to internalise such civic values, which is one of the pre-conditions for civic nationalism. Chapter four argued that impunity for political leaders who had committed crimes during the crisis contributed to the ongoing significance of the east-west divide because victims had not received justice and, from their perspective, lorosa’e and loromonu could not yet be reconciled. Some even argued that impunity had increased the significance of the divide in the post-crisis period as frustrations grew.

Third, some interviewees questioned whether Timor-Leste’s political system and culture supported national unity. A Fretilin MP argued that personality politics undermined national unity (interviewee no 26, personal communication, 23 October 2009). The official argued that personality politics weakened citizens’ connection with the state and its institutions. A senior presidential adviser argued that Timor-Leste’s
electoral system discouraged effective representation (interviewee no 21, personal communication, 20 October 2009). The adviser argued that such representation was undermined by a closed list electoral system, in which people vote for political parties rather than individuals. The connection between constituents and members of parliament was too indirect. The official argued that an open list, in which people vote for individual candidates, would enhance representation.

Following the 2012 elections, Prime Minister Gusmão announced his decision to stand down as prime minister. Gusmão first indicated that he would stand down in September 2014, which he deferred until October that year. However, he has since deferred his decision to stand down until April 2015. In September 2014 Gusmão stated that he would oversee the resolution of the dispute between Timor-Leste and Australia over the Treaty on Certain Maritime Arrangements in the Timor Sea (CMATS) signed in 2006, which establishes a framework for the exploitation of the Greater Sunrise natural resources. In April 2013 Timor-Leste initiated arbitration under the Timor Sea Treaty signed in 2002 of a dispute related to CMATS, alleging that Australia did not conduct the negotiations in 2004 in good faith by engaging in espionage. While the Permanent Court of Arbitration in the Hague was expected to hand down a determination on the matter in September 2014, in August that year Timor-Leste and Australia agreed to negotiate a resolution to the dispute outside the court. Gusmão declared that he would not “run away” from his leadership role during these bilateral negotiations (Kingsbury 2014b, p. 1).

The eventual leadership transition would represent a changing of the guard. Kingsbury (2014b, p. 1) argues that “there have been calls in Timor-Leste for the ‘Generation of
’75’ leaders to step aside to make way for a younger generation of leaders”. Such a transition would transform the political landscape in Timor-Leste, in particular current balances of social and political power and hegemony. The ‘Generation of ’75’ refers to an older generation of leaders from the resistance movement who have retained their power in the post-independence period. The ‘Generation of ’75’ is dominated by former Fretilin leaders who participated in either the armed or diplomatic fronts of the resistance. These leaders are considered to be the heroes of the resistance and, as a result, have widespread moral and political authority in the post-independence period. Narratives of nationalism which are grounded in the resistance reinforce their authority.

Political observers argue that Prime Minister Gusmão’s true motivation for deferring his decision to stand down as prime minister until April 2015 is the lack of a clear successor. Gusmão’s leadership role in the bilateral negotiations to resolve the dispute relating to CMATS would be more symbolic than actual (Kingsbury 2014b, p. 1). The negotiations will be overseen by the Minister of Petroleum and Mineral Resources, Alfredo Pires. Kingsbury (2014b, p. 1) argues that “another part of Gusmão’s thinking is that it is not yet clear who would or could succeed him as the country’s leader”. Such a successor should be capable of consolidating and building on the gains made by CNRT in the 2012 elections, in which the party increased its support by 12 per cent and won an additional 12 seats in the National Parliament, as well as building national unity. The most likely candidate to succeed Gusmão is the Minister of State and of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, Agio Pereira. Minister Pereira has been described as Gusmão’s “very able right-hand man” (Kingsbury 2014b, p. 1). However, like Gusmão, he is a member of the ‘Generation of ’75’. Some argue that Pereira does
not have a strong political support base in Timor-Leste because he fled the country and sought refuge in Australia during the resistance movement (Kingsbury 2014b, p. 1).

There are younger leaders within CNRT who could succeed Prime Minister Gusmão, including the Minister of Justice and Secretary General of CNRT, Dionisio Babo-Soares. However, political observers predict that the party would not survive a leadership contest between younger leaders. Kingsbury (2014b, p. 1) argues that “…without Gusmão’s leadership, in a country in which charisma counts for more than policy, the party and the coalition government could break up over a disputed leadership”. In addition, some argue that Gusmão would be reluctant to stand down as prime minister while former prime minister Mari Alkatiri, another member of ‘Generation ’75’, remains secretary-general of Fretilin (Kingsbury, 2014b, p. 1).

The 2012 elections were dominated by personality politics, with CNRT relying heavily on the charisma of incumbent Prime Minister Gusmão to win support in the parliamentary election. Such reliance on Gusmão may dampen the party’s prospects following the leadership transition. Gusmão’s successor will inherit significant challenges to nation-building, in particular relating to the development of sustainable economic and fiscal policy. Widespread poverty and high unemployment may be exacerbated by a sharp decline in natural resource revenues in the mid-term. 90 per cent of the Timorese Government’s state revenue is provided by oil and gas revenues (IRIN 2014, p. 5). The Petroleum Fund is worth US$16 billion in 2014 however, Lao Hamutuk estimates that these resources could be depleted in seven years by 2021 and the fund depleted by 2025. The cash payment scheme introduced by the AMP coalition government, led by Gusmão, has exacerbated uneven wealth distribution in Timor-
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Leste. Buying off peace is not sustainable in the long-term. Gusmão’s successor will be confronted with the political legacy of his “quick fix” (IRIN 2014, p. 5). As the Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN) (2014, p. 5) argues, “…looking at a system that has in part built stability by handing out cash - as the architect of that system [Gusmão] steps away, we have to remember that he has papered over some really big issues during his tenure”.

The leadership transition could have significant implications for national political consensus in Timor-Leste. Several interviewees from a wide range of political parties and NGOs placed their faith in Prime Minister Gusmão and former president Ramos-Horta to build national unity. A senior PSD party official described these leaders as an “umbrella” for national unity (interviewee no 38, personal communication, 6 November 2009). Gusmão and Ramos-Horta were perceived to represent all Timorese and have the support of all parties to lead efforts to build national unity. A UNDERTIM MP said their party had supported Ramos Horta’s presidential candidacy in the 2007 elections because the nation was divided and Ramos Horta, as a mestiço from neither the eastern nor western regions, “spoke for the east and west” and supported reconciliation between ‘east’ and ‘west’ (interviewee no 23, personal communication, 22 October 2009, 23 October 2009 and 26 October 2009). Interviewees argued that no other political leaders were capable of building national unity.

The leadership transition could also have significant implications for the development of civic nationalism in Timor-Leste. Interview research indicates that the pre-conditions for civic nationalism, relating to a legal political community in which citizens are united by a common state and its institutions, rights and responsibilities and civic values, are
underdeveloped. The illegitimacy of the state, underpinned by the disconnection between citizens and the state, poses a critical challenge to the development of civic nationalism.

A comparative analysis of the 2007 and 2012 elections reveals that the AMP coalition government, led by Prime Minister Gusmão, has not contributed to substantially reducing regionalism in political representation. While political rhetoric about reconciliation between ‘east’ and ‘west’ and national unity contributed to a relatively peaceful election period, both major political parties, CNRT and Fretilin, have not developed genuine national representation which is substantially distributed across eastern and western districts. While the cash payment scheme may have demobilised groups which contributed to violent conflict during the 2006 crisis in the short-term, the 2012 elections indicate that the relationship between political party affiliation and region remains very strong. Regional imbalances are embedded in the political party system. The emergence of the east-west divide during the crisis has entrenched a negative form of political competition pitting ‘east’ against ‘west’, which exacerbates the effects of political patronage and electoral clientilism.

During the 2012 elections, Prime Minister Gusmão, and successful presidential candidate José Maria de Vasconcelos, known as ‘Taur Matan Ruak’ (TMR), relied on their charisma, as heroes of the resistance movement, to win support. Political observers noted that symbols of valour were widely used during their election campaigns. Such valourisation of the resistance does not strengthen the connection between citizens and the state or the transfer of citizens’ allegiance from local to central authority. Instead, it strengthens the connection between patronage groups and the
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state. Such valourisation does not support the development of a legal-political community because political participation in the state is based on membership in a patronage group rather than citizenship. Citizens are not united by a common state and institution, rights and responsibilities and civic values, but divided by current balances of social and political power and hegemony.

Without a clear successor to Prime Minister Gusmão, the leadership transition could become a source of social and political conflict in Timor-Leste. A power vaccum created by Gusmão’s departure from politics could contribute to identity-based conflict as different groups compete for access to state power and resources. While the cash payment scheme has not addressed the root cause of social and political conflict in Timor-Leste, the 2012 elections indicate that it has reduced violent conflict. However, given that the petroleum fund may be depleted by 2021, Gusmão’s successor will not be able to buy peace. Further identity-based conflict would undermine any progress towards nation-building in the post-2006 period.

While there are both positive and negative implications for civic nationalism, in the long-term the leadership transition has the potential to support the pre-conditions for civic nationalism in Timor-Leste by fundamentally transforming the political landscape and current balances of social and political power and hegemony. Narratives of nationalism in Timor-Leste are still grounded in the resistance movement and reinforced by the dominance of an older generation of political leaders from the resistance. Emerging leaders, who do not rely on the valourisation of the resistance for their legitimacy and moral and political authority, could re-conceptualise the political landscape and construct new narratives of nationalism which are potentially more
inclusive because they are not fractured by social fault lines which emerged during the resistance.

The current construction of nationalism in Timor-Leste, which is grounded in the resistance movement and layered with the divisions inherent in the resistance, is exclusive and lacks local legitimacy. As a result, it does not support reconciliation and national unity. Civic nationalism, which defines the nation in terms of citizens’ commitment to the state and its institutions, could be more inclusive. However, interview research indicates that the pre-conditions for civic nationalism, relating to a legal political community in which citizens are united by a common state and its institutions, rights and responsibilities and civic values, are underdeveloped. The immaturity of the political system has dampened prospects for national political consensus, in particular because political leaders are divided by historical grievances and disputes, and are perceived to be above the rule of law and the political system, based on a closed list electoral system, discourages effective representation. While the upcoming leadership transition in Timor-Leste may support the pre-conditions for civic nationalism by providing scope for the construction new narratives of nationalism which are potentially more inclusive, there are still critical challenges to overcome.

**Conclusion**

Identity-building is a fundamental process of nation-building which consolidates the new nation-state and guards it against further fragmentation. A Timorese peace-building officer emphasised that “we have resisted, now we must build” (interviewee no 2, personal communication, 6 December 2008 and 19 August 2009). Timorese resisted
Indonesian occupation and won, but what had they won in terms of national unity? The emergence of the east-west divide during the 2006 crisis in Timor-Leste indicated that identity-building in the post-independence period was failing. Interview research reveals that the divide continues to be politically significant in the post-crisis period. Political rhetoric about reconciliation between ‘east’ and ‘west’ and national unity has not overcome regionalism in political representation. The ongoing political significance of the divide indicates that identity-building in Timor-Leste remains weak. In addition, it indicates that the new nation remains vulnerable to identity-based conflict relating to the divide.

UN nation-building efforts in Timor-Leste adopted a state-centric approach which has marginalised traditional political and social structures and customary governance. The clash of paradigms between these traditional and modern structures has resulted in a state and its institutions which lack local legitimacy. As a result, the connection between citizens and the state and the transfer of citizens’ allegiance from local to central authority is weak. The illegitimacy of the state is exacerbated by the limited progress made towards addressing the structural issues which contributed to the crisis, including weak and politicised state institutions, a weak justice sector, poverty and widespread dissatisfaction with the nation-state. In particular, the incapacity of the state to provide for the welfare of citizens contributes to widespread dissatisfaction with the nation-state. Non-state actors which contest the legitimacy of the state play an important role in providing for the welfare of citizens.

Timor-Leste has a long history of resistance against external influences and this history is central to its national storytelling. In the post-independence period, when
independence has been won, Timor-Leste’s history of resistance tells a story of the past, but not of the present or future. By continuing to ground Timorese nationalism in the resistance movement, those involved in nation-building have layered nationalism with the divisions inherent in the movement, including the east-west divide. Interview research indicated that this construction of nationalism is exclusive and lacks local legitimacy. It does not support reconciliation and national unity and, as a result, undermines identity-building.

Narratives of nationalism in Timor-Leste reflect the social divisions which underpinned the emergence of the east-west divide during the 2006 crisis. In addition, they reflect balances of social and political power and hegemony, most evident under the Fretilin government, led by former prime minister Alkatiri, in which lorisot'e are portrayed as the ‘heroes’ of the resistance movement and loromonu as the ‘traitors’. As Verdery (cited in Ozkirimli 2005, p. 169) argues, these divisions are used as “a form of currency” to compete for access to state power and resources. The divide is part of broader narrative which has emerged in the post-independence period in Timor-Leste relating to economic, social and political competition over the relative entitlement of particular individuals and groups to the benefits of independence. Other social divisions identified in chapter four, including between mestico and rai nain, pro-autonomy and pro-integration groups and diaspora and home-stayers, all relate to constructions of nationalism which establish varying degrees of authenticity and, as a result, are exclusive.

Chapter one argued that an inclusive national political community is fundamental to guarding the new nation-state against further fragmentation and identity-based conflict.
Such a political community would ensure equal representation and participation in the state and, more significantly, equal access to its power and resources – the benefits of independence which all Timorese, regardless of competing social divisions, are entitled to. Ongoing exclusion would exacerbate growing frustration and discontent and disenchantment with the nation-state. The construction of a new inclusive political community could resolve underlying insecurity relating to the east-west divide.

Civic nationalism, which defines the nation in terms of citizens’ commitment to the state and its institutions, could be more inclusive. However, interview research indicates that the pre-conditions for civic nationalism, relating to a legal political community in which citizens are united by a common state and its institutions, rights and responsibilities and civic values, are underdeveloped. The illegitimacy of the state, underpinned by the disconnection between citizens and the state, is a major challenge to the development of civic nationalism. Yet, because it has the potential to transcend divisive narratives of nationalism, developing civic nationalism is critical to strengthening identity-building in Timor-Leste, in particular to developing a common sense of purpose and bridging social divisions, and should be a key priority of nation-building.
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Since the turn of the 21st century, international and regional organisations have actively engaged in nation-building to solve the problem of state failure or collapse. In the aftermath of the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks, there was a shift towards a state-centric paradigm of international security and development. Weak, failing or failed states were considered to pose a serious threat to international peace and stability. Such states were considered to be vulnerable to transnational crime, in particular to terrorism. Security, development and peace were inextricably linked to state-building, in particular to liberal democratic forms of statehood. Dinnen (2007, pp. 1-2) describes nation-building as “...the favoured antidote” of the international community to the threats posed by state failure or collapse.

The United Nations (UN) was engaged in nation-building in Timor-Leste for more than a decade following its independence. Following the vote for independence in the UN-sponsored referendum on 30 August 1999, the outbreak of violent conflict led to the deployment of an Australian-led UN peacekeeping force (International Force for East Timor (INTERFET)) in September 1999 and the establishment of the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) in October that year. Timor-Leste became fully independent on 20 May 2002, following two and a half years under the administration of UNTAET. The UN remained engaged in Timor-Leste for a further decade. There were three follow-up missions: the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET) (May 2002 – May 2005); the United Nations Office in East Timor (UNOTIL) (May 2005 – August 2006); and the United Nations Integrated Mission in East Timor (UNMIT) (August 2006 – December 2012). International peacekeeping forces led by Australia under the International Stabilisation Force (ISF)
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returned to Timor-Leste in May 2006 following the outbreak of violent conflict during the 2006 crisis.

There is a growing consensus that the international community’s nation-building efforts to date have disproportionately focused on state-building – developing the capacity of the state and its institutions. The emergence of the east-west divide between Timorese from the eastern region of the half-island, lorosa’e, and those from the western region, loromonu, during the turbulent political and security crisis in Timor-Leste in 2006 indicated that identity-building – developing a unifying national political community – in the post-independence period was failing. Only four years after Timor-Leste achieved independence on 20 May 2002, peace and stability were threatened by internal forces and not external ones as had been the case during periods of Portuguese colonialism and Indonesian occupation. The developing national political community in Timor-Leste appeared to be weak and unable to contain strong regional identities.

The aim of the research was to critically assess the implications of the east-west divide for nation-building in Timor-Leste, in particular for identity-building. The research addressed the following questions:

- What is the ongoing political significance of the east-west divide which emerged during the 2006 crisis in Timor-Leste?; and
- Does the divide pose a significant challenge to nation-building in Timor-Leste?

Part one of the thesis established a theoretical framework for the research. Chapter one reviewed literature on nation-building and identity-based conflict. The first section of the chapter challenged the literature’s disproportionate focus on state-building which
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neglects identity-building. The second section of chapter one examined the implications of the disproportionate focus on state-building for conceptualising nation-building.

There is a growing consensus that literature on nation-building has a disproportionate focus on state-building. The disproportionate focus on state-building has significant implications for nation-building. Chapter one concluded that this literature often fails to take into account that, in addition to state-building, identity-building is a fundamental process of nation-building. Identity-building legitimises and consolidates the nation-state, guarding it against further fragmentation. If identity-building is fragile or even failing, nation-states may be characterised as hybrid political orders, in which there are competing claims to legitimacy and authority. Such nation-states may be vulnerable to identity-based conflict.

Constructivist arguments have significant implications for our understanding of the emergence and persistence of identity-based conflict. Chapter one demonstrated that political leaders can play a role in constructing both identity and identity-based conflict to hold or accumulate power. As a result, the state can become a site for competition between social groups. Polarised collective identities can become entrenched over time and, as a result, identity-based conflict is prone to intractability. Therefore, such identities may persist and pose a serious threat to long-term peace and stability.

Chapter two applied the theoretical framework to nation-building in Timor-Leste, where the emergence of the east-west divide during the 2006 crisis indicated that identity-building in Timor-Leste was failing. The first section of the chapter examined the UN nation-building efforts in the post-independence period in Timor-Leste. The second
section of chapter two explored the development of nationalism in Timor-Leste. This section examined the emergence of narratives of nationalism during the resistance movement and how these narratives had evolved in the post-independence period. The third section of chapter two reviewed existing research on the impact of the 2006 crisis in Timor-Leste on the nation-building project. The fourth section of chapter two outlined the research methodology based on the theoretical framework, qualitative interview research and analysis of public debate in Timor-Leste.

Chapter two concluded that, like literature on nation-building, UN nation-building efforts in Timor-Leste disproportionately focused on state-building. The UN adopted a state-centric approach which failed to take into account the local context and consequently, resulted in a state and its institutions which lacked local legitimacy and authority. As a result, a hybrid political order exists in Timor-Leste in which there are competing claims of legitimacy.

Chapter two demonstrated that in the post-independence period in Timor-Leste, nationalism is grounded in resistance, in particular the 24 year resistance movement against Indonesian occupation. The significance of the resistance has been embedded in nation-building, in particular in symbols of nationalism, including the national flag, coat-of-arms, Constitution, and nationalist heritage sites. Nationalism is often described as ‘unity through struggle’. Yet in the post-independence period, this narrative of nationalism has broken down following the removal of the common enemy of Indonesia, which had been central to the concept of ‘us’ and ‘them’. The removal of a common enemy revealed highly diverse groups within the nation-state.
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Chapter two also demonstrated that in post-conflict societies, narratives of nationalism may be instrumentalised to articulate demands for access to state power and resources. Rituals and symbols of nationalism may be used to assert moral and political authority, which can be politicised by social groups as they compete for scarce resources. In the post-independence period in Timor-Leste, divisive narratives emerged about relative sacrifice and suffering during the resistance movement and consequently, which social groups were most entitled to the benefits of independence. These narratives are informed by social divisions between pro-autonomy and pro-integration groups, lorosa’e and loromonu, diaspora and home-stayers and mestiço and rai nain, all of which relate to constructions of nationalism which established varying degrees of authenticity and, as a result, are exclusive.

These varying degrees of authenticity inform competing claims to access to state power and resources as well as social status. Those who are considered to be truly Timorese are also considered to be most entitled to state power and resources. Those who are considered to have made the greatest sacrifice during the resistance movement are also considered to be most entitled to the benefits of independence. These two concepts are inter-related because those who are portrayed as ‘heroes’ are also portrayed as truly Timorese. As Soux et al (2007, p. 50) argued, these narratives asked “who were the ‘true’ resistance fighters? Who collaborated with the Indonesians? Who deserved the spoils of war and benefits of peace? Who sat out the war in exile, and did not suffer?”.

These competing claims also inform competing visions of the nation-state in the post-independence period. The inherent tensions relating to these competing visions of the nation-state present a serious challenge to sustainable peace and development, because if there is a lack of political consensus about nation-building, it is difficult to develop and implement policies which contribute to the nation-building project. In particular, it
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is difficult for political leaders to address the structural issues which contributed to the emergence of the 2006 crisis.

During the 2006 crisis Timor-Leste was described as a state in search of a nation. Chapter two argued that, while resistance is central to national story telling in Timor-Leste, this story telling has divided, rather than united, Timorese in the post-independence period. Chapter two concluded that not only did the emergence of the east-west divide during the crisis in Timor-Leste have significant implications for state-building within the security sector, it indicated that the identity-building process was fragile or even failing. Existing research demonstrates that UN nation-building efforts in Timor-Leste had a disproportionate focus on state-building which neglected identity-building. The development of a cohesive national political community in the post-independence period has been obstructed by divisive national discourses about the competing roles of Timorese during the resistance movement. As a result of weak identity-building, the state has become a site for competition between social groups and is vulnerable to identity-based conflict. During the crisis, it was the division between lorosa’e and loromonu which contributed to widespread violent conflict.

Part two of the thesis examined the political significance of the east-west divide in the post-2006 crisis period in Timor-Leste, addressing the first research question: What is the ongoing political significance of the east-west divide which emerged during the 2006 crisis in Timor-Leste? Chapter three examined the emergence of the divide during the crisis. The first section of the chapter explored the origins of the divide. The second section of chapter three examined the events of the crisis, which continued until the death of Major Alfredo Reinado, the symbolic rebel leader of the so-called Petitioners group, on 11 February 2008. In particular, this section explored the role
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played by political actors in manipulating the east-west divide as they jostled for power in the new nation-state. Based on the theoretical framework on nation-building and identity-based conflict, the final section of chapter three characterised the crisis as an identity-based conflict relating to the divide.

Chapter three demonstrated that the historical origin and nature of the east-west divide are heavily contested. The chapter concluded that the lorosa’e and loromonu identities appear to be latent identities of relatively obscure origin which became politicised during the resistance movement and, to a lesser extent, during periods of rural-urban migration from the 1940s and widespread displacement in Dili following the referendum for independence on 30 August 1999. In the post-independence period, contemporary lorosa’e and loromonu identities emerged in a divisive national discourse about the competing roles played by both groups during the resistance, with loromonu characterised as putting up a weaker fight in the western region, participating in the militia groups and being pro-autonomy – a characterisation disputed by the Petitioners. These identities were used to articulate demands for access to state power and resources. This narrative was a part of broader narratives circulating during this period about which individuals or groups were most entitled to the benefits of independence.

Chapter three demonstrated that the east-west divide was embedded in the security sector in the post-independence period. During the 2006 crisis, the divide was elevated to the national political agenda when the Petitioners protested against discrimination in the F-FDTL and widespread violent conflict relating to the divide broke out between the F-FDTL and PNTL, symbolising east and west, as well as youth and gangs. Political leaders manipulated the divide as they jostled for power in the nation-state. The crisis reflected political divisions between Fretilin and non-Fretilin groups as well as
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historical grievances and personal disputes between political leaders. Non-Fretilin groups were frustrated with the authoritarian Fretilin government, led by then prime minister Mari Alkatiri. The power struggle between Alkatiri and then president Xanana Kay Rala Gusmão had been exacerbated by Fretilin’s drafting of a Constitution which had created a weak presidency. Some leaders skilfully mobilised conflict promoters. Divisions between leaders were played out in violent conflict on the streets of Dili. Arnold (2009, p. 442) described the political situation of the Petitioners as “less about discrimination in the army and more about political control of the country”.

Chapter three concluded that the emergence of the east-west divide during the 2006 crisis could be characterised as identity-based conflict. In particular, it represented a crisis of national identity. The current construction of Timorese nationalism is grounded in the resistance movement and, as a result, fractured by social fault lines which emerged during the resistance, one of which is the divide. A unifying national political community does not yet exist to contain competing local identities. There was a broad consensus that the roots of the crisis were buried underneath Timor-Leste’s historical experience during periods of Portuguese colonialism and Indonesian occupation, which had subsumed social divisions. During the resistance Timorese were united against the common enemy of Indonesia, and nationalism emerged in Timor-Leste. But in the post-independence period, the common enemy was removed and divisions re-emerged.

Chapter four examined whether the east-west divide continued to be politically significant in the post-2006 crisis period, following the settlement of the Petitioners issue. The first section of the chapter analysed whether the structural factors which contributed to the crisis remain a potential source of social and political conflict. The
second section of chapter four examined the role played by regionalism in the 2007 elections and the views of political parties on the divide. The final section of chapter four explored other social fault lines in Timor-Leste which may contribute to identity-based conflict, assessing the relative significance of the divide.

Some argued that the death of Major Reinado on 11 February 2008 led to the decline of the east-west divide. In current literature and debate, there seems to be a conventional wisdom that the divide had declined as quickly as it rose and is no longer significant. The death of Major Reinado and the appeasement of the Petitioners may have contributed to the resolution of the security crisis facing Timor-Leste, but they did not resolve the crisis in national identity. The thesis argued that the divide resonated more broadly in Timor-Leste, beyond the security sector, because of its correlation with ongoing divisive national discourse about the competing roles played by lorosa’e and loromonu during the resistance movement.

Chapter four demonstrated that the east-west divide continued to be politically significant in the post-2006 crisis period. Chapter four concluded that Timor-Leste is vulnerable to further identity-based conflict. Limited progress has been made towards addressing the structural issues which contributed to the crisis, including weak and politicised state institutions, a weak justice sector, poverty and widespread dissatisfaction with the nation-state. In the post-crisis period, socio-economic development continues to be poor and uneven. In particular, the incapacity of the state to provide for the welfare of citizens sustains widespread discontent and disenchantment with the state and is a potential cause of political and social conflict. Such dissatisfaction is vulnerable to political manipulation.
Conclusion

Around half of interviewees believed the east-west divide continues to be significant in the post-crisis period and a small majority believed Timorese are vulnerable to further political manipulation. A minority argued that the divide has become entrenched in the conceptualisation of the political landscape in the post-crisis period. Views on the significance of the divide were diverse and sometimes contradictory within parties and between the so-called western parties. Evidence of ongoing violent conflict relating to the divide at the community level was mixed, but communities expressed serious concern about underlying insecurity relating to the divide.

Interviewees expressed concern that identity-building in the post-independence period was fragile. The developing national political community was weak and could not contain competing local identities. These local identities had contributed to the fragmentation of the political landscape, dividing it along regional lines. Regional imbalances were embedded in the political party system. The emergence of the east-west divide during the 2006 crisis had entrenched a negative form of political competition pitting ‘east’ against ‘west’, which continued to affect the party system.

A regional analysis of the 2007 parliamentary election results indicates that there is a strong relationship between political affiliation and region. Fretilin’s share of the vote in the eastern districts was disproportionately high, accounting for 52 per cent of its total vote. CNRT’s share of the vote in the eastern districts was disproportionately low, accounting for only 15 per cent of its total vote. The minor parties had regional political support bases, with ASDT, KOTA, PD, PSD and PUN having their bases in western districts and UNDERTIM in eastern districts. Non-Fretilin interviewees often characterised Fretilin as a so-called eastern party which exclusively represents the interests of eastern districts. Interviewees from non-Fretilin parties expressed concern
Conclusion

about expanding their political representation in eastern districts for fear of threats and retribution by Fretilin militia. These interviewees also assumed that efforts to expand their representation in these districts would be futile because they were the traditional stronghold of Fretilin.

Part two of the thesis concluded that the east-west divide has become entrenched in the conceptualisation of the Timorese political landscape in the aftermath of the 2006 crisis. Some interviewees depicted the divide as the deep root cause of the crisis and argued that this root had not yet been dug out. As a Timorese peace-building officer explained, the death of Major Alfredo Reinado “had cut down the trunk of the tree, but had not dug out its roots” (interviewee no 5, personal communication, 17 December 2008). As a result, part two concluded that tensions relating to the divide remain underneath the surface. Some interviewees argued the significance of the divide has decreased and other social divisions are more likely to contribute to violent conflict. However, the three main divisions raised by interviewees, between *mestiço* and *rai nain*, pro-autonomy and pro-integration groups and diaspora and home-stayers, all relate to constructions of nationalism which established varying degrees of authenticity and, as a result, are exclusive.

Part three of the thesis examined the longer-term implications of the ongoing significance of the east-west divide for nation-building in Timor-Leste, addressing the second research question: does the divide pose a significant challenge to nation-building in Timor-Leste? Following the overwhelming vote in favour of independence in the referendum on 30 August 1999, Timor-Leste was assumed to have a strong sense of national unity based on the resistance movement. Timorese had resisted and won, but what had they won in terms of national unity? The international community’s nation-
Conclusion

building efforts appeared to have taken the existence of national unity and a national political community for granted. The emergence of the divide during the 2006 crisis brought this assumption into question by revealing the enduring significance of local identities. Part three assessed the political legacy of the divide by analysing the role played by regionalism in the 2012 elections and challenges to the legitimacy of the state in Timor-Leste.

Chapter five examined the significance of the presidential and parliamentary elections held in Timor-Leste in 2012 for identity-building. Chapters three and four argued that the emergence of the east-west divide during the 2006 crisis and the role played by regionalism in the 2007 elections indicated that identity-building in Timor-Leste was failing. Chapter five posed the question of how identity-building has progressed since this period. The chapter investigated the political legacy of the divide by examining the role played by regionalism in the 2012 elections and political rhetoric about the divide and national unity during the election campaigns. The chapter provided a comparison to the findings of my field research which I undertook in 2008 and 2009 and potentially a trajectory of the development of regionalism in Timor-Leste.

The 2012 elections in Timor-Leste were a significant milestone for the new nation-state, which led to the election of a new president, José Maria de Vasconcelos ‘Taur Matan Ruak’ (TMR), the re-election of Prime Minister Gusmão, the re-election of his party, the National Congress for Timorese Reconstruction (CNRT), as the senior partner of a coalition government and the return of the Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor (Fretilin) to opposition. The Timorese Government assumed primary responsibility for running the elections which consequently, were viewed as a litmus test of state-building as well as democratic consolidation.
Chapter five argued that while international observers declared the 2012 elections in Timor-Leste to be free and fair, and the UN and ISF upheld their decision to withdraw from Timor-Leste at the end of 2012, the elections alone were not evidence of democratic consolidation. Weaknesses within the political party system, including underdeveloped party platforms, political patronage and electoral clientilism, pose critical challenges to consolidation. The 2012 elections were not as afflicted by regionalism and violent conflict relating to the east-west divide as the 2007 elections. However, the relationship between party affiliation and region has moderated only very slightly. Any moderation appears to be uneven. Analysis of the 2012 elections supported the view of some interviewees that strong local identities divided national politics along regional lines.

A district analysis of the parliamentary election results in chapter five indicated that CNRT’s share of the vote in the eastern districts remained disproportionately low and Fretilin’s share of the vote in these districts remained disproportionately high. CNRT’s share of the vote in the eastern districts has stagnated. Fretilin’s share of the vote in the eastern districts has declined and the party has made some moderate or slight gains in the central and western districts. A regional analysis of PD’s national vote indicated that the party has overcome regionalism to an extent. Chapter five concluded that the potential trajectory of regional polarisation, as indicated in the 2007 election, was diminishing somewhat, but remained clearly evident.

Chapter five demonstrated that, during the 2012 election campaigns, the 2006 crisis was predominantly remembered by political leaders as a crisis of disunity among themselves. National unity was considered to be essential to preventing a repeat of the
Conclusion

crisis and became a key election theme. However, the dominant construction of national unity during the campaigns evoked a utopian view of unity during the resistance movement. Such a construction of national unity could be layered with the many divisions inherent in the resistance and undermine identity-building in the post-independence period.

Chapter five demonstrated that groups associated with the 2006 crisis, including Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and former members of the Petitioners, functioned as lobby groups during the 2012 election campaigns. Their politicisation has secured political status and preferential access to state power and resources, in particular through the cash payment scheme. The Timorese Government’s efforts to appease or demobilise these groups could lead to further politicisation. Such preferential treatment could entrench a negative form of political competition in which groups which threaten peace and stability are appeased and ultimately rewarded.

Chapter five concluded that, following the 2012 elections, the most decisive political division is between Fretilin and non-Fretilin groups. CNRT’s coalition building with minor political parties Frente-Mudança and PD did not represent an alliance of so-called western parties, as the Alliance for a Parliamentary Majority (AMP) coalition government, led by Prime Minister Gusmão, had. It more likely represented a consolidation of non-Fretilin groups against Fretilin. The outbreak of violent conflict following the announcement of a coalition government which excluded Fretilin highlighted the potential for this division to threaten peace and stability in Timor-Leste.

Chapter five demonstrated that strong narratives of national unity appeared to have reduced the potential for identity-based conflict in the 2012 elections and represented
some progress towards identity-building in Timor-Leste. Political leaders and civil society organisations actively engaged in rhetoric which supported national unity as well as peace and stability during the election campaigns. As a result, regional divisions were unlikely to be inflamed by political manipulation, as had been the case during the crisis and 2007 elections. However, while rhetoric which supported national unity contributed to a more peaceful and stable security situation, it did not appear to affect political representation, which remained divided along regional lines.

Chapter five argued that the two major political parties, CNRT and Fretilin, would continue to be afflicted by regionalism in the long-term. The ongoing significance of regionalism in Timor-Leste has negative implications for nation-building. It exacerbates the effects of political patronage and electoral clientilism by politicising *lorosa'e* and *loromonu* identities and entrenches a negative form of political competition which pits ‘east’ against ‘west’. The 2012 elections indicated that the root causes of the 2006 crisis were yet to be dug out in the post-crisis period and remain a potential source of violent conflict. Chapter five concluded that while the relationship between party affiliation and region was diminishing somewhat, Timor-Leste remains vulnerable to identity-based conflict relating to the divide.

Chapter six examined the implications of the ongoing political significance of the east-west divide for nation-building in Timor-Leste, in particular identity-building. The first section of chapter six examined the implications of regionalism for the connection between citizens and the state and the transfer of citizens’ allegiance from local to central authority – two criteria of identity-building which are fundamental to the legitimisation and consolidation of the state. In addition, this section examined competing claims to state legitimacy in Timor-Leste, including by some of the non-state
actors which challenge the legitimacy of the state. Chapter one argued that a state which lacks local legitimacy may become a site for competition between social groups.

The second section of chapter six examined the implications of regionalism for the development of a common sense of purpose and the erosion of social divisions in Timor-Leste – two other criteria of identity-building. This section explored whether strong local identities undermine the development of a national political community which transcended social divisions. Chapter one argued that such an identity is fundamental to guarding the nation-state against further fragmentation. The final section of chapter six examined the implications of the ongoing significance of the east-west divide for the development of civic nationalism in Timor-Leste, which defines the nation in terms of citizens' commitment to the state and its institutions as well as civil society.

Chapter two argued that traditional culture in Timor-Leste is grounded in strong local identities based on kin based systems and specific places. Interview research in chapters four and five indicated that local identities remain strong in the post-2006 crisis period. Analysis of both the 2007 and 2012 elections supported the view of some interviewees that strong local identities divided national politics along regional lines. The relationship between political party affiliation and region remains very strong. Strong local identities in themselves do not undermine the development of national identity as individuals may have multiple identifications. However, chapter three argued that local identities in Timor-Leste relate to a divisive national discourse about the competing roles of lorosa’e and loromonu during the resistance movement. Interviewees identified the strength of local identities as one of the most significant challenges to the development of a cohesive national political community. The
Conclusion

emergence of the east-west divide during the crisis was depicted by these interviewees as evidence of strong local identities subsuming a weak or even failing national political community.

Chapter six concluded that the ongoing significance of the east-west divide has negative implications for state legitimacy, the connection between citizens and the state and the development of civic nationalism in Timor-Leste. Chapter one argued that a state which lacks legitimacy may be characterised as a hybrid political order, in which there are competing claims to legitimacy. In such orders, the state and its institutions co-exist with traditional social and political structures which can also provide for the security, representation and welfare of citizens. Chapter six demonstrated that in the post-independence period in Timor-Leste, non-state actors, such as martial arts groups (MAGs), ritual arts groups (RAGs) and veterans’ organisations, have emerged which contest the legitimacy of the state. These actors performed some of the functions of the state at the community level, in particular by providing for the welfare of citizens. Interview research supported the argument that, in hybrid political orders, the illegitimacy of the nation-state, underpinned by the disconnection between citizens and the state, has undermined identity-building.

Interview research in chapter six indicated that identity-building in Timor-Leste was affected by narratives of nationalism which have emerged in the post-independence period. Timor-Leste has a long history of resistance against external influences and this history is central to its national storytelling. Chapter two argued that, in the post-independence period, when independence has been won, Timor-Leste’s history of resistance tells a story of the past, but not of the present or future. By continuing to ground Timorese nationalism in the resistance movement, those involved in nation-
Conclusion

building have built the nation-state on a foundation fractured by social fault lines which emerged during the resistance, including the east-west divide, and layered Timor-Leste’s present and future with divisive national discourse about the past. Around half of interviewees brought into question the current construction of nationalism, which is grounded in the resistance. This construction of nationalism does not support reconciliation and national unity and, as a result, undermines the development of a common sense of purpose and the erosion of social divisions. Interviewees identified two key issues relating to national identity: first, it is exclusive; and second, it lacks local legitimacy. Some interviewees argued that this construction of nationalism contributed to identity-based conflict.

Chapter one argued that narratives of nationalism reflect social hierarchies and political and social power balances. Diverse historical narratives existed in the post-independence period and reflected intergenerational fault lines between those who were involved in the resistance movement during Portuguese colonialism and those during Indonesian occupation, as well as the other social divisions identified in chapter four between mestiço and rai nain, pro-autonomy and pro-integration groups and diaspora and home-stayers. These divisions all relate to constructions of nationalism which establish varying degrees of authenticity and, as a result, are exclusive. These varying degrees of authenticity inform competing claims to access to state power and resources as well as social status.

Divisive national discourse about the competing roles played by lorosa’e and loromonu during the resistance is one thread woven into a broader narrative which emerged in the post-independence period in Timor-Leste relating to economic, social and political competition over the relative entitlement of particular individuals and groups to the
Conclusion

benefits of independence. Frustration over poor and uneven socio-economic
development and discontent and disenchantment with the state was growing in the post-
independence period. In this political context, narratives of sacrifice and suffering
become a political commodity used to articulate demands for access to state resources
and power – scarce resources. As Verdery (cited in Ozkirimli 2005, p. 169) argued,
these divisions were used as “a form of currency” to compete for access to state power
and resources. Political parties and leaders used their contribution to the resistance
movement to bolster their moral and political authority. In addition, this narrative
reflected balances of social and political power and hegemony in the post-independence
period (most evident under the Fretilin government, led by former prime minister Mari
Alkatiri) in which lorosa’e are portrayed as the ‘heroes’ of the resistance movement and
loromonu as the ‘traitors’.

The thesis concludes that the current construction of nationalism in Timor-Leste, which
is grounded in the resistance movement, is fragile because it is exclusive and lacks local
legitimacy. Such a construction of nationalism denies the equality of citizens, who
should have equal representation and participation in the state. Most significantly, it
denies that all citizens are entitled to the benefits of independence, regardless of
competing social divisions. Ongoing exclusion has the potential to further exacerbate
growing frustration and discontent and disenchantment with the state. Long-term peace
and stability is contingent on the development of an inclusive national political
community.

Chapter six argued that civic nationalism, which defines the nation in terms of citizens’
commitment to the state and its institutions, could be more inclusive. As Talentino
(2004, p. 564) argued:
Ultimately, acceptance of, and commitment to, the processes of the state – belief in their legitimacy, a sense of ownership in their representation, and even pride in their development – are essential in building a sense of identity. A civic identity must be created that can transcend ethnic or group identity… A civic identity is also important to prevent divisions from fracturing the state in the future.

However, interview research in chapter six indicated that the pre-conditions for civic nationalism, relating to a legal political community in which citizens are united by a common state and its institutions, rights and responsibilities and civic values, are underdeveloped in Timor-Leste. The illegitimacy of the nation-state poses a critical challenge to the development of civic nationalism. However, the thesis concludes that developing civic nationalism is critical to strengthening identity-building in Timor-Leste, in particular to developing a common sense of purpose and bridging social divisions, and should be a key priority of nation-building.

Part three concluded that the ongoing significance of the east-west divide poses a significant challenge to nation-building in Timor-Leste. Strong local identities divide national politics along regional lines. The divide has fragmented the conceptualisation of the political landscape in Timor-Leste and, as a result, undermined the development of a unifying national political community. Regionalism poses a significant challenge to democratic consolidation. It has exacerbated the effects of political patronage and electoral clientilism by politicising lorosa’e and loromonu identities and entrenching a negative form of political competition which pits ‘east’ against ‘west’.
Conclusion

In addition, regionalism poses a significant challenge to identity-building. In the post-independence period, it has undermined the legitimacy and consolidation of the state and, as a result, the connection between citizens and the state. The current construction of nationalism in Timor-Leste, grounded in the resistance movement, divides rather than unites Timorese. The disconnection between citizens and the state has undermined the development of a form of nationalism in Timor-Leste which supports reconciliation and national unity as well as a unifying national political community. Regionalism has dampened prospects for peace and stability in Timor-Leste, which remains vulnerable to identity-based conflict relating to the east-west divide.

The research conclusions from the case study of the implications of east-west divide for nation-building in Timor-Leste highlight several key aspects of nation-building and identity-based conflict in post-conflict societies. These aspects concern: first, the conceptualisation of fragile states as well as security, development and peace in literature on nation-building; second, the relationship between state-building and identity-building in literature on nation-building; and third, the negative consequences of state-building without identity-building in post-conflict societies.

First, while the definitions of ‘fragile’, ‘failing’, ‘failed’ and ‘collapsed’ states are highly debated, definitions of state fragility tend to focus on the state’s lack of willingness or capacity to perform core security, representation and welfare functions – of which there are declining levels of state performance from ‘fragile’ to ‘failing’, ‘failed’ and finally ‘collapsed’ – and the state’s weak or non-existent legitimacy. Such definitions have a disproportionate focus on the capacity of the state and its institutions. The case study indicates that definitions of state fragility should also focus on the connection between citizens and the state, the transfer of citizens’ allegiance from local
Conclusion

to central authority, creating a common sense of purpose and bridging social divisions. In addition to weak state capacity, the case study indicated that weak identity-building and identity-based conflict may also contribute to state failure or collapse.

Since the turn of the 21st century, international and regional organisations have been actively engaged in nation-building to solve the problem of state failure or collapse. Such operations have been undertaken in Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iraq and Sierra Leone as well as Timor-Leste. There is a growing consensus that the international community’s nation-building efforts have disproportionately focused on state-building. Security, development and peace have been inextricably linked to state-building, in particular to liberal democratic forms of statehood. The case study indicates that linking security, development and peace to state-building alone is not sustainable. State-building without identity-building undermines peace and stability as well as development. The emergence of the east-west divide during the 2006 crisis in Timor-Leste is evidence of this: widespread violent conflict resulted in a significant loss of life and injury and damage to critical infrastructure and represented a major set-back to development. UN nation-building efforts in Timor-Leste were exclusively central government oriented, excluding many Timorese from the nation-building process and undermined identity-building. The case study supports the growing consensus in literature on nation-building that nation-building efforts should support both state-building and identity-building processes in order to achieve sustainable peace.

Second, while state-building and identity-building are separate and distinct processes, they are inextricably linked. The case study supports the growing consensus in literature on nation-building that identity-building legitimises and consolidates the nation-state, guarding it against further fragmentation. State-building should take into
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account the local context in order to build the connection between citizens and the state. When nation-building is reduced to a technical exercise, then state-building is reduced to the institutional transfer of liberal democratic forms of statehood and the state is reduced to its institutions, and the need to build a connection between citizens and the state is neglected. Such technical processes overlook the extent to which institutions are embedded in a cultural and social context. Without local legitimacy, the state may be characterised as a hybrid political order in which there are competing claims to legitimacy and authority as well as competing visions of the nation-state. In such orders, non-state actors contest the legitimacy of the state and play an important role in providing for the security, welfare and representation of citizens. As a result, the connection between citizens and the state will remain weak.

The case study emphasises that the capacity of the state to provide for the welfare of citizens is critical to the legitimacy and consolidation of the nation-state. By providing basic services and critical infrastructure, the state demonstrates the tangible benefits of cooperation with the state and between different groups. In addition, it enhances the connection between citizens and the state and the transfer of citizens’ allegiance from local to central authority. Poor and uneven socio-economic development in the post-independence period in Timor-Leste and growing frustration with the state contributed to the emergence of the east-west divide during the 2006 crisis as well as its ongoing political significance. The incapacity of the state to provide for the welfare of citizens provided fertile ground for social and political conflict as different groups competed for scarce resources in the post-independence period.

Third, state-building without identity-building has negative consequences which may derail the nation-building project. The case study indicates that state-building may
reflect existing social and political balances of power and hegemony and that state-
building without identity-building may weave social divisions into the fabric of the
state. As a result, the state and its institutions may become a site for competition
between social groups. Such divisions were evident in disputes and historical
grievances between political leaders and critical institutional weaknesses, and rivalries,
between the FALINTIL Timor-Leste Defence Force (F-FDTL) and Timor-Leste
National Police (PNTL). The 2006 crisis elevated the east-west divide to the national
political agenda and it became vulnerable to political manipulation.

Those involved in nation-building may focus on state-building because they assume that
a national political community will emerge naturally over time. The case study brought
this assumption into question. The current construction of nationalism in Timor-Leste,
reflected in the Constitution, national symbols, nationalist heritage sites and political
rhetoric, has been grounded in the resistance movement and layered with the divisions
inherent in the resistance, one of which is the east-west divide. This construction of
nationalism has divided, rather than united, Timorese. The case study shows that, as a
result of weak identity-building, narratives of nationalism and divisive national
discourses in Timor-Leste were instrumentalised to compete for scarce resources. The
divisive discourse about the competing roles of lorosa’e and loromonu during the
resistance movement was part of a broader narrative which emerged in the post-
independence period in Timor-Leste relating to economic, social and political
competition over the relative entitlement of particular individuals and groups to the
benefits of independence. Narratives of sacrifice and suffering became a political
commodity used to articulate demands for access to state resources and power. The
ongoing political significance of the east-west divide has constrained the emergence of
Conclusion

new discourses of nationalism which support reconciliation between ‘east’ and ‘west’
and national unity, such as civic nationalism.

The case study supports the growing consensus in literature on nation-building that
identity-building is a fundamental process of nation-building which has to be
incorporated into nation-building efforts. The case study indicates that Timor-Leste
remains vulnerable to identity-based conflict because of the ongoing political
significance of the east-west divide. Literature on conflict theory argues that polarised
collective identities become entrenched over time and, as a result, identity-based
conflict is prone to intractability. The case study demonstrates that the divide could
become intractable – the roots of the divide have not yet been dug out and remain a
potential source of social and political conflict. The structural issues which contributed
to the 2006 crisis, including grievances, disputes and rivalries among Timor-Leste’s
small political elite, weak and politicised state institutions, a weak justice sector,
poverty and widespread dissatisfaction with the state, remain salient in the post-crisis
period. The upcoming leadership transition in Timor-Leste may serve to further limit
progress towards addressing these issues. There is potential for leadership disputes to
contribute to political instability in Timor-Leste and undermine the nation-building
project.

Nation-building is shaped by both material and immaterial structures. Immaterial
structures, including the connection between citizens and the state, the transfer of
citizens’ allegiance from local to central authority, creating a common sense of purpose
and bridging social divisions, are central to the nation-building project and building
sustainable peace. Nation-building is not a technical exercise in which state-building is
reduced to the institutional transfer of liberal democratic forms of statehood and the
Conclusion

state is reduced to its institutions. Instead, building sustainable peace requires those involved in nation-building to engage with a community’s sense of identity and history and, most significantly, to support the development of an inclusive national political community which transcends social divisions.
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Appendix 1: List of interviewees

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<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Gender</th>
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<td>40-60</td>
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<td>M</td>
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