6 The Ongoing Crisis in East-Timor: Analysis of Endogenous and Exogenous Factors

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Since the abrupt collapse of the East Timorese security institutions in April-May 2006 and the ensuing political crisis, the country has been going through cycles of complete desperation to rounds of some civility amongst its politicians and general populace. The political crisis became so deep that it has resulted in more than 150,000 Internally-Displaced Persons (IDPs) and in the intervention of international military forces and police services to perform basic security functions.

Despite the 2006 upheaval in the spring and summer, the refugee problem has been slightly reduced1 and the 2007 presidential and legislative elections have taken place without major violence or disruption. However, one of the main rebel leaders, Major Alfredo Reinado, is still at large. This situation raises serious questions regarding the capacity of the East Timorese leadership and state to capture and try Reinado and his supporters.

One of the outcomes of this ongoing crisis is that East Timor’s international image and reputation has been severely tarnished. What was until the outbreak of the 2006 violence perceived as a success story, not only for the Timorese themselves but more importantly for the United Nations, has since then raised serious concerns and doubts as to the capacity of this country’s leadership to perform minimal state functions, and has led many scholars to believe ‘that East Timor had more in common with other post-colonial, post-conflict societies’ (Kingsbury & Leach, 2007).

A considerable number of studies have been written on the ongoing crisis. Some place emphasis on power struggles amongst the members of the East Timorese elite, while others blame external actors; namely, Australia, Indonesia, Portugal, and the United Nations, for the troubles that have taken place in this country.

In this paper we will attempt to reorganise some of these arguments and we will mix both sets of factors to create a more realistic and heuristic understanding of this crisis. Because it is out of this mixture that we may find some plausible explanations for this highly complex and controversial crisis, we shall break down the crisis into two major factors: endogenous and exogenous. This is needed because many Interna-
tional Relations theoreticians and other social scientists have observed that there is no clear border between domestic and foreign, therefore, revealing its inherent complexity and non-mono-causal relationship.

The endogenous factors

There seems to be a consensus amongst academics that political crises should be settled domestically, even when there might be some indications that they might have been fostered from abroad (Jenkins & Powden 2006). At this broad level, we will analyse the power struggle amongst the elite; the ‘founding fathers’ syndrome; the alleged ethnic conflict; the re-emergence of gangs and youth groups; the lack of sufficient political institutionalisation of the different organs of power in East Timor, except for the executive; and the need for the East Timorese Catholic Church hierarchy to find a new role in a post-colonial environment.

A considerable amount of studies tend to place an emphasis on the long-standing power struggle between East Timorese key decision-makers. The Brussels-based International Crisis Group squarely states that ‘the entire crisis, its origins and solutions, revolve around ten people, who have a shared history going back 30 years’ (2006: 1). This power struggle comes apparently from a long-standing feud between various East Timorese elites, dating back all the way to the 1975 civil war and to the 24-year occupation by Indonesia.

Based on fieldwork done between 2002 and 2003 in East Timor, Silva argues that quite a few members of the FRETILIN executive came from Mozambique, while key presidential advisers to Xanana Gusmão had lived in Australia. Upon their return to East Timor, these two elite groups had competing agendas. The ones who came from Mozambique and from other Portuguese-speaking countries were successful in pushing for Portuguese to be the official language and in modelling the judicial system after the Portuguese one, while those who went to Australia favoured the introduction of Tetum as the sole national language and English as an official language (Silva 2006: 189-190). Therefore, she believes that these two elite groups have a tendency to value, celebrate and reproduce in East Timor institutional and bureaucratic habits learned in the countries that granted them shelter during their exile period. Although it is true that in post-colonial states the issue of power struggles is a strong variable, it is not the only one in play at the domestic level.

Another issue occupying a role in this crisis is the concept of ‘founding fathers’. Almost all post-colonial states share the concept of founding fathers. Most scholars who have studied East Timor tend to state
that politics emerged only after the Portuguese revolution back in Lisbon in April 1974 (Anderson 1993; Hill 2002; Jannisa 2005; Niner 2007), and that the vast majority of them studied at Catholic-run schools in the 1960s and the early 1970s. However, research conducted over the last few years reveals that naming the founding fathers of East Timor is an issue far from being settled. There are other non-Catholic and non-Lusophone protagonists who can legitimately claim the distinction. Amongst them are the leaders of the Vicarda rebellion of 1950 (Oliveira 1983: 175; Thomaz 1977: 40-41; Duarte 1981: 14-16; Duarte 1987: 32-33; Chamberlain 2005: 4-5), the three East Timorese who allegedly attended the 1955 Bandung Conference (Chamberlain 2005: 7), the ones who took part in the 1959 Viqueque rebellion, namely those who were deported to Portugal and Angola (Gunn 2006b: 27-53; Gunter 2006: 27-41; Chamberlain, 2007), and those who ran the first East Timorese independence movement, the Union Republic of Timor (União da República de Timor), which came into being in 1960 and lasted until the late 1990s (Fernandes 2005: 355-431; Chamberlain 2005: 24-58).

Other authors have strongly argued that there is an ethnically-based crisis between the loromonu and lorosaes, or ‘East-West’ conflict. This argument was, however, cast aside by the then-American ambassador in Dili, Grover Joseph Rees, who argued that it was above all a political crisis, and not an ethnic one. Asked by the Dili correspondent of the Lisbon daily Diário de Noticias if the crisis was ethnically based, Rees replied: ‘[n]o, I don’t think that the roots of the conflict have ever been ethnically based. There are several ethnic groups in East Timor, not only two, but nearly thirty. There is lots of mixture. For the great majority of my friends their fathers are from the East and their mothers from the West, or vice-versa. For this reason I do not believe that this is the source of the conflict. There are other reasons. They are mainly political.’

Even the Bishops of Dili and Baucau, who were strongly anti-Mari Alkatiri and anti-FRETILIN, have also dismissed this argument. D. Basílio do Nascimento, the Bishop of the latter diocese, for example, has contended more than once that the conflict is not an ethnic one, but that someone from abroad was exploiting this issue to pit people against each other. Although for a while this division was politically exploited to convince naïve people, as the crisis became less violent, it was quietly dropped and slowly the issue was shifted to disgruntled gangs and youth groups, made up of unemployed East Timorese instructed during the Indonesian occupation. This converged with the ‘pervasive intergenerational differences’ between the young and the older leaders (Scambray, Leach, and Jollife). James Scambray’s report, commissioned for the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID), marks a turning point. Besides recognizing that one basis for the violence that
shook the country had been the 'long-standing ethnic tensions' which were related to the 'control of the markets and trading routes' (Scambray 1). He identified other factors, such as 'property disputes, rival factions within the security forces, endemic gang rivalries, and a politically driven destabilisation campaign by opposition parties' (idem). Although it was made public on 15 September 2006, this report seems to be confirmed by some media reports. Micael Pereira, of the Lisbon weekly newspaper Expresso, has argued that East Timor's main problem is widespread gang violence, and calculated that more than 10% of the population is involved in gangs. Although he and other journalists attribute the culture of violence to the Indonesians' deliberate policy of creating militias in East Timor in the mid-1980s to undermine the resistance against Indonesian occupation, Scambray's report traces its origins to the Portuguese colonial (idem).

Others argue that the main problem has nothing to do with the wider agenda of nation-building, but instead with state-building (Feijó 2006: 159). For this former political advisor to President Xanana Gusmão, East Timor is a democracy in transition which has not become yet institutionalised (ibid: 162) mainly due to the existence of a weak civil society and a feeble political society (168). Regarding the distribution of power within the political system, Feijó argues that the several state institutions, such as the National Parliament, the Judiciary, and even the Presidency (168-169), are too weak compared to the Cabinet. In his opinion, during the first four years as an independent country, the only branch of government which gained more power was the executive (governo). For him there was an 'excessive governmentalisation of the regime' (181). Despite these unique circumstances, all state institutions, including the powerful Cabinet/Executive, failed to provide an answer to long-standing problems that afflicted the relationship between the Defence Forces and the National Police, which had been already diagnosed by an inquiry commission as far back as January 2004.

On the other hand, there appears to be a strong relationship between religion and politics in the democratisation process of East Timor. During the 24-year Indonesian occupation, the local East Timorese Catholic Church hierarchy, which disagreed with the Vatican's policy towards Indonesia on the status of East Timor and with the Jakarta-based Indonesian Catholic Bishops' Conference, became almost exclusively the spokesperson and protector for the average East Timorese citizen. This gave them a strong identity and role in East Timor politics.

However, all this changed with the withdrawal of Indonesia and especially after the election of local political leaders. Right away, tensions emerged between the local Catholic Church and the new political elite. The confrontation between local conservative-leaning Catholic Church's hierarchy and Mari Alkatiri's Cabinet intensified when the latter, in an
attempt to establish some mild form of church and state separation, proposed to make religion an optional, rather than a mandatory, subject in public schools in February 2005. However, over a four-week period, thousands of East Timorese took part in demonstrations and rallies against Alkatiri, in April and May. The Catholic Church’s strong capacity to mobilise the inhabitants of Dili against the government’s plan forced the Alkatiri’s Cabinet to back down when it signed a joint declaration with the Dili and Baucau Bishops on 7 May 2005, which allowed the situation to return to some kind of normal state of affairs. As Molnar observed, ‘it would appear that the Catholic Church’s activism for legalizing at least some aspects of Catholic doctrine and principles may achieve what they could not prior to the writing of the Constitution – a Constitutional inclusion of Catholicism as state religion. Should the Church continue with their agenda and succeed, Catholicism might as well have been declared a state religion’ (Molnar 2005).

This conflict was not the first between the Catholic Church and East Timorese political leadership. The first major dissension can be traced back all the way to Xanana Gusmão’s agreement with Susilo Yudhoyono, in January 2005, not to prosecute the Indonesians involved in the massacres up to 1999. The Bishop of Dili, D. Alberto Ricardo da Silva, criticised the East Timorese political elite shortly after for reaching a compromise with Indonesia ‘over the atrocities committed during the country’s independence process.’ The Church’s overt criticism of the political leadership regarding key public policy choices reveals that it envisages a far greater role in domestic politics, and that it has had a hard time adapting to a new reality: an elected political leadership that conducts foreign policy based on a realpolitik approach.

All these domestic underlying factors are insufficient, though, to allow us to understand comprehensively the causes of the crisis. In other words, although a wide range of endogenous factors allows us to see how complex East Timorese politics and society really is, there is a strong need to move away from mono-causal or one-sided reasons, and to concentrate also on external reasons for the crisis.

The exogenous factors

Like any other state, East Timor is confined to a highly complicated sub-region. All international organisations place East Timor into the Southeast Asian sub-region. Although they are correct from a geographic point-of-view, in fact from a political perspective it is confined to the South Pacific island-states. Two reasons explain this interpretation. First, while Southeast Asia is made up of sizeable countries that tend to be medium or small powers in their region, East Timor quali-
fies clearly as a rather tiny actor. Second, key indicators regarding the country tend to point at an enormous dependency on foreign powers to ensure the viability of state institutions, a rather similar trend characterizing other states in the South Pacific. To sum up, from a political perspective, East Timor is obviously located in the South Pacific sub-region.11

Besides being part of this sub-region, a substantial number of analysts are of the opinion that East Timor has been suffering from considerable Australian pressure tactics to control it. Barbedo de Magalhães contends that Canberra is noticeably gambling on the destabilisation of East Timor so that it may have unlimited access to her key resources: oil and gas (Magalhães 2006). In his opinion, the Howard administration was committed to the overthrow of the Alkatiri Cabinet to be able to negotiate a better oil and gas deal than what the Australian government had intended originally. On the other hand, Fernandes traces back Australia’s attempts to control East Timor all the way to the 1999 intervention, and the cover-up by Australian media and academics for Canberra’s policy of connivance with Indonesia, during this country’s occupation of East Timor for 24 years. Gunn laments president Xanana Gusmão’s recommendation to the East Timorese parliament that no country should pay reparations for supplying ‘weapons and military training to Indonesia’ for her 24-year occupation period, and for retracting ‘from a call for revival of the UN-backed special crimes unit to consummate the justice process’ (Gunn 2006b: vii).

Indeed, the preponderance of Australia in East Timor is due, in part, to three reasons. First, it was the first external power to send in 150 commando forces ahead of a promised 1300-man contingent, on 24 May 2006. This compares extremely well with other powers which deployed initially much smaller forces. Portugal, for example, sent a 110-man contingent, while Malaysia and New Zealand sent 500 and 60, respectively, made up of military and police personnel. A second point is the close geographical proximity between the two countries.

Third is the ‘generous’ aid package provided to East Timor by Australia. According to AusAID, Canberra has disbursed over $570 million in Official Development Assistance (ODA) to East Timor, between 1999 and June 2007 (AusAID, 2007). However, because of its nature, this generosity has raised serious concerns amongst East Timorese NGOs, even before the unfolding of the 2006 crisis. The pressure tactics used by the Howard Government to extract concessions from the Mari Alkatiri Administration during the oil and gas negotiations raised questions about the ‘generosity’ of Australian aid to East Timor. On average, Australia disburses annually AUS$40 million, but it dragged its feet during the negotiations, despite the fact that East Timor could get millions from the oil and gas fields. According to Anderson, ‘[t] he latest “re-
source sharing” agreement of 2006 involves a 50/50 share of the Sunrise oil and gas field (previously 82/18, Australia’s way), a field which East Timor has claimed as 100 per cent its own. The East Timorese still feel they are being robbed, and serious injustice over oil is not compensated for by small time AusAID charity’ (2003). A number of East Timorese NGOs which disapproved of Australia’s negotiation tactics during the Timor Sea talks had their AusAID funds cut in 2005 (La’o 2005).

The ever-growing predominance of Australia in East Timorese politics is moreover related to the re-emergence of China and her need for oil and gas. China established diplomatic relations with East Timor on 20 May 2002, during the visit of the Chinese Foreign Minister to the newly established state to open their embassy in Dili.12 Shortly before the breakdown of East Timor’s security and defence apparatuses, the East Timorese Defence Minister, Roque Rodrigues, visited Beijing, and during the talks with his Chinese counterpart, Cao Gangchuan, stated that ‘China will continue to enhance exchanges and cooperation with East Timor to further boost development of nation-to-nation and military relations.’13Shortly afterwards, President Xanana Gusmão’s planned to visit Beijing not only to strengthen political, economic, and financial ties, but more importantly to sign two Memoranda of Understanding regarding the exploration of oil and gas in the East Timor Sea. However, on the eve of leaving Dili for Beijing, the collapse of the security and defence apparatuses prevented him from departing. In short, the deal never went ahead. However, the Chinese multinational PetroChina was granted a contract to conduct an onshore seismic survey, and there is a possibility that it might get involved in offshore oil development.14 A Chinese business delegation visited Dili and presented to the East Timorese Government with several investment projects worth USD$100 million, according to the East Timor Embassy in Beijing in September 2007.15

Despite China’s keen interest in East Timor’s oil and gas, commitment to build the new East Timorese Foreign Office’s building and Presidential Palace, and the USD$13.6 million in bilateral trade,16 Storey is quite right when he contends that ‘for economic, political and historical reasons, it seems unlikely that China can ever displace Australia and Indonesia from the top hierarchy of East Timor’s foreign relations’ (p. 4).

As the violent 24-year occupier of East Timor, Indonesia has had a more settled and cautious approach to its neighbour during this crisis. The youth gang-related violence that pervades much of East Timor has been attributed to Jakarta-incited groups. One of the most common rumours plaguing Dili in the first few days after the onset of the crisis was that the looting of the Serious Crimes Unit in the Attorney General’s Office and the East Timorese Truth Commission had been master-
minded by Indonesians involved in the 24-year occupation. Although these rumours were never confirmed this view still lingers today.

Indeed, there was a preoccupation in Jakarta with the inquiries taking place in East Timor. In order to assuage them, in 2005, Jakarta and Dili established a Commission of Truth and Friendship to look into violent Indonesian withdrawal from East Timor. The aim of this Commission was to improve bilateral relations. Although it has taken voluntary statements from hundreds of witnesses, the inquiry panel had no authority to prosecute individuals or order anyone to testify. If this Inquiry Commission does not abandon the possibility of granting amnesty to human rights violators, the United Nations refuses to take part in it. Although Indonesia as an important role to play in East Timor, it has been moving cautiously to avoid any charges that it has been an important source for the current crisis.

Contrary to unfounded assumptions, Portugal has no material interests in East Timor whatsoever. Two main indicators attest this reality: Portuguese direct investment and trade figures. Total Portuguese direct investment in East Timor from 1999 up to 2005 amounted to a mere € 2.9 million. This figure represents 0.008 of Portugal's total foreign direct investment. Trade ties are also irrelevant. As can be seen in Table 6.1, between 2000 and 2006 imports represented on average nearly 0.002%, while exports stood at 0.008% (Portugal 2007b: 1).

Table 6.1  Portuguese-East Timorese Trade Balance, 2000-2006  
(Share of Total Portuguese Foreign Trade)

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<td>Imports (%)</td>
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<td>Exports (%)</td>
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*Source: Portuguese Ministry of Economics and Innovation*

As of 2006, in terms of imports East Timor ranked 133rd, while in terms of exports it was 111th in foreign trade (ibid.). However, nearly 93% of Portuguese exports from East Timor were coffee-based (Portugal 2007a: 2; Portugal 2007b: 2).

In terms of East Timorese foreign trade, the picture is slightly different. While for Portugal, East Timor is an insignificant market, Portugal is a somewhat important market outside Asia. In 2004, Portugal ranked as the third largest trading partner of East Timor, with 12.4% of total exports (Portugal 2006: 4), while it ranked in sixth place with 3.0% in terms of the total, behind Indonesia, Australia, Singapore, Vietnam, and Bangladesh (ibid.). Although it remained ranked in the same position, East Timor imported less from Portugal and it dropped to 2% (2007a: 1).
Portugal’s main interests are essentially political. These tend to concentrate on three key issues: to make East Timor a viable state actor; to re-introduce the Portuguese language and to turn it into a de facto official language and not just a de jure one; and to counterbalance Australian and Indonesian political weight in Dili.

There has been a permanent Portuguese objective in Asia since the invasion and occupation of East Timor by Indonesia in 1975: to turn its former colony into an independent and viable independent state actor. This enduring foreign policy goal is in part related to the fact that East Timor is the only former Portuguese Asian colony where there was a constitutional promise of self-determination in the 1976 Constitution. Goa’s integration in India was accepted by Portuguese decision-makers in December 1975, while Macau was handed over peacefully to mainland China, after a 12-year transition period, in December 1999. Due to the fact that the other two former Portuguese colonies became part of other key regional actors, Portuguese decision-makers have traditionally put a heavy emphasis on the independence and viability of East Timor.

Another reason for Portugal’s strong commitment to the viability of East Timor has to do with the reintroduction of Portuguese as an official language. While in other former colonies, the Portuguese language is gradually vanishing (Wiarda 2002), in East Timor there is a possibility that the number of Portuguese-speaking persons might increase, as the number of enrolled pupils grows in public and Catholic-run schools. The two bilateral Indicative Cooperation Programs signed between Portuguese and East Timorese authorities place as the top priority the reintroduction of Portuguese into East Timor’s education system, from kindergarten through university (Portugal 2004: 10-12). For example, the Indicative Cooperation Program from 2004 to 2006, signed by Foreign Ministers Maria Teresa Gouveia and José Ramos Horta, stated quite categorically that ‘education, which is understood to include the teaching of Portuguese language, will be the first priority of education with East Timor, the main concern being to cover the territory to the greatest possible extent’ (ibid.: 10).

The third reason for Portugal’s commitment to East Timor has to do with the perception that Portuguese decision-makers have of themselves playing a counterbalancing role in Dili to Canberra’s and Jakarta’s interests, and in the process helping the East Timorese leadership in dealing with the Indonesian and Australian colossus.

These three main goals have been shaping key Portuguese foreign policy instruments towards East Timor. Portugal was the largest bilateral aid donor to East Timor from 1999 to 2001, and continued to do so until the first semester of 2007, as it is shown in Figure 6.1. Overall, from 1999 to the first half of 2007, Portugal has disbursed € 393.7 million.
Figure 6.1 Portuguese Foreign Aid to East Timor, 1999-2007

Source: Portuguese Institute for Development Assistance / Foreign Office (N.B. The 2007 data is only an estimate and refers to the first half-year)

In percentage terms of total Portuguese foreign aid programs, the disbursements represent a significant share, as shown in Figure 6.2. From 1999 until 2003, East Timor was the largest recipient of Portuguese foreign aid. This changed only when Portugal decided to forgive part of Angola's debt in 2004.

In terms of allocation, Portuguese foreign aid has gone through a rather interesting evolution in the past nine years. In an effort at promoting state-building, Portuguese ODA has concentrated heavily on the item of 'Government and Civil Society', with the exception of 2005, when it was surpassed by education, which really started to be a big item in 2004; that is, over a quarter of the total bilateral aid program. Contrary to widely spread beliefs, education became an important item in the Portuguese foreign aid package in the last three years.

The greater emphasis on the education sector has drawn heavy criticism from at least one East Timorese NGO. Probably influenced by the fact that Brazil is also strongly promoting the reintroduction of the Portuguese language in East Timor, Guteriano N.S. Neves criticised Portuguese and Brazilian aid for being overwhelmingly concentrated in the education sector, in a lecture delivered at the University of Brasilia (Neves 2005).

Like Australia, Malaysia, and New Zealand, Portugal also deployed a small 120-strong contingent of its paramilitary force, the GNR, in East Timor on 4 June 2006. Since then, its contingent has been strength-
ened to 220. In terms of costs, the Portuguese contingent costs on an annual basis around €10 million to the Portuguese treasury. Around 25% of this amount is paid by the United Nations. Despite the long distance and the logistical problems associated with this operation, the trade of diplomatic barbs between then Portuguese Foreign Minister Diogo Freitas do Amaral, and the Australian Prime Minister, John Howard, and his Foreign Affairs Minister, Alexander Downer, and the difficult relationship between the two countries at the beginning of their deployment, the role of the GNR has been welcomed. However, both countries have quite a different approach to the whole issue. While Australia maintains most of her contingent outside the UN umbrella, Portugal joined Malaysian police contingents in the command of the United Nations Police Force (UNPOL), on 13 September 2006 (UNMIT, 2006). Besides keeping public security throughout the country, the UNPOL has been entrusted with the reconstitution of ‘the Timorese National Police, training officers in human rights, community policing and incident management’ (ibid.).

Another key external actor in East Timorese affairs has been the United Nations (Ferro 2005; Feijó 2006). It was through the UN that Portugal and Indonesia negotiated the plebiscite in 1999, and until 2002, it basically governed East Timor and made quite huge investments in the country. After the independence of East Timor, the UN scaled down its presence. Since the crisis of April and May last year, the UN has returned to East Timor. Under Security Council resolution 1704, it established the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) on 25 August 2006. The mandate was basically to enhance capacity-
building in several state institutions, foster national reconciliation, support the 2007 presidential and parliamentary elections, restore and maintain public order, re-establish the National Police Service, PNTL, and the Defence Forces, among many other functions.  Although there are some fears that the United Nations might commit some of the same mistakes as prior to the outbreak of the 2006 crisis, it seems dedicated to maintaining an extended presence in East Timor in order to make it a feasible actor.

In short, exogenous actors have played and most likely will continue to perform an important role in East Timor. However, these are not enough by themselves to explain the ongoing crisis. To get a full picture of what is at stake in this small South Pacific island-state, it requires a comprehensive and heuristic approach uniting both endogenous and exogenous factors.

Conclusions

The ongoing East Timorese crisis can be broken down in two main levels of analysis: domestic and external. At the endogenous level, we have a wide range of factors that ought not to be neglected or isolated from each other. The same goes for the external factors. Contrary to a recently-published book, which argues that there has been an overwhelming failure in nation-building (Jenkins & Plowden 2006) there is a need to broaden the scope of analysis to include underlying endogenous and exogenous factors in order to get a more measured and realistic view of East Timorese state-building.

At this point in time, East Timor’s immediate future is, in part, held hostage by an understanding between Australia and Portugal. Without its dissolution, and in the absence of an East Timorese elite reconciliation, we cannot foresee the settlement of the ongoing crisis.

The East Timorese political leadership has to find ways to settle this issue. There is, in short, a need by the East Timorese leadership ‘to rise above and overcome the challenge of dividedness and differences’ in order to build pluralistic state institutions, with checks and balances, and to integrate the country into a globalised world. If they fail in this endeavour, they run the risk of becoming perceived by other international actors as another failed South Pacific island-state, and not as a Southeast Asian country.

In short, this study underscores the importance of endogenous and exogenous factors to understand the ongoing East Timorese crisis.
Notes

1 At the height of the crisis in April-May 2006, it was estimated that there were between 150,000 to 178,000 Internally-Displaced Persons (IDPs). According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, as of July 2007 there were still 100,000 IDPs, that is, nearly 10% of the population. ("How Many Are Currently Displaced?" [http://www.internal-displacement.org/idmc/website/countries.nsf/(httpEnvelopes)/3FD4aE5dY76FaEtCt257233005344BB?OpenDocument#disclaimer], accessed on 26 July 2007.

2 'A tendência a valorizar, celebrar e reproduzir em Timor-Leste hábitos institucionais e burocráticos aprendidos nos países que os acolheram durante o período de exílio' (SILVA 2006: 184).

3 Paulo A. Azevedo, 'Nunca foi um conflito étnico' (It was Never an Ethnic Conflict), Diário de Notícias (29 May 2006), [http://dn.sapo.pt/2006/05/29/internacional/nunca_um_conflito_etnico.html], accessed 1 June 2007.

4 Micael Pereira, 'O bispo D. Basilio do Nascimento diz que Timor-Leste está a arriscar a sua independência: "É urgente uma solução"' (Bishop D. Basilio do Nascimento states that East Timor is risking her own independence: 'It is Urgent a Solution'), Expresso (Lisbon), No. 1753 (3 June 2006): 28.

5 Micael Pereira (2007), 'Gangues de Timor' (Timor Gangs), Expresso-Única (Lisbon), No. 1811 (13 July): 82.


7 This larger concept means 'a people who share common customs, origins, history, and frequently language' (Chesterman 2005: 1).

8 Feijó sees signs of this difficult relationship as far back as the 2004 Lospalos incidents (166).

9 It should be noted that the East Timorese educational system is under the control of the local Catholic Church.

10 'Timor-Leste: Bispo opõe-se a julgar crimes cometidos durante o processo de independência' (East Timor: The Bishop is opposed to the agreement not to try the crimes committed during the independence process), Fundação Ajuda à Igreja que Sofre (www.fundacaoais.pt/page_content.php?id_code=274), accessed on 1 June 2007.

11 James Cotton clearly places East Timor in Southeast Asia (2004). However, the 2006 collapse of the defence and security apparatuses clearly shows that it resembles more a South Pacific island-state than a Southeast Asian regional actor, which has never witnessed the public dissolution of such important instruments of power.


19 Clinton Fernandes mentions *en passant* ‘Portuguese corporate’ interests in East Timor (Fernandes 2004: 116). This might be the case for Australia, but not for Portugal. Besides being interested in having access to the large and rich, but highly competitive, EU market, Portuguese corporate interests are concentrated in two former colonies, Brazil and Angola. In Mozambique, for example, Portugal does not rank among the first ten foreign investors (Mozambique: Portugal sai da lista dos 10 maiores’ [Mozambique: Portugal leaves the list of the 10 best], *O Jornal* [Lisbon], No. 253 [18 July 2007]: 3).


State, Society and International Relations in Asia

Reality and Challenges

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