Chapter 9

Difficult memories

The independence struggle as cultural heritage in East Timor

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This chapter examines the way difficult sites of imprisonment, trauma and resistance are being remembered in the newly independent nation of East Timor. While the difficult challenge of memorialising massacre sites, places of political imprisonment, torture and human rights abuses confronts many post-conflict societies, few represent as profound a loss as Timor-Leste, having suffered an estimated minimum 102,000 casualties during the Indonesian occupation from 1975 to 1999, along with forced population displacements and extensive non-fatal human rights violation through arbitrary detention, torture and rape (CAVR 2005: 43).[1]

In Timor-Leste, these difficult legacies are complicated by the distinct cultural and linguistic affiliations promoted by successive colonial regimes, political schisms within the former independence movement, a lack justice for the victims of human rights abuses during the Indonesian occupation, and the recent rise of regional tensions. These fissures have complicated the process of nation-building, and the articulation of a unifying postcolonial national identity. As such, they are critical to understanding the cultural heritage of the independence struggle and its conservation in Timor-Leste, which is itself an exercise in articulating cultural nationalism.

In examining East Timorese responses to these difficult issues since independence in 2002, this chapter discusses some of the challenging contexts of cultural heritage management in Timor-Leste, and surveys the colonial and postcolonial 'layers' of the cultural heritage landscape, examining their competing visions of East Timorese identity. It then focuses on East Timorese nationalist conservation of difficult sites in the struggle for independence, including key jails and interrogation centres, massacre sites, and recent monuments to the armed resistance movement Falintil (Armed Forces for the National Liberation of East Timor). With limited resources, East Timor has had notable success in the conservation of key sites, and memories of the liberation struggle, at both the national and the local levels. Nonetheless, it is argued that the cultural heritage landscape reflects a major 'fault line' in post-independence politics, in that the contribution of younger East Timorese nationalists in the struggle for independence remains relatively neglected.

Contexts

During the struggle for independence, a truly national sense of East Timorese identity and community arose from the collective experiences of suffering under the Indonesian occupation, which had a unifying effect across various ethnic and language groups under the 'colonial gaze' (Anderson 1993). Since independence, maintaining this unified sense of a common national identity has proven a more challenging task. Timor-Leste has witnessed intergenerational disputes over national identity and official languages (Leach 2003), and wider 'history wars' within the former independence movement over the symbolic 'ownership' of the independence struggle, and its core historical narratives (Leach 2006). One widely endorsed and popular narrative of East Timorese nationalism is that of *funu*: of a 450-year 'national' resistance struggle against consecutive foreign occupiers. However, this broadly unifying historical narrative is complicated by the more divisive cultural legacies of successive colonial eras. Beneath it, a complex and ongoing struggle over postcolonial cultural affiliations and national identity is evident.

Put simply, the distinct experiences and educational backgrounds of two generations of nationalists, respectively encountering Portuguese and Indonesian colonialism, have complicated the task of articulating a simple, unifying postcolonial national identity. Older nationalists have politically dominated the post-independence state, and it is clear that significant numbers of young people have felt misrecognised by some 'official' articulations of national identity embedded in the East Timorese constitution, and in the policies of the first government. As such, while the process of articulating the cultural components of nationalism may be metaphorically understood as one of 'imagining' a nation (Anderson 1983), in practice it may involve the universalisation of cultural and political values of a dominant nationalist grouping (Leach 2002: 45).

One touchstone issue is the choice of official languages, and the official cultural affiliations of the independent state. While the indigenous lingua franca *Tetum* is accorded a high degree of cross-generational endorsement, Portuguese has been less popular with the younger generation educated in Indonesian. The official use of the language, and the 'privileged ties' accorded to Portuguese-language countries – embedded as an 'official' conception of national identity in the East Timorese constitution of 2002 – made sense for an older generation of the political élite, literate in Portuguese, and instrumental in the rise of East Timorese nationalism in the 1960s and early 1970s. For this generation, Portuguese was important as a unifying language across the élite of local language groups (before the spread of Tetum in the 1980s), and as a language of the armed resistance. Its choice as an official language also acknowledged the critical diplomatic support of Lusophone countries during the occupation. For the younger generation educated in Bahasa and with little knowledge of the old colonial language, however, the choice of Portuguese raised fears of their exclusion from symbolic sources of power and cultural identity in an independent East Timor.

Another example of this 'fault line' is evident in intergenerational debate over nationalist historiography, and the nature of an 'authentic' postcolonial national identity. For an older generation of nationalists, emphasising the long history of *funu*, the Portuguese presence is critical to East Timorese nationalism: unifying different regions against a common occupier, bringing Catholicism, and marking the nation as a distinctive grouping not only in relation to Indonesia as a whole, but, equally, to the indigenous peoples of Dutch-colonised, Protestant-influenced west Timor.[2] Many nationalists in a younger generation look for what they see as a more authentic postcolonial identity, looking primarily to its Melanesian or indigenous roots, and more interested in the commonalties with west Timor. As one interviewee put it (Leach 2006: 232), 'I would prefer to study indigenous history, not related to colonialism. East Timor's history itself; the local things.'

With some 75 per cent of the population under thirty years of age – but the political élite still dominated by an older generation – these differences are important political fault lines. Indeed, two key background factors behind the political crisis in East Timor in 2006 were political divisions within the former independence movement and these well-documented intergenerational tensions. Among other things, the partial rejection of certain 'official' narratives of national identity and history by young people highlights the difficult legacy of cultural division in the wake of consecutive colonial eras in East Timor. These wider intergenerational divisions over national identity and history are an important context to understanding issues of cultural heritage management in the independent nation.

Inevitably, another critical context in Timor Leste has been one of limited resources for the maintenance and restoration of the built cultural heritage landscape, though the international community has donated money for several key projects such as UNESCO's support for the conservation of the *Uma Fukum*: the oldest Portuguese colonial building in Dili, a former barracks and future site of the national museum. In the UN transitional administration period, the Portuguese government also resourced reconstruction of many colonial-era buildings, including churches and government offices. The small number of major projects supported by the East Timorese government has generally been co-funded by external partners. I examine these further below.

'Layers' of cultural heritage

East Timor became the newest member of the UN upon independence in 2002, following 450 years of Portuguese colonial rule ending in 1975, and a 24-year struggle against Indonesian occupation between 1975 and 1999. As the future President and Nobel Peace Prize recipient Jose Ramos-Horta (1996) noted, 'East Timor is at the crossroads of three major cultures: Melanesian, which binds us to our brothers and sisters of the South Pacific region; Malay-Polynesian, binding us to South East Asia, and the Latin Catholic influence, a legacy of almost 500 years of Portuguese colonisation'. These influences have offered disparate resources for competing colonial and nationalist accounts of East Timorese history and identity

(Leach 2006: 224). During the twenty-four-year Indonesian occupation, these tensions became a site of symbolic struggle; with Indonesian neo-colonial historiography emphasising historical Malay connections, and East Timorese nationalists highlighting Melanesian affinities and the 450-year impact of Portuguese colonialism, by which East Timor could be identified as a nation distinct from Dutch-colonised west Timor.

Similarly, the various colonial and postcolonial layers of cultural heritage in Timor-Leste represent contested attempts to reinterpret the past in ways which suit, respectively, Portuguese, Indonesian and nationalist ideas of East Timorese identity. The built landscape of cultural heritage and monuments charts a changing history from 'heroes of the Portuguese empire', through neo-colonial 'integration' monuments of Indonesia; to the monuments of an independent state. As Wiley (1994: 145) notes, collective identities commonly interpret the past as the linear 'origin' of the present political self, or of a future self it is in the process of 'becoming' (see also Anderson 1983: 22–36). Each layer of the memorial landscape of Timor-Leste exhibits this process of remembering the past in ways which ideologically buttress 'contemporary' political projects of collective identity construction.

Timor-Leste still has many Portuguese colonial monuments, including memorials and statues to various 'heroes of the empire'. These are primarily dedicated to metropolitan Portuguese, but also prominently include monuments to loyal Timorese *Liurai* (kings) who fought or died '*por Portugal*'; either in helping to suppress indigenous rebellions, or as in the case Dom Aleixo Corte-Real of Ainaro, in fighting the Japanese occupation. Portuguese colonial historiography emphasised positive relations with the mother country and the progress of 'Portugalisation' – a colonial metaphor for a 'civilising' mission involving the spread of Catholicism, and the 'pacification' of periodic rebellions (Gunn 1999: 22–4). Of particular interest here are monuments remembering victims of the Japanese occupation, such as the prominent monument to the 1942 massacre of Portuguese troops in Aileu. With typical colonial myopia, these are primarily monuments to Portuguese soldiers and officials, not the estimated 50,000 Timorese who died during the occupation.

Indonesian-era monuments also reflect on the Portuguese colonial past. These typically seek to depict the forced integration of East Timor as a 'return to the fatherland', and portray elements of East Timorese nationalism against the Portuguese as consonant with Indonesia's own anti-colonial struggle against the Dutch (Gunn 2001:10). For example, most major towns in East Timor have Indonesian integration monuments, some of which depict Dom Boaventura, an anti-Portuguese rebel Liurai of the early twentieth century, in traditional dress, breaking free from the chains of Portuguese colonialism. In this way the Indonesian regime appropriated a key image of then-nascent East Timorese nationalism, and adapted it to an integrationist purpose, celebrating the forced integration as a triumph of Timorese anti-colonialism. Where East Timorese traditional houses have four pillars, the integration monuments often have five-sided platforms, reflecting the five Indonesian citizenship principles of Panca Sila. Importantly too, the Indonesian regime took pains to conserve certain sites such as the nineteenth-century Portuguese jail at

Figure 9.1 Indonesian Integration Monument, Dili, depicting a traditional Timorese warrior breaking loose from the chains of Portuguese colonialism. (Source: M. Leach)

Aipelo, preserved as a monument to the brutality of colonial era. Here, it is possible to witness the serial connections between the ideology of the successive colonial regimes, and heritage conservation practices in each era (Logan 2003).

Timorese nationalist cultural heritage

The final layer of cultural heritage consists of East Timorese memorials reflecting on the Indonesian era, and the pain and trauma of the liberation struggle. Prominent among these post-independence sites are the *Comarca Balide* (Balide Jail), a

former jail and interrogation centre; the 'heroes monument' to Falintil resistance fighters at Metinaro; and memorials remembering the victims of massacres in the lead-up to and aftermath of the 1999 referendum on independence, such as those in the Suai and Liquica churches.[3]

These newer sites are central to the process of forging a postcolonial national identity. Some, like the 'heroes monument' at Metinaro are designated as sacred spaces of the nation, to be under permanent honour guard. Others, like the monuments to the victims of the Suai and Liquica massacres, recall traumatic events that took place in already sacralised spaces, honouring the memory of victims who died sheltering from TNI or their proxy militias in churches, or cemeteries. These difficult sites of cultural heritage are especially important in this process of articulating a nationalist view of East Timorese history and identity, as they are intimately tied in with wider processes of national reconciliation, and post-conflict justice in Timor-Leste. It is no accident that one of the key sites, the Comarca Balide, is now home to the records of Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation (CAVR).

Comarca Balide: the Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation

The most important repository of national memories of the Indonesian occupation is the Comarca Balide. A former Portuguese colonial jail built in 1963, the site was used as an incarceration facility by several regimes, including the short-lived unilaterally declared Democratic Republic of East Timor in late 1975. Employed briefly by Fretilin to house UDT and Apodeti prisoners after the civil war in 1975, the jail was then an Indonesian interrogation centre run by the notorious military police and intelligence organisations Kodim and Morem. The Comarca's importance as a site of pain and suffering under successive regimes made it a symbolically compelling choice for the headquarters of the CAVR after independence. Once the CAVR's primary testimony collection activities were wound down in late 2005, the site was designated as a permanent memorial and archive for CAVR documents, including the thousands of victim testimonies.

The initial proposal to rehabilitate the Comarca came from the association of ex-political prisoners (ASSEPOL) in 2000, and was adopted by the then-nascent CAVR as an appropriate site to house the 'human rights history' of Timor-Leste. In 2002, a memorandum of understanding determined that the Comarca would become the Dili office of the CAVR for its mandate period, then stand as an archive under a long-term objective to 'preserve the former Balide prison for future generations as a memorial to repression and as a centre for the promotion of human rights and reconciliation in East Timor'. These objectives were endorsed by the government of Timor-Leste.

Restored with the support of the Japanese and Irish Governments, the Comarca building was ready for the formal opening of the CAVR hearings in February 2003. The original ASSEPOL inspiration was not forgotten, with the publicity leaflet featuring a quote from one of the founding committee members: 'We will

show that flowers can grow in a prison.' The restoration process was participatory and inclusive, with ex-prisoners strongly involved in landscaping and other features of the restoration, as a form of rehabilitative therapy. One woman who had spent her childhood there while her mother was imprisoned transformed the inner courtyards into gardens. Former political prisoners also built the furniture and lecterns in the courtyard meeting space area. Before the opening, another former prisoner conducted a traditional cleansing ceremony. In this way, the Comarca restoration project was actively conceived both as a site for personal recovery, and as a national historical repository.

On 20 December 2005, at the end of the CAVR mandate period, the Comarca became a permanent memorial for the victims of human rights abuses in Timor-Leste, and home to the post-CAVR technical secretariat, charged with disseminating the CAVR report and maintaining its permanent archives. The process of converting the Comarca site into a memorial and historical repository has been conducted in consultation with UNESCO, and other relevant international museums.[4]

The Comarca as a memorial

The Comarca houses both standing memorials to victims of human rights abuses, and other less conventional memorials, literally embedded in the architecture of the site. In the former category, the 'Santa Cruz room' is the archive for the thousands of CAVR records collected during its mandate, its name recalling the site of the 1991 massacre of students which put the occupation of Timor-Leste firmly back on the world stage. Another room houses the 'Suai Circle', a memorial to the victims of the Suai massacre during militia rampages in 1999, with photographs, traditional *tais*, and votive painted stones recalling individual victims.

One innovative method of preserving the memory of human rights abuses is through the conservation of prisoner graffiti. In total there are 65 graffiti, preserved in whole or part, including one from a future CAVR commissioner imprisoned during the Indonesian era. Most graffiti are in Portuguese, and many express the simple remembrances of prisoners, such as 'Here lay Zeca'. Others mark extended periods of arbitrary imprisonment in the early years of the Indonesian occupation, such as one scratching in which a prisoner laments: 'I spent my past in this cell.' Some show a sense of humour under adversity, such as one which declares: 'special cell for world leadership candidates'. Yet others are more disturbing, such as those found in the isolation cells under the main jail: 'You tortured my body in the fetters of your empire.' Some graffiti in the isolation cells record perhaps the last testament of political prisoners, such as one dated 10 August 1976, nine months after the Indonesian invasion, in which a list of names follows an etching on a wall: 'In this cell of death were …'

The power of these graffiti lies in the fact that they are intensely personalised artefacts of a lived present of suffering, rather than abstract, general or reconstructed memories of the past. As the CAVR (2003) notes, these conserved graffiti remind the visitor of the wider function of the building as a memorial and historical repository of narratives:

Figure 9.2 Conserved prisoner graffiti, Comarca Balide. (Source: M. Leach)

> The graffiti from the jail and the unrenovated isolation cells serve as stark testimony to the plight of political prisoners and the CAVR archives hold many written, audio and visual records to supplement the memory of this time and the story of what happened in the building.

While the internal rooms of the Comarca have been renovated, the prisoner graffiti are conserved under plastic frames, deeper under the modern paint layers, where many were inadvertently preserved in later Indonesian times. By contrast, the isolation cells have been left as they are, aside from the installation of lighting 'so that visitors can see for themselves conditions in these 'cells of death" (CAVR 2003).

The Comarca also contains the legacies of other occupants, including graffiti and coarse artworks by TNI officers, such as one depicting a large number of Indonesian soldiers with a woman stripped of her clothes. The site also conserves the more recent graffiti of rampaging Aitarak and Mahidi militias in 1999, declaring Xanana Gusmão 'a mongrel'.

Cultural heritage and human rights

The connection between cultural heritage maintenance and human rights monitoring is made explicit in the Comarca management plan. As Jose Caetano Guterres (2005), coordinator of the CAVR archives team, notes, the primary role of the archive 'is to provide evidence of the violations … on which the victims can base their request for reparations and on which the authors can be pursued'.

The CAVR records now consist of thousands of interviews, victim testimonies, and community profiles. Drawing heavily on the approach of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the Comarca Balide has adopted three principles defining the nexus between archive maintenance and human rights.

The first principle of 'prevention through preservation' sees archives as a critical means of preserving the history of human rights abuses, so that evidence is passed on to future generations, and such violations may be prevented in future. The second deals with issues of public accountability. By facilitating public access to these records, and entrenching the principle of openness in the relationship between citizenry and state, future governments will be kept accountable. The third deals with promotion of rights to information as both a democratic safeguard, and a barrier to attempts to rewrite history. As Joinet (2004) argues, drawing on UN Commission on Human Rights principles, the corollary of the individual 'right to know' – a legal right of victims – is a collective 'duty to remember' assumed by the state. Archives are critical to 'sensitising' governments to these principles.

The permanent presence of the CAVR archives is intended to ward against historical revisionism, but also to support the broader work of collective memory construction by providing 'a solid bedrock upon which to build true representations and interpretations of people and events'. Importantly, in the East Timorese context, these principles were explicitly linked to the process of reconciliation and post-conflict nation-building. The managers of the Comarca site hope the CAVR archives will facilitate unifying constructions of national history and collective memory in the light of the deep divisions and scars of colonial eras (Guterres 2005):

> Since memorials affect the ways in which we confront past, present and future, they, and … their associated archives, have the potential to play significant roles in democracy building, in the promotion of human rights, and in the pursuit of justice. Memorials may also serve as state-sponsored forms of symbolic reparation and may help promote other forms of reparation and reconciliation.

Interestingly, the Comarca philosophy draws an explicit contrast with the role of archives – as relatively open sites for democratic participation in the construction of collective memory – and the approach of colonial-era memorials, with their static monuments of a military nature, and their ideological rigidities, imposed by a distant state.

Despite these laudable ambitions, by 2005, the overall status of the CAVR and the recommendations of its report were cast in doubt by the *Realpolitik*-inspired Truth and Friendship Commission (TFC). This bilateral Indonesia/East Timor Commission was established to 'investigate the events of 1999', sidelining the recommendation by a UN panel of experts that an international war crimes tribunal be established if Indonesia failed to bring to justice those responsible

for the post-referendum violence. It appeared that the CAVR report might be sidelined in favour of the TFC, which focuses more on diplomatic relations with Indonesia than justice. While it was clear that the task of pursuing Indonesian human rights violators was not one that could be pursued by East Timor alone and without international support and pressure, the crisis of 2006 exposed the raw core of unresolved post-independence tensions in East Timor. In particular, as the cycle of gang violence unfolded, it exposed an explosive legacy of resentment over the failure to bring the perpetrators of the 1999 violence to justice (UN 2006).[5] Equally, for many commentators, the rise of 'east–west' regional tensions in Timor-Leste was also related to the unresolved political legacies of the Indonesian occupation. Sparked by intergenerational conflict in the army between Falintil veterans from the eastern region, where the military resistance had been more sustainable, and younger, more junior western recruits, who felt discriminated against, the army dispute broadened into wider civil conflict between east and west, partly over which 'region' had contributed more to the resistance.[6] In this context, the critical importance of the CAVR's report and human rights archive to a nation-building agenda were starkly highlighted.[7]

While these recent developments may impact little upon the status of Comarca as a national memorial to suffering, it has a wider symbolic effect on the CAVR as an institution symbolising reconciliation, justice, and an archival 'safeguard' against future human rights abuses. Complicating the progress of the Comarca site as a CAVR memorial and archive, the building now also houses the Dili satellite office of the TFC. Tensions between the two bodies are evident, and include a lack of a formal memorandum of understanding on TFC access to CAVR records. At the time of writing, the CAVR had no clear ongoing mandate, aside from a technical secretariat charged with distributing the report *Chega!*. As such, no dedicated archival staff were assisting the public to access the records. Access was also limited by the absence of an archive law regulating public rights to information, and, more practically, by the lack of a thorough index of CAVR documents. In sum, there were evident tensions between the Comarca philosophy of openness and preserving historical memory in the interests of justice, and a new diplomatic process emphasising good international relations.

The Heroes Monument, Metinaro

At the top of the pantheon of East Timorese nationalist memorial sites, the impressive 'Heroes Monument' at Metinaro to the fallen Falintil soldiers is designed as a sacralised national site, to be under permanent honour guard. Built close the main East Timor Defence Force (ETDF) barracks, the centrepiece of the site is an open platform monument, designed to accommodate official ceremonies, with three flagpoles, facing the open sea. The site also comprises a national memorial garden and natural reserve – to honour all the victims of the struggle for the independence – a Chapel, and two ossuary houses containing the remains of several hundred Falintil fighters, at which visitors may pay their respects.

Built with the support of the United Nation Development Program, as well as USAID and other donors, the site was a major project of the Recovery, Employment and Stability Program for Ex-Combatants and Communities in Timor-Leste (RESPECT). Despite its success in establishing the Metinaro site, the program has been a controversial one, tarred by government's initial failure to adequately recognise and compensate former combatants for their sacrifices during the 24-year struggle for independence. Aside from those who joined the ETDF, a number of former veterans have since formed the backbone of various 'anti-system' political groups who reject the government and the new constitution.

The difficulties of nation-building are reflected in one minor controversy over the Heroes Monument site, with one of these veteran-dominated groups, the CPD-RDTL, arguing that their fallen comrades should be buried in their own districts.[8] Once again, this critique highlights a perennial tension in East Timor between nation-building projects and the ongoing strength of local and regional identities based on language and ethnic groups. These tensions, so evident in the crisis of 2006, touch the cultural heritage landscape just as they influence broader debates over national identity and history.

National Museum of the Resistance

Housed in the former Portuguese-era courthouse in Dili, the Archive and Museum of the East Timorese Resistance opened in early 2006. In a more conventional museum style, but with innovative exhibits, the museum differs from the CAVR in that its archives preserve contemporary documents, artefacts and photos of the resistance movement between 1975 and 1999, rather than subsequent victim testimonies. Supported by the Portuguese Government's Instituto Camões, and the Association of Resistance Veterans, the archives include the document collections of key resistance leaders and Falintil brigades, and those of the clandestine front operating in towns, along with exhibits such as Falintil leader Konis Santana's typewriter.

The key exhibit is a series of 52 life-size panels on the history of the resistance, with photos and interpretative text, ordered chronologically and thematically, with an accompanying catalogue in Tetum, Portuguese and English. As one of the curators, José Mattoso argues, in a country in which 54 per cent of the inhabitants are under 15 years of age, the collective history of the resistance in Timor-Leste 'will remain a fact expressed by a fragile memory' unless preserved and recorded quickly for future generations (Mattoso 2004). While an impressive exhibit, beautifully housed in the renovated court of justice, only three panels focus specifically on the key role of the youth and student-dominated civilian resistance. As I argue further below, this lower level of recognition accorded to the youth contribution to the independence struggle is a feature of the cultural heritage landscape, and one that reflects the broader intergenerational 'fault line' in post-independence politics.

Figure 9.3 Monument to the victims of the Suai massacre in 1999, Suai. (Source: M. Leach)

Massacre sites: Suai and Liquica

Some 2,600 East Timorese are estimated to have been killed by the TNI or their proxy militias in the violence leading up to and following the independence referendum in September 1999 (CAVR 2005: 44). The most notorious massacres of civilians took place in or around church sites, while the victims were seeking shelter. Some of have been honoured at the district level, normally with some outside assistance. For example, the monument to the 200 victims of the Suai massacre was built by people of Covalima district with support from the East Timorese government, the governments of Ireland and UK, and the UN Serious Crimes Unit.

In examining the post-independence cultural heritage landscape of East Timor, it is important to acknowledge different levels of memorialisation, and to look beyond the realm of 'formal' monuments. In the grounds of the Suai Church itself, local memorials, often family-made, offer simple remembrances of particular individuals killed on that day, including three priests. As these sites were already sacralised spaces, the church and local parishioners have exercised much of the responsibility for the less formal memorials of these tragic events.

Similarly, the small but moving monument to the 60 victims of the Liquica Church massacre was clearly designed and constructed at the local community and parish level by those closest to victims. Indeed, all over Timor-Leste, local memorials for those who died in the violence in 1999 may be found, organised

at the village or community level. Indeed, there is scarcely a town above village size without one.

Other memorials and 'immanent' cultural heritage

These more informal memorials include locally made monuments in hiding places for Falintil resistance fighters, built by the proud community members who assisted them. The site of the Santa Cruz massacre in 1991 is itself commemorated informally with votive candles on the front gate. Though the informal memorial is very moving, to some of the younger generation, the lack of a more formal memorial appears a strange omission after five years of independence.

Other more difficult sites are partly remembered, recalled by one side of the brief but bloody civil war in 1975 between Fretilin and UDT (Timorese Democratic Union). For example, sites such as the *Armagem* (storehouse) in Aileu – used as a Fretilin jail during the early and difficult years of Indonesian occupation – still stir difficult and divisive memories in the town. Similarly, a small local memorial on the road to Same in central Timor commemorating two victims of the civil war 'barbarically assassinated by Fretilin' show small signs of local dissent from official narratives of the cultural heritage landscape. This 'whispered' remembering of a difficult era highlights the unresolved legacies of the civil war. Despite some genuine efforts at reconciliation, including the CAVR process which covered the civil war period, these sites highlight aspects of East Timorese history considered inimical to the nation-building task, if not to the wider process of reconciliation.

Other sites of suffering have been converted to more practical uses. In the wake of the 1999 referendum, when departing Indonesian troops and their proxy militias destroyed some 90 per cent of East Timor's infrastructure, buildings for civil purposes were at a premium. As a result, some imprisonment sites have been converted to novel uses. For example, the former jail at Aileu in central Timor now houses a primary school, with barbed wire and guard towers recalling the previous function.

The final level, and in some ways the most important, is the unintentional or 'immanent' cultural heritage landscape – consisting of the unrestored wreckage of houses and buildings burned or damaged by departing TNI and their militia in 1999. Alongside these ubiquitous sites, invariably festooned with militia graffiti, are other unforgotten but abandoned sites, such as the Indonesian interrogation centre in Baucau, which lies boarded up immediately behind one of the key tourist attractions of the area, the colonial era Baucau Pousada.

Cultural heritage as recognition

Memorials and repositories of difficult national memories, like the Comarca, seek to make sense of the collective experiences of a people in ways that foster a sense of national unity, and valorise the pain and trauma of all those who suffered in the struggle for liberation. An essential element of 'nation-building', more broadly, is the cultural production of *unifying* narratives of collective identity and history. For

Figure 9.4 House destroyed by militia in 1999, Venilale. (Source: M. Leach)

these reasons, a certain level of popular legitimacy must support 'official' (constitutional, or state-endorsed) narratives of cultural nationalism. However, as I have argued above, the 'national' values and culture of the 'imagined community' may in fact privilege those of a dominant nationalist grouping, and contribute to cultural and political conflict after independence. Below, I employ a recognition approach to examine the way the nationalist cultural heritage landscape in Timor-Leste has valorised some contributions to the independence struggle more than others.

Broadly speaking, a recognition approach examines the way distorted or inadequate forms of recognition may become important sources of motivation for political mobilisation and resistance (Honneth 1995: 138–9). Perceived 'disrespect' to a group's sense of self, to its traditions and values, or a perceived 'misrecognition' of its contribution to shared and valued social goals, such as national independence, may create the conditions for political conflict (Honneth 1995: 121–43). As noted above, young people clearly feel misrecognised by some aspects of East Timorese cultural nationalism after independence.

With these intergenerational tensions in mind, it is useful to review Timor-Leste's cultural heritage landscape on a 'recognition' basis. Broadly speaking, the success of East Timor's independence struggle was due to a unique combination of three forces: the armed resistance of Falintil (the armed wing of Fretilin, and later of CNRT, both of which were dominated by first-generation nationalists); the underground civilian resistance (dominated by youth and student groups); and the diplomatic front and international solidarity networks.

While the political leadership of Fretilin and CNRT fared well in post-independence government, the armed resistance of Falintil has had some serious problems with recognition, with many former veterans feeling inadequately reintegrated into society, and inadequately compensated for their sacrifices. There has been some progress since 2005 in the form of veteran registration processes, pensions and retraining programmes, and in cultural heritage terms, the Heroes Monument at Metinaro and the National Museum of the Resistance strongly highlight this first key element of the resistance in the memorial landscape.

By contrast, the youth-dominated civilian resistance remains comparatively neglected in the nationalist cultural heritage landscape. While the 12 November anniversary of the Santa Cruz massacre is now a public holiday, dedicated to the victims of the massacre (National Youth Day), it is surprising that there is still no formal monument on or near the Santa Cruz site, or elsewhere in Dili, despite some parliamentary discussion of the idea when the public holiday was declared in 2004. The significance of this site to the East Timorese independence struggle cannot be overstated, as it was the footage of the massacre in 1991 that put East Timor's plight firmly back on the world stage. In sum, there is to date comparatively little recognition in the nationalist memorial landscape of the youth contribution to the liberation struggle. This misrecognition forms part of a broader set of intergenerational tensions over postcolonial political settlements in Timor-Leste, which together represent key background factors contributing to the crisis of 2006.

The third force – that of the diplomatic front and international solidarity campaigns, including thousands of diaspora Timorese – has also been relatively neglected in nationalist memorials. In 2002, an International People's Park commemorating the role of international solidarity in securing the referendum for independence was created in a prominent beachside park at Lecidere, in Dili. By 2005, the original memorial had been mysteriously sidelined by a new and larger monument commemorating the UN, and various international governments' peacekeeping contributions since 1999. This resulted in a sail-sculpture in the original park being removed, and a small original monument and plaque being physically sidelined by a new structure and large signs emphasising the corporate and governmental sponsors of the monument. Rather than finding a new site to acknowledge the important role of state-based internationalism since 1999, the prior site – recognising broader notions of the international 'people-to-people' solidarity so critical to the independence struggle – was simply displaced.

By the 2007 elections, some of these gaps in the heritage landscape were being acknowledged by key opposition figures from the older generation, signalling a growing awareness of intergenerational tensions as a potent issue in East Timor's politics. Perhaps responding to the Fretilin government's neglect of these issues, President Gusmão, then running for Prime Minister with a new opposition party, awarded 'clandestine resistance' medals in the presidential election campaign period, honouring many former activists, including victims and survivors of the Santa Cruz massacre. Heritage issues have also been spoken of as part of the

agenda of the newly elected president, Jose Ramos-Horta, including a memorial to the victims of the massacre at Santa Cruz, and – again reflecting the links between ideology and cultural heritage, and a shift in power to a new government closer to the Catholic Church[9] – a new memorial on the site of Pope John Paul II's visit in 1989.

Conclusion

A patchwork of cultural heritage sites, authored by several generations of colonial and nationalist elites, serves as a reminder of Timor-Leste's long and difficult history of occupation, resistance, and ultimately, of national liberation. These different historical 'layers' of cultural heritage offer competing visions of the past in Timor-Leste – visions which still echo in the memorial landscape, recalling the distinct political projects of successive regimes. For the Portuguese colonial era, with a visual narrative of 'Portugalisation' evident in monuments and grand churches, a typical *mission civilitrice* colonial discourse of progress from animist 'backwardness' to 'civilisation' was emphasised. For the Indonesian era, with its integration monuments seeking to highlight imagined pre-colonial unities, the visual narrative is one of 'reunification', and of Asian resistance to European colonialism, subsuming the East Timorese struggle under the aegis of its own nationalist narrative. And for East Timorese nationalists, the broad narrative is one of *funu*, or the struggle of a united people against consecutive colonial occupations. Each offers competing visions of East Timorese collective identity, its origins, and history.

Behind the visual competition between layers, each layer has its own contradictions – and the East Timorese nationalist project is no exception. It has been argued that while key sites in the nationalist heritage landscape have succeeded, with few resources, in preserving difficult national memories for future generations, more could yet be done to valorise all participants in the struggle for independence equally; and in particular, the youth- and student-dominated civilian resistance. Secondly, it has been argued that this pattern of misrecognition relates strongly to other cleavages in post-independence politics, which contributed directly to the crisis of 2006. These include broad intergenerational tensions, but also the 'east–west' conflict, itself linked to unresolved legacies of the occupation and 'recognition' disputes over contributions to the resistance struggle. Finally, as ongoing uncertainty over the Comarca site demonstrates, cultural heritage policy is also linked with other political problems of the independent state: of reconciling good relations with neighbours with a pressing national need for post-conflict justice.

Perhaps inevitably, then, the difficult issues of cultural heritage management mirror the larger challenges of nation-building in Timor-Leste: of recognising different generations' experiences in the liberation struggle, and accommodating the ongoing power of local and regional identities in presenting a unified national story. In light of recent upheavals the East Timorese state needs to demonstrate its wider and official recognition of all those who participated in the struggle for independence: young and old, east and west.

Notes

1 CAVR's estimate of the minimum total number of conflict-related deaths is 102,800 (+/- 12,000). This figure includes both killings and deaths due to privation. The often cited figure of 180,000 is CAVR's upper estimate of total conflict-related mortality.
2 As Jose Ramos-Horta put it, 'If you take away Portuguese language and religion, there is no such thing as East Timor' (cited in Chesterman 2001).
3 The section draws upon site visits between 2005 and 2007 and interviews with personnel responsible for managing the sites.
4 Including the Famine Museum in Ireland, Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, and the Port Arthur Museum in Tasmania.
5 As the subsequent report of the UN Secretary-General noted 'The resurfacing of divisions that pre-dated 1999 has highlighted the need to address the past as part of the nation-building process. The assessment mission found that the demand for justice and accountability for the serious crimes committed in 1999 remains a fundamental issue in the lives of many Timorese.'
6 Many of the 'east–west' tensions in the ETDF were in fact intergenerational. Only some 200 of the 600 'petitioners' had signed the petition alleging discrimination against westerners, the majority being younger soldiers aggrieved over the mistreatment and secondary status in relation to older, former Falintil veterans.
7 According to one of the CAVR report's authors, Reverend Vasconselos, *Chega!* would offer an important antidote to the unprecedented politicisation of regional identity. Countering the perception that 'east–west' divisions were determined by different experiences under the Indonesian occupation, the report demonstrated that 'violations were indiscriminate and not related to the ethnic identity of victims or where they were born'. See Scott 2006.
8 Interview with Aitahan Matak, CPD-RDTL (Committee for the Popular Defence of East Timor) spokesperson, 8 November 2005.
9 The Catholic Church had been critical of the former Fretilin government, and protested its strong opposition to compulsory religious education in government schools.

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