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Conflict Transformation in Nation Building: The Case of East Timor.

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Abstract

This essay analyzes challenges and opportunities of the newly independent East Timor, a territory in the process of nation-building and conflict transformation. The analysis focuses on two levels of tranformative capacity building—the formal government institutions and the social relationships outside the government. At the institutional level, East Timorese military personnel, political parties, and elected representatives possess the potential to develop dynamic relations conducive to the sustainable capacity of domestic conflict transformation. On the social relationship side, three sets of paradoxical orientations involved in conflict transformation—*personal* versus *contextual change*, *justice* versus *mercy*, and *empowerment* versus *interdependence*—are explored in the context of East Timor's nation-building. The author argues within both levels of conflict transformation, East Timor needs to establish and strengthen sustainable mechanisms of communication with Jakarta in order to deter potential threats that may originate from Indonesia's domestic politics, as well as from the broader international context. The analysis concludes with a brief discussion on the inevitability of time pressure on East Timor's nation-building process, and how the post-Cold War regional security climate is likely to present unique challenges for its way forward.

3 Conflict Transformation in Nation Building: The Case of East Timor

TATSUSHI ARAI

Introduction

   Thousands of deaths were the ultimate price paid for the independence of East Timor in the referendum on August 30, 1999. When a surprising ninety-eight percent of registered voters ventured out to voting stations despite mounting security concerns, independence from repression was primary among the motives of the East Timorese. As soon as the unifying goal of independence was achieved, another daunting task came into focus—which way is the new independent nation going? The East Timorese energy and enthusiasm amassed toward independence have yet to be channeled into new, coherent directions by the transitional process governed by the United Nations peacekeepers. The attempt at nation building is inevitably in confusion for a simple reason: *negative peace* has begun to emerge but *positive peace* is nowhere in sight.[1] Transformation of the prolonged war, fueled by five centuries of Portuguese colonialism and a quarter century of Indonesian occupation, is still to be explored.

   This essay analyzes the challenges and the opportunities in the context of East Timor's independence and nation building. Of particular importance is the transformation of key actors and social situations involved in the referendum. As expanded in the following discussion, the concept of conflict transformation encompasses not only an achievement of negative peace but also positive peace, which involves the behavior, attitudes, and sources of conflict. Analysis focuses primarily on events pertaining to the August referendum and their direct consequences while relevant historical facts will be taken into account where appropriate.

   The significance of this question cannot be overstated. James Traub (2000) describes the United Nations (UN) operation in East Timor as a form of neocolonialism. His criticism is that, due to the total destruction of those social infrastructures that had been available in the society of abject poverty, the UN is authorized to govern the East Timorese for years to come. Despite Traub's criticism, one could certainly argue that the UN's presence will be justified as a necessity with no viable alternatives available at this point. It may also be argued that the UN, taking over the much-debated presence of an Australian-led multinational force, is the least harmful choice of an international peacekeeper. However, the problem rests with the ramifications for long-term conflict transformation. In the socio-political setting where external forces dictate the future directions of the debilitated, nascent nation, what impact does the international presence have on the historical present and future of East Timorese social fabrics and cosmology? Ethical implications abound yet little attention has been paid to this crucial point. The present study is an attempt, however modest, to explore the challenges and opportunities of a post-independent East Timor, drawing on a review of conflict transformation theories.

   In the following sections, key events related to the violence that occurred both before and after the August 30, 1999 referendum will be summarized. Secondly, the framework of analysis for this study will be detailed. Thirdly, implications of the conflict will be discussed in light of

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[1] Negative peace is defined as the absence of direct violence. Positive peace is characterized by the overcoming of structural and cultural causes of violence, which are often not as visible as direct violence.

the theory of conflict transformation. Of importance are the two levels of transformation: 1) institutions and systems; and 2) relationships. The final section will integrate key findings and discuss implications for the future of East Timor.

Overview of Key Events

East Timor is comprised of about one-half of Timor Island and is located less than 400 miles off the northwest coast of Australia. The size of this thickly forested and mountainous terrain roughly corresponds to El Salvador, or the Commonwealth of Massachusetts within the United States. The East Timorese are comprised of twelve ethnic groups, each possessing their own linguistic heritage. Tetum, among other languages, has gained the status of a *lingua franca* and is used by about three-quarters of the population. Despite this ethnic diversity, the overwhelming number of the East Timorese share varying degrees of belief in Catholicism.

At the beginning of the sixteenth century, the Portuguese sailed to Timor for the first time and began to establish trading missions. The Portuguese gradually strengthened their control over colonial rule by appointing the first governor in the early eighteenth century, while losing the western end of the island to the Dutch by the middle of the century. By the latter half of the nineteenth century, the Portuguese colonial policy transformed the indigenous subsistence economy into one that valued the production of cash crops such as coffee. Colonialism also created a social structure where a small group of local elites monopolized the fruits of the exploitation of the indigenous population in collaboration with their European masters. Except for the years of Japanese occupation in the 1940s, the eastern part of Timor remained under Portuguese rule until the mid-1970s, when the Portuguese government adopted democratic foreign policies and retreated from its colonies. In 1975, the Portuguese officially withdrew from the eastern half of Timor while the western half had already been evacuated by the Dutch as early as 1949. One year after the Portuguese withdrawal, Indonesia forcibly annexed East Timor, killing over 200,000 people out of the total population of about 700,000. Indonesia's rule over East Timor continued until the recent referendum for independence.

After a quarter-century's resistance organized by the East Timorese, Jakarta finally decided to hold a referendum on the future status of the region. On August 30, 1999, ninety-eight percent of registered voters participated in the UN-sponsored ballot. The choice to be made was between autonomous status under Indonesia's sovereignty and complete independence. Nearly eighty percent voted for independence. Behind the almost unanimous solidarity of the East Timorese was a broad-based campaign of the pro-independence political movement, the National Council of Timorese Resistance (CNRT), and its military wing, the Armed Forces for the National Liberation of East Timor (FALINTIL).

Violence swept the island before and after the referendum. The first waves of massacres started in April 1999. Militias were recruited from East Timor and neighboring islands, and armed by the Indonesian government. Indonesian soldiers and police joined the campaigns of attacks targeting the civilian population. Violence intensified soon after the results of the referendum were announced and continued for two and a half weeks. Militias killed thousands and looted nearly all houses in villages and towns. Approximately 200,000 out of the population of one million crossed the border to West Timor.

As tension rose after the referendum, the Portuguese and Australians called for the UN to take immediate action. In late September 1999, an Australian-led multinational force, authorized by the UN Security Council and accepted by Indonesian President B.J. Habibie, intervened as a transitional arrangement, which was replaced by a UN peacekeeping operation in February 2000.

The United Nations Transitional Administration for East Timor (UNTAET) is mandated to carry out the ambitious task of nation building and is expected to hand over its authority to an elected constituent assembly of East Timor by early 2002. Under UNTAET's supervision, East Timor remains tranquil as of late 2000, except for sporadic, small-scale violence. As peace and order were restored, about half of the refugees repatriated home. Of the 100,000 who still remain in West Timor, an estimated 25,000 are believed to be staying in part because they are afraid of facing the consequences of atrocities they had perpetrated. On the part of Indonesia's political landscape, Abdurrahman Wahid, a long-time supporter of East Timorese independence, replaced Habibie as president in October 1999.

Analytical Framework

Literature attempting to define conflict transformation abounds. There are two areas of contention related to the concept of conflict transformation: *What* to transform and *how*? With respect to the first question, the following typology summarizes key elements where researchers' views appear to converge. Of particular relevance are Johan Galtung (1996), John Paul Lederach (1995), Raimo Vayrynen (1991), and Vamir Volkan (1997):

- Actors
- Interests
- Issues and events
- Perceptions of Self and Other (including institutionalized images)
- Communication patterns
- Relationships
- Organizations
- Social contexts

Concerning the *how* question, Lederach (1995) distinguishes between descriptive and prescriptive transformation. Descriptive transformation refers to the actor's perception of how conflict is being played out as it unfolds. Prescriptive transformation is about how the conflict situation will and can develop in a way that contributes to peace building. Another important consideration, underlined by Galtung (1996), is that conflict transformation is not a process aimed at a steady-state, durable resolution, but rather a never-ending process intended to build sustainable *transformative capacity*. By integrating these key elements of conflict transformation, conflict transformation is defined herein as a sustainable process of capacity building in which conflicting parties' attitudes, behavior, and goal incompatibilities are elevated to a cognitive and emotive stage where non-violent means are legitimized in place of violence.
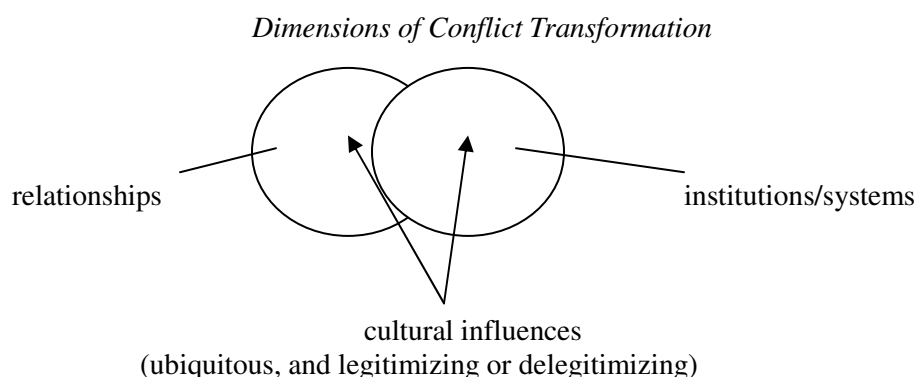
There is another fundamental question "Conflict transformation to what end?" Transformation, by definition, requires change. Change requires a direction in, and to, which the body social can move. The literature is less articulate on this question. When a third party intervenes and participates in conflict transformation processes, latent danger exists that the outsider guides, consciously or unconsciously, the directions in which transformation takes place. However, it is not unreasonable to propose the universal validity of one assumption as a starting point for our effort to define acceptable directions. Namely, recovery from violence is the top priority in a post-conflict society. A logical deduction from this assumption supports Galtung's (1996) thesis that the ultimate task for peace is to construct peace culture—a cosmology where social capacity constantly grows to transform direct, structural, and cultural conflicts into constructive energy for society building. It is the author's view that developing peace culture as the ultimate objective of conflict transformation is consistent with the priorities of post-conflict

societies such as East Timor. This is because the concept, unlike neocolonialism or other manifestations of structural and cultural violence, does not imply an imposition of incongruent values on the society in need of transformation. Thus the analysis throughout this essay will address how the present situation in East Timor may be best transformed toward the ultimate goal of building peace culture.

The present study entails both groups and nation states as units of analysis and explores ideas relevant to the short- and long-term future of East Timor. This necessitates an analytical framework where some level of generalizability is feasible in terms of time (necessary for nation building) and space (encompassing East Timor, Indonesia, and other international actors). Given these considerations, special attention will be paid to two social dimensions where conflict transformation takes place:

- *Institutions and systems* – referring to the formal organizational framework of government.
- *Relationships* – referring to social interactions outside the formal organizational framework.

These two concepts are not mutually exclusive. Some social interactions are both institutional and relationship-oriented at the same time. Thus, the two dimensions overlap in part. In the context of East Timor's nation building, for example, *relationships* between pro- and anti-independence factions develop through party politics, elections, and other formal *institutional* settings. However, not all relationships between the two groups develop within the framework of formal institutions. The two concepts thus occupy different dimensions of social interactions as well. Underlying both dimensions is the ubiquity of cultural influences that legitimize, or delegitimize, actors' behavior and patterns of social interaction. Historical accumulations of transformative experiences in both dimensions in turn will contribute to fomenting peace culture. A graphic presentation of the analytical framework is presented in the following chart:

Dimensions of Conflict Transformation

relationships   institutions/systems

cultural influences
(ubiquitous, and legitimizing or delegitimizing)

Analysis of Conflict Transformation

Transformation of the Institutions and Systems

The institutional level of transformation involves formal systems of state apparatus. Institutional transformation leads to the crystallization of some aspects of relational and cultural transformation through, for example, legislative action. Thus, this area of transformation is fundamental to building society's sustainable transformative capacity and consolidating it on the

principle of popular sovereignty.

The challenge faced by East Timor is unique in that it needs to undertake not only institutional transformation but also the more comprehensive task of nation building. Conceptually, nation building is comprised of two complementary tasks. One is state making, that is, establishing formal institutions to exercise both internal and external sovereignty. Mohammed Ayoob (1991) observes that taxation, warfare, and policing have been regarded as the three major components of the Western history of state making. The second task is more emotive, cognitive, and perceptual in nature and involves the nurturing of a common identity. Nationalism is a product of this dimension of nation building. The analysis in this section concerning institutional transformation focuses on the state-making dimension.

Ralph M. Goldman (1995) suggests the use of transaction theory as an analytical tool to observe institutional transformation processes. According to this theory, the violent nature of a nation state is transformed into a non-violent disposition at a certain stage of nation building. Of particular importance in this process are military authorities, elected representatives, and political parties. In many non-democracies, the most powerful state apparatus is the military, with elected representatives in the middle, and political parties marginalized at the bottom of the hierarchy. In the historical process of nation building, these three entities exchange signals with each other and gradually establish interaction patterns. Reciprocal exchanges of three social currencies, or catalytic signals of inter-party communication, are particularly important to facilitate the triangular interactions—political positions, material commodities (e.g., money), and decision-making authorities. If the three bodies exchange currencies with one another over time in a trusting manner, violence and aggressiveness subside as a means of exercising power. Military leaders find civilian positions more attractive and gradually convert their roles to non-militaristic ones. The supremacy of the military declines over time and political parties achieve relative superiority to the other two, with elected representatives placed above the military. States that have passed this threshold of transactional trust building rarely retrogress into the previous violent mode, and incompatibilities of political objectives are dealt with by non-violent means. By contrast, states that have not achieved this stage still resort to violent means of power exercise when distrustful actors dishonor fair transactions of social currencies. Tripartite power relations and their transition are illustrated in the following chart, where numbers 1, 2, and 3 represent the ranks of superiority:

Before Threshold		*After Threshold*
1 Military		1 Parties
2 Representatives		2 Representatives
3 Parties		3 Military
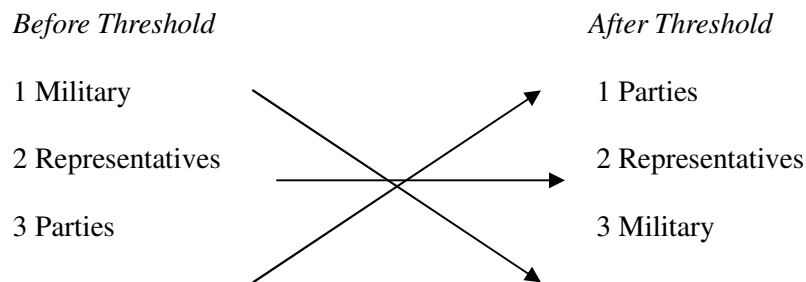
Goldman (1995) further suggests policy implications of transactional theory for states that have not passed the critical threshold. Assuming that the order of supremacy among the three bodies is in the pre-threshold stage, strategies for maximizing civilian control and minimizing violence include the centralization of the military, the attainment of comprehensive-based popular representation, and the promotion of a national party system where popular sovereignty is respected.

To what extent does transactional theory apply to a post-independent East Timor? The linear developmental assumption built into this model has limitations in its applicability to non-Western polities where statehood is constructed on different premises. The author believes, however, that East Timor is best described as part of the Western system and therefore, the theory is highly relevant. This is not only because five centuries of Portuguese colonial history penetrated the local political culture but, more importantly, the framework of the UN-sponsored state-making, regardless of local involvement, operates within the broad paradigm of Western democratization. In the following discussion, the current status of East Timorese party politics, the military, and representative politics is reviewed and concrete steps are offered to enhance the transformative capacity of the emerging state system.

Regarding the roles and the status of political parties, East Timor is endowed with positive potential for institutional transformation despite some uncertainties. With the withdrawal of the Portuguese in the mid-1970s, several political parties emerged, espousing a variety of visions ranging from socialism to the continuation of neo-colonial rule. In 1989, the National Council of Maubere Resistance (CNRM) was formed under the leadership of Xanana Gusmao, a long-term politico-military leader of the nationwide underground movement. Gusmao envisioned CNRM as a grand inter-party alliance for independence. The three rival parties, the Timorese Democratic Union (UDT), the Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor (FRETILIN), and the Timorese Popular Democratic Association (APODETI), converged to form a unified underground movement under CNRM. UDT was originally comprised of pro-Portuguese elites, who advocated for a sustained relationship with the colonial master. Faced with popular opposition, however, UDT soon changed its tenet to pro-independence. FRETILIN, on the other hand, has tenaciously pursued anti-colonialism and total independence. Though FRELILIN initially advocated Marxist-Leninist ideology, it came to renounce its socialist position by the mid-1980s and called for the establishment of broad-based unity with other groups. Finally, APODETI has been by far the smallest, but not least significant, among the three. Assisted by the Indonesian government, APODETI originally pursued integration of East Timor into Indonesia. Later it came to embrace local autonomy rather than Indonesia's direct rule. By the mid-1980s, its members had joined the underground movement under CNRM's leadership. In April 1998, the First East Timorese National Convention in the Diaspora decided to create a full-fledged shadow government, the National Council of Timorese Resistance (CNRT), drawing on the CNRM's organization. Headed by Gusmao as President and Jose Ramos-Horta as Vice-President, CNRT serves as a transitional arrangement, which will be replaced by an elected government. As Gusmao emphasizes, CNRT does not aim to be a political party itself. Rather it is meant to be a comprehensive forum whereby the unifying goal of independence takes precedence over the constituent parties' objectives.

As independence is being attained, new parties are emerging and the existing ones are intensifying their competition. Within CNRT's framework, for instance, the leading FRETILIN has recently held subdistrict elections and consolidated its popular base for organizational restructuring. Outside CNRT, newly emerging parties offer alternative perspectives to the current political context where FRETILIN and, to a lesser extent, UDT exercise strong leadership. The Popular Council for the Defense of the Democratic Republic of East Timor (CPD-RDTL), for example, promotes socialism and calls for a return to the short-lived independent state that was established immediately before Indonesia's invasion in 1975. The Social Democratic Party, on the other hand, pursues a centrist approach and gradually attracts young supporters from CNRT's membership. Thus independence is bringing a new pluralism to East Timor's party politics.

These developments indicate some challenges and opportunities for critical transaction and transformative capacity building. One important challenge is that the East Timorese lack

experience in political pluralism. Independence has been an overriding reason for the inter-party unity during the last quarter century. FRETILIN, UDT, and other key players have learned to agree rather than disagree over their differences. Once independence is achieved, there is an increasing opportunity for these groups to expose their divergent views, which have been placed aside during the independence movement. The question is whether the party members can tolerate mutual differences and learn to transform them in a constructive, non-violent manner? Though little is known about their transformative capacity at this point, attention has to be paid to the signs of violence exercised over divergent political views. In his report to the UN Security Council on January 16, 2001, the UN Secretary-General indicates that in late 2000, FRETILIN and CNRT supporters took violent actions against CPD-RDTL's campaigns in several districts of East Timor. The report further notes that party leaders on all sides have cooperated in the police investigations, which resulted in the issuance of several warrants against the suspects.

Despite these challenges, there are some positive factors that are likely to promote critical transaction of social currencies. For instance, the surprising ninety-eight percent voter turnout rate in the referendum is in part attributed to CNRT and its constituent parties' rigorous campaigns for public mobilization. From a grassroots perspective, it can be argued that the general public, even at this embryonic stage of nation building, has come to terms with the practice of party advocacy. Another factor is the presence of strong leadership. Gusmao, in particular, appears to have won undisputed leadership through the independence movement, and is deemed mostly likely to be elected the first president. The leadership demonstrated by Gusmao and others will help provide order in the growing pluralism, and will thus foster some level of future predictability in critical transactions. Finally, the leading political parties share the decade-long history of coalition under CNRM and its successor, CNRT. FRETILIN and UDT have learned to share power, accept a divergence of views, and develop the patterns of rule-bound behavior within the same institutional framework. This sharing of common history may provide grounds for predictable, non-exclusive inter-party relationships. However, as the abovementioned incident of inter-party violence indicates, the fulfillment of these positive possibilities depends largely on whether the party supporters at the grassroots level can come to terms with non-violent means of conflict management. In short, despite the uncertainties in the emerging pluralism, the popular basis of party advocacy, the strong leadership, and the shared history of inter-party coordination are all likely to contribute to the critical transaction of social currencies.

Regarding the military, FALINTIL, CNRT's military wing, is the only functioning body with a cohesive command structure. FALINTIL was the twin organization of FRETILIN until 1989, when Gusmao, then commander in chief, separated FALINTIL from FRETILIN for the construction of the broad-based inter-party alignment. As of late 2000, preparation has been underway to establish the East Timor Defense Force (ETDF) drawing on FALINTIL's membership. With assistance from Australia and Portugal, UNTAET plans to train the ETDF's first battalion of 500 to 800 members in 2001, with the ultimate goal of building a light infantry force comprised of 1,500 regular soldiers and an equal number of reservists. As a prerequisite to the establishment of ETDF, legislation is due to outline the principles of civilian control and accountability. The World Bank and the International Organization for Migration will assume the task of demobilizing the FALINTIL soldiers who will <u>not</u> participate in this new defense force.

Some uncertainties remain in this transitional process. FALINTIL has been an inseparable part of CNRT's political movement, and the military-party linkage has evolved out of a quarter-century's joint struggle. This factor may pose a significant challenge to the development of a sustainable division of power between the military and party politics. However, there is also the strong potential for success. Due to the ETDF's small size, the centralization of

military command, which is essential for critical transactions, appears to be a realistic goal to pursue. Moreover, there exists a strong international commitment to establishing civilian control over the ETDF. This commitment will help promote the rule-bound nature of civilian-military transactions, thereby fostering confidence and predictability in the democratization process.

Finally, concerning the development of elected representatives, a newly independent East Timor, by definition, has no prior experience. During the current transitional period, the National Council, established by UNTAET, functions as a liaison forum where UNTAET hears non-binding views expressed by locals. Because the representatives in the council are not popularly elected, UNTAET may ignore local views if they are inconsistent with its overall mandate. Whether the political representation system will work effectively to establish trusting patterns of communication with the military and political parties is a question too early to be answered. The only basis of prognosis at this stage is the likelihood of a unanimous public commitment to the electoral process if the high voter turnout rate in the referendum is any guide to measure East Timorese political momentum.

The future is unpredictable but reasoning enables one to suggest certain generalizations based on the above discussions of party politics, the military, and political representation. First, supportive conditions exist for the three organs, with the possible exception of still unpredictable representative politics, to exchange social currencies in trusting patterns. This prognosis is not overly optimistic, at least from the perspective of the UN, which faces significant challenges in Bosnia and Cambodia, where these conditions hardly existed at the point of its intervention. Second, the major challenge is an inevitable fusion of the military and party politics. Gusmao, a popular CNRT leader, was a long-term FALINTIL commander and his close relationship with the military organization may evolve in a way inconsistent with democratic principles. It is advisable to articulate a clear division of spheres among the three bodies and a checks and balances system in the UNTAET-initiated process of constitutional development.

However, the foregoing analysis on transaction theory is conditioned by factors outside this theoretical framework. Two factors, in particular, are likely to affect East Timor's institutional transformation process. One is the reconstruction of the judiciary system. As Traub (2000) reports, as of early 2000, there were seventy local law school graduates registered in the UNTAET's list. Of the seventy, not one is able to practice Indonesian law because of their non-indigenous educational backgrounds. To restore order, UNTAET recruited law graduates, trained them, and commenced trial proceedings in January 2000. As of February 2000, however, 346 out of the 350 newly instituted cases remained untouched due to backlog. With the culture of impunity unabated and the legacy of human rights abuses still intact, restoring the system of justice is a basic component to nation building. Public trust in the general image of government organs may grow or deteriorate over time depending on the government's progress in the establishment of judicial accountability. Another obstacle is refugee repatriation. In the violent turmoil before and after the referendum in August 1999, 200,000 refugees, or one fifth of the country's population, fled. As of early 2000, only fifty percent of those who fled had returned. With one-tenth of the entire population still missing or in the process of repatriation, the stage of emergency relief is likely to last for a long time and to delay the starting of the formal stage of state making. A post-genocide Rwanda, notwithstanding a difference in magnitude, is indicative of this challenge. Thus, despite the significant potential for transformative capacity discussed above, policymakers are reminded that such factors as justice and refugee repatriation may offset existing conditions that contribute to formal institutional development.

Further, how does East Timor's domestic transformative capacity affect conflict transformation involving Jakarta, as the primary instigator of East Timor's conflict? Institutional

transformation within East Timor may assist in the transformation of locals divided into pro- and anti-independence factions. But its relevance to institutional transformation of the hostility between East Timor and Indonesia, having supported anti-independence militias, is not obvious. East Timor's institutional transformation is a unilateral gesture in the bilateral international context. Theoretically, therefore, in order for the two countries to manage their hostility, institutional transformation needs to take place at the international level where both sides now interact as sovereign entities. This issue, however, is beyond the scope of the present study focusing primarily on East Timor's internal conflict transformation. Nevertheless, it is at least worthwhile to note that, to the extent that East Timor's transformative capacity grows, its war-proneness with respect to Jakarta is likely to decline.

On the multilateral level, East Timor's institutional transformation affects its capacity to exchange social currencies, by extension of Goldman's concept, with Indonesia and other Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) neighbors, Australia, Portugal, and the UN. Enhancement of transformative capacity, more likely than not, will increase East Timor's diplomatic potential to build predictable, trusting patterns of interaction with not only Jakarta but also other key international stakeholders. It remains an open question as to whether such a course of development will lead to East Timor's increased capacity to accede to membership in ASEAN and to establish substantial status in the UN. If accession is achieved, this institutionalization may enhance the transformative potential of East Timor's bilateral relationship with Jakarta. Institutionalization may also contribute to the formation of a multilateral context in which East Timor and Indonesia communicate with more predictability and accountability, and less distrust, based on institutional rules monitored by other member states. This, however noncompulsory, may help to create a conducive environment for East Timor and Indonesia to transform their hostility in the long run.

Transformation of Relationships

The previous section addressed conflict transformation within a *formal* institutional framework. However, there are some important aspects of conflict behavior, attitudes, issues, goal incompatibilities, and interactive patterns that formal institutional settings do not encompass. This section addresses these aspects. Of particular importance are 1) local militias repatriating to East Timor as well as the local population who remained (groups of individuals as the unit of analysis); and 2) East Timor's interactions with Indonesia as a policy-making entity (states as the unit of analysis). The first issue is domestic in scope. Key actors involved are masses at the grassroots level whose conflictual and peace-making behavior is not *directly* conditioned by formal government institutions. The second issue is international in scope. The two countries' interactions necessarily affect, and are affected by, regional and global dynamics—for instance, ASEAN and the UN respectively. However, their interactions, more often than not, tend to be outside the boundaries of formal rules, decision-making procedures, and institutions. An example of this type of *informal* behavioral pattern was observed when military leaders in Jakarta insidiously mobilized anti-independence militias within East Timor and from its neighboring islands, even after East Timor's independent status was determined by referendum.

Relationships – Domestic Level

Lederach (1995) presents some paradoxical values built into the practice of conflict transformation. Of particular relevance to this analysis are:

1. Personal versus contextual change[2]
2. Justice versus mercy
3. Empowerment versus interdependence

At first glance, each pair of concepts illustrates a value incompatibility. For conflict transformation to occur, however, each of the three pairs of value orientations need to be integrated into a synergy of creative thinking that promotes sustainable conflict transformation. In paradox 1, conscientization, or cultivation of self-awareness in a social context, integrates personal and contextual transformation. In paradox 2, sustainable reconstruction of fractured relationships requires the pursuit of justice in ways that respect the participating actors and amend injustices. In paradox 3, self-empowerment and interdependence complement each other when one's distrust toward others is transcended, and one's growth contributes to developing a sense of shared community. These three paradoxes and their integrations provide grounds for transformational relationship building in East Timor's domestic context.

Personal versus contextual change: Transformative capacity does not develop among individuals and within communities where fractured self-identity and cosmological confusion are the norm. The nearly 25,000 refugees staying in West Timor are most likely experiencing identity confusion, as are the thousands of returnees who struggle to rebuild their community life in a newly independent East Timor. This identity crisis is exacerbated by the loss of places for moral healing—militias turned religious buildings into stages for massacres starting in April 1999. On the other hand, a positive sign for relationship rebuilding is also observable. A significant majority of the former militia had been comprised of unorganized mobs, rather than determined fighters with a solid collective identity to sustain their aggressive motives. Indicative of the fragility of the militia's mindset is the fact that there has been little organized resistance within East Timor since the nationwide violence was settled soon after the referendum. To the extent that they are not entrenched in deep-rooted ethnic or ideological hatreds, de-entrenchment from their past and present psychological dispositions is a realistic possibility. Thus, what is urgently needed is a sustained process of conscientization and popular education for returnees and locals who remained in East Timor. Of particular importance is a scientific exploration of history to aid in the reconstruction of self-identity and cosmology. The nationwide solidarity camps for Rwandan returnees operating after the 1994 genocide provide useful insight in this context. The Rwandan grassroots workshops featured presentations and discussions, led by local scholars and government officials, on the reconstruction of the national history, the genesis of ethnic divisions, and the value of national unity. The Rwandan experience suggests that in a post-conflict society with a small population size and territory, government-led grassroots sensitization campaigns may be a feasible policy option. The design of such workshops and their long-term consequences, however, still leave much room for debate.

The long-term effectiveness of conscientization and popular education may be enhanced if they are tied to the establishment of a national constitution. A nationwide debate on constitutional principles is scheduled to start by early 2001. A constitutional assembly will be elected soon thereafter. By early 2002, the assembly will sign the constitution as its final major task before the formal declaration of national independence. Apart from its formal, institutional implications, the process is particularly suited to the promotion of sensitization camps where individual and collective values can be shared, cultivated, and redefined in a new political context.

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[2] The original term used by Lederach is "systemic change." The term is modified here as "contextual change" in order to avoid possible confusion between Lederach's choice of terminology and the author's own concept of systems and institutions, discussed in the foregoing section.

Mercy versus justice: Transformation of fractured relationships does not evolve in the context where justice is ignored. As discussed above, rebuilding a formal judicial branch is not likely to be achieved as quickly as the society demands due, in part, to the lack of trained legal professionals. To supplement the formal judicial system, more intensive research and development efforts, led by the local leadership and the UN, may be justified in order to explore the potential value of indigenous dispute settlement mechanisms. Should they be justified as a reliable alternative, a number of overdue cases that involve relatively minor offenses may be tried in the existing community mechanisms, bound by common guidelines that may be established by the government. The key is to resurrect the existing infrastructure and to enhance community-based transformative capacity.

Empowerment versus interdependence: Stable and sufficient employment opportunities are fundamental to the process of redirecting energy away from aggressiveness and toward transformative capacity building. Yet in terms of the supply of labor force, conversions of military personnel will most certainly exacerbate the already strained labor market. A daunting task of UNTAET and a new East Timorese government is to demobilize the FALINTIL solders and re-educate militia members. Those who are not regrouped into the new national security force will return to their communities. Ex-soldiers without industrial or agricultural skills are doomed to be redundant, if not socially destabilizing. On the demand side of the equation, East Timor's labor market is marginal in size. Government positions may help but they are primarily for skilled professionals. Local agriculture is limited to neocolonial coffee fields and a few staples such as rice and corn. The demand base was temporarily expanded recently by UNTAET, but these opportunities are temporary and almost exclusively for Portuguese speakers. In order to establish sustainable foundations for the self-empowerment of returnees, the internally displaced, and ex-soldiers, a higher priority must be placed on vocational training and a gradual diversification of agriculture and industry in a way congruent with local needs and traditions.

Relationships – International Level

The focus here is to explore how Jakarta's threat, potential and actual, to East Timor can be reduced (negative peace) and how a sustainable, constructive bilateral relationship can be achieved (positive peace). A key assumption built into these questions may be clarified by referring to Christopher Mitchell's (1981) *attitude-behavior-issues triangle* of conflict diagnosis. Mitchell explains that conflict represents an integral effect of disputants' belligerent behavior, their internalized hostility, and a particular situation created by their goal incompatibilities. The corollary of this triangular relationship is that conflict resolution necessarily requires a treatment of all three aspects. Indonesia is, and will remain, a high-power party over East Timor for the foreseeable future. In this particular bilateral setting, Indonesia is an actor capable of projecting both its conflict behavior and attitude on issues that define their bilateral relationship. East Timor, as a low-power party, is likely to remain an actor whose capability to initiate effective conflict behavior may be limited in relation to Jakarta. This does not imply, however, that East Timor's ability to manage its own conflictual attitude is also constrained. Thus the following analysis focuses primarily on Indonesia's conflict *behavior* and *attitude* on the one hand and East Timor's *attitude* on the other. The bilateral relationship, or a conflict *situation*, may be understood as a product of the two parties' attitude and behavior.

In what conditions is Indonesia most likely to form an overtly conflictual attitude and exercise threatening behavior, such as an invasion of an independent East Timor? And under what circumstances is East Timor most likely to escalate its hostile attitude toward Indonesia?

First, the overwhelming power disparity between the world's fourth largest democracy and the newborn small-island nation is a potential cause of threat. William W. Wilmot and Joyce L. Hocker (1998) describe four sources of power—resource control, inter-party linkage, communication skills, and expertise. If this model is a guide, East Timor, with the severe shortage of a resource base, established ties with other nations, and capable personnel, is and will remain a low-power party in relation to Jakarta. Sustained power imbalances may have adversarial effects on their patterns of interaction, thereby making the long-term bilateral relationship fragile and vulnerable.

Second, leadership change in Indonesia is a real possibility that may precipitate a negative impact on the bilateral relationship. As a long-term supporter of an independent East Timor, President Wahid plays a critical role in East Timor's nation building. Wahid envisions decentralization as a principle of Indonesia's governance. This tenet is arguably consistent with the assumption that his foreign policy orientation is not directed toward regaining influence over Indonesia's former territory in Timor. In addition, Wahid is known for carefully distancing himself from military elites and as a result, the dominance of military elites appears to be declining within the Indonesian government. Traub (2000) observes that as soon as Wahid took over the presidency from Habibie, anti-independence militias were decoupled from a clique of powerful military leaders and ceased to organize collective violence. If, however, the ailing incumbent president must step down and is replaced by Vice-President Megawati Sukarnoputri, the current conditions would not be guaranteed.[3] Sukarnoputri formerly advocated for Indonesia's continuous rule over East Timor and her relationship with military elites is not as clearly definable as Wahid's. Therefore a possible leadership change in Indonesia poses a serious threat to the future of transformative capacity building.

Third, domino effects resulting from East Timor's independence may harden Jakarta's disposition toward decentralization in general and East Timor's status in particular. Donald K. Emmerson (2000) argues that several regions of Indonesia, such as Ache, Maloku, East Kalimantan, Riau, and Irian Jaya, are potentially inclined toward independence. In Irian Java, for example, a surge of independence movements in late 2000 provoked the sudden hardening of Jakarta's stance with the region. Thousands of government troops were dispatched to quell the independence movement, causing turmoil and bloodshed. Whether East Timor's independence has accelerated the momentum toward independence of other regions is unclear. Its impact on Jakarta's sensitivity to similar independence movements is also hard to discern. What is clear, however, is that President Wahid's stated position for decentralization is losing ground. The centrifugal force already set in motion appears to have grown out of manageable proportions. Moreover, the impact of external precipitants, such as another regional economic crisis, on the relationships between these regions and Jakarta remains unpredictable. In the event that domino effects do occur, efforts toward transformative capacity building may turn ineffective.

The final factor is an anticipated decline in the level of international attention given to East Timor. Unlike Bosnia, for example, East Timor fails to be the focus of sustained public attention. This is due in part to the changing nature of the post-Cold War significance of the region, particularly from the view of the United States and other major powers. When UNTAET begins to phase out its operations in late 2002, East Timor is unlikely to remain on media agendas unless unexpected events unfold in its peace process. Absence of attention after the UN

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[3] At the point of this writing in February 2001, President Wahid is faced with increasing pressure from his political opponents, who demand his impeachment over alleged embezzlement charges. The political instability, combined with his health problem, may add to the unpredictability of his presidency, thereby increasing the likelihood of a leadership change in the Indonesian government.

withdrawal is a certainty, and a vacuum of international monitoring capacity may work negatively for the embryonic nation situated adjacent to a potentially threatening neighbor. The real challenge of transformative capacity building will come when international attention to East Timor subsides in the years to come.

If these factors are the potential obstacles ahead, what can be done to mitigate and, if possible, transcend them? The single most important strategy is to initiate, and continue, constant communication between the two nations on important security issues. Channels of communication and rules of dialogue must be established to enable both sides to address even contradictory interests and values within a democratic framework. Furthermore, institutionalization of communication channels and interaction patterns, as discussed above, enhances the effectiveness of the first approach. Transformative capacity in mutual relationship may be most effective when both nations' behavior and attitudes are rule-bound and made accountable to other members within the same organizational setting.

Concluding Remarks

In this essay, the challenges and opportunities of an independent East Timor in the process of transformative capacity building were analyzed. The ultimate goal of conflict transformation is peace culture. To this end, a two-track approach was suggested—transformation of formal institutions and social relationships. On the institutional side, an independent East Timor possesses potential for the military, political parties, and elected representatives to develop dynamic relationships leading to a sustainable capacity for domestic conflict transformation. In its international relations with Indonesia, institutionalization of East Timor's interactive patterns is a way to secure the grounds for transformative capacity building. On the relationship side, three sets of paradoxical orientations were proposed, personal versus contextual change, justice versus mercy, and empowerment versus interdependence. In relation to Jakarta, constant communication needs to be established within an institutionalized framework in order to deter potential threats that may originate from Indonesia's domestic politics and the international context.

Transcending the parameters of analysis attempted in this essay, however, there are also some broad historical and global factors that may promote or hinder East Timor's conflict transformation process. One is a time factor associated with nation building. The other relates to the post-Cold War security climate in South East Asia.

Time pressure on East Timor's nation building is enormous. Viewed from a historical perspective, globalization has decisive impact on political, economic, socio-cultural, and technological dimensions of human interactions. For developed countries with advanced infrastructures that can take advantage of these trends, globalization is a positive phenomenon. The same logic does not apply to developing countries without competitive infrastructures. A long-lasting impact of this gap is the expansion of neocolonialism that affects poor, newly independent nations most severely. The predicament of the weak is that they have no choice but to accept the mechanisms of exploitation that they have no power to change. East Timor is no exception. The inevitability of globalization effects produces a significant time pressure on East Timor's nation building. The Asian economic crisis in 1997 revealed vulnerabilities in some developing economies. In a crisis of such magnitude, globalization leaves no countries in the region unaffected. What if a newly independent nation faces regional and global crises of the same kind? The danger is real for East Timor. Its nation building process may be severely distorted and ruined. The danger most likely turns into a time pressure on the political leaders of the transitional government—achieve substantive stages of nation building as soon as possible, or

East Timor will be swept away by unpredictable hazards from outside. Therefore, global structural gaps may create adversarial effects on nation building processes and hinder transformative capacity building in the context of formal institutions and relationships.

On the security front, the end of the Cold War drastically changed the security environment of South East Asia. The diminished presence of the former superpowers' military implies the increased importance of regional self-defense, both individual and collective. ASEAN's expressed readiness to develop security cooperation among its member states is a response to this new security environment in the region. East Timor's dilemma is that it is not only incapable of defending itself independently from external threats, but also likely to be left out of collective security mechanisms. Its accession to ASEAN may be desirable but Jakarta's allies are not likely to accept East Timor so willingly. UNTAET is scheduled to withdraw in 2002 and thousands of peacekeepers will eventually return home. In the meantime, the accommodating stance of Jakarta may prove short-lived because of the dubious sustainability of Wahid's presidency, as discussed above. Moreover, up to 25,000 refugees, including former Timorese militias and bandits, remain in West Timor and pose threats to East Timor's vulnerable defense lines. The total balance of these security implications is a significant challenge to East Timorese efforts to build transformative capacity. Despite a rather positive assessment of civilian control presented in the preceding analysis, conditions surrounding the new government might necessitate sustained military supremacy at the cost of forgone civilian control. This may result in the loss of opportunities for East Timor to achieve institutional capacity for conflict transformation.

Despite external security constraints and time pressure on nation building, the ultimate goal, the construction of peace culture, remains unchanged. Conceptually a path to this end is clear—continuously develop transformative capacity in both relationship and institutional dimensions for acculturation of constructive trends. After all, conflict transformation, as Vayrynen (1991) notes, is a generalized learning from historical experience accumulated in the collective mindset of people. The fate of East Timor was shaped by five centuries of Portuguese rule and a quarter century of Indonesian domination. For peace culture to sprout and structural violence to be overcome, generations of diligence and patience may be called for. Though obstacles ahead appear daunting, the time has never been so ripe for the East Timorese who have been waiting for this historical opportunity for centuries.

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