

Reproduced from *Folly, Violence, & Ambition: Essays on the History and Politics of Timor-Leste* by Douglas Kammen (Singapore: ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, 2026). This version was obtained electronically direct from the publisher on condition that copyright is not infringed. No part of this publication may be reproduced without the prior permission of ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute. Individual articles are available at < <http://bookshop.iseas.edu.sg> >.

Folly, Violence, & Ambition

The **ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute** (formerly Institute of Southeast Asian Studies) is an autonomous organization established in 1968. It is a research centre dedicated to the study of sociopolitical, security and economic developments in Southeast Asia and its wider geostrategic environment. The Institute's research programmes are grouped under Regional Economic Studies (RES), Regional Strategic and Political Studies (RSPS), and Regional Social and Cultural Studies (RSCS), as well as six country programmes—namely, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Myanmar, Vietnam, and the Philippines. The Institute is also home to the ASEAN Studies Centre (ASC) and the Singapore APEC Study Centre.

ISEAS Publishing, an established academic press, has issued more than two thousand books and journals. It is the largest scholarly publisher of research on Southeast Asia from within the region. ISEAS Publishing works with many other academic and trade publishers and distributors to disseminate important research and analyses from and about Southeast Asia to the rest of the world.

Folly, Violence, & Ambition

Essays on the History and
Politics of Timor-Leste

Douglas Kammen

First published in Singapore in 2026 by
ISEAS Publishing
30 Heng Mui Keng Terrace
Singapore 119614
E-mail: publish@iseas.edu.sg
Website: bookshop.iseas.edu.sg

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute.

©2026 ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute

The responsibility for facts and opinions in this publication rests exclusively with the author and his interpretations do not necessarily reflect the views of the policy of the publisher or its supporters.

ISEAS Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

Name(s): Kammen, Douglas, author.

Title: Folly, violence, and ambition: essays on the history and politics of Timor-Leste / by Douglas Kammen.

Description: Singapore : ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, 2026. | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: ISBN 9789815361131 (soft cover) | ISBN 9789815361148 (ebook PDF) | ISBN 9789815361155 (ebook epub)

Subjects: LCSH: Timor-Leste—History—Autonomy and independence movements. | Decolonization—Timor-Leste. | Political violence—Timor-Leste. | Timor-Leste—Politics and government.

Classification: LCC DS646.59 K15

Cover design by Lee Meng Hui

Cover photo courtesy of Douglas Kammen

Index compiled by Douglas Kammen

Typeset by Superskill Graphics Pte Ltd

Printed in Singapore by Times Printers Pte Ltd

At no time of the world's history have men been at a loss how to inflict mental and bodily anguish upon their fellow-creatures. This aptitude came to them in the growing complexity of their passions and the early refinement of their ingenuity.

Joseph Conrad, *Nostromo*

For Selma, for three decades of friendship

For Janet and Judith, who opened new vistas

*For Abel and Lilly, Avo and Rita, Nug and Titi,
Nuno and Selina, Babe and Merina*

And for Henny, forever

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
--------------	---

LONGITUDINAL STUDIES

CHAPTER 1	Proclaiming East Timor: Historical Reflections on Political Declarations	13
CHAPTER 2	Master-Slave, Traitor-Nationalist, Opportunist-Oppressed: Political Metaphors in East Timor	25
CHAPTER 3	Progress and Propaganda in Timor-Leste: Visions of the Future in Comparative Historical Perspective	47

COLONIAL RULE AND SOCIETY

CHAPTER 4	The Feudalization of Timor, 1851–1896	63
CHAPTER 5	Queens of Timor	85
CHAPTER 6	Fantasy and Fossilization in the Study of Timor-Leste: Territoriality, Demography, and Status	109
CHAPTER 7	Trouble and Strife: Demographic Shocks, Agrarian Change, and Marriage in Portuguese Timor	127

OCCUPATION AND RESISTANCE

CHAPTER 8	Between Violence and Negotiation: Rethinking the Indonesian Occupation and East Timorese Resistance	151
CHAPTER 9	Blood and Witches: Selective Executions in Occupied East Timor, 1978–1980	169
CHAPTER 10	A Tape Recorder and a Wink?	191

ORIGINS AND REALITIES OF INDEPENDENCE

CHAPTER 11	The Armed Forces in Timor-Leste: Politicization Through Elite Conflict	203
CHAPTER 12	Subordinating Timor: Central Authority and the Origins of Communal Identities in East Timor	229
CHAPTER 13	Gusmão's Ruling Strategy: From Peacebuilding to Purchase and Coercion	253
CHAPTER 14	Fragments of Utopia: Popular Yearnings in East Timor	269
	Conclusion: The Origins and Trajectories of "the People"	301
	Bibliography	315
	Index	331

List of Tables

4.1	Elections of Regulo and Terms of Vassalage, 1857–1896	68
4.2	Kingdoms by taxes owed for 1873–1878, prior terms of vassalage, and “rebellions”	76
5.1	Polities with ruling queens in Portuguese Timor during the 19th century	93
7.1	Per annum change in population of Portuguese Timor, 1907–1970	133
7.2	Ratio of males to females in Portuguese Timor by age cohort	137
7.3	Ratio of males to females by marital status in Portuguese Timor	138
7.4	Sex ratio of the unmarried population in Portuguese Timor	140
9.1	Reported executions by region, late 1978–mid-1980	175
13.1	Timor-Leste budget allocation for the military and veterans’ payments (in US\$ million)	262

List of Maps

4.1	Kingdoms that signed terms of vassalage and rebellions, 1854–1863	69
4.2	Kingdoms that signed terms of vassalage, 1864–1873	70
4.3	Kingdoms that signed terms of vassalage, 1874–1883	71
4.4	Kingdoms that signed terms of vassalage, 1884–1893	73
4.5	Nested hierarchy of kingdoms in Manatuto, c. 1880, showing current district border	73
5.1	Ruling queens in Portuguese Timor in the 19th century	95
7.1	Districts with the highest sex ratios in Portuguese Timor, 1920–30s	141
9.1	Routes of battalions 744 and 745, late 1978–1979	181
9.2	Location of witchcraft accusations and killings, 1979–1980	185

List of Figures

7.1	Population trend and annual rainfall in Portuguese Timor, 1900–1950	131
7.2	Demographic and agrarian change in Portuguese Timor	143
14.1	Poster created by Carlos Billich for Timor-Leste’s independence, 20 May 2002	273
14.2	Photograph of traditional soldiers in front of the <i>Palácio do Governor</i>	278
14.3	Computer-generated images of futuristic buildings in Dili	279
14.4	CNRT campaign poster, 2007	280

Glossary

ABRI	Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia (Armed Forces of Indonesia)
AMP	Aliança da Maioria Parlamentar (Parliamentary Majority Alliance)
ASDT	Associação Social Democrata Timorense (Social-Democratic Association of Timor), formed in 1974. The same name/acronym was also used by a new political party, founded in 2001.
CAVR	Comissão de Acolhimento, Verdade e Reconciliação de Timor-Leste (Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation in Timor-Leste)
CNRM	National Council of Maubere Resistance
CNRR	National Council of Revolutionary Resistance
CNRT	Conselho Nacional da Resistência Timorense (National Council of Timorese Resistance)
CPD-RDTL	Conselho Popular pela Defesa de República Democrática de Timor-Leste (Popular Council for the Defense of the Democratic Republic of East Timor)
degredado	person deported for criminal offence
deportado	person deported because of political views/activities
Falintil	Forças Armadas de Libertação Nacional de Timor-Leste (National Liberation Army of East Timor)
FDTL	Força de Defesa de Timor-Leste (East Timor Defense Force) The name was later changed to Falintil-FDTL.
Fretilin	Frente Revolucionária do Timor-Leste Independente (Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor)
PD	Partido Democrático (Democratic Party)
PNTL	Polícia Nacional de Timor-Leste (National Police of Timor-Leste)
PSD	Partido Social Democrata (Social Democratic Party)
RDTL	República Democrática de Timor-Leste (Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste)
UDT	União Democrática Timorense (Timorese Democratic Union)
UN	United Nations
UNTAET	United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor

Original Publications

- “Proclaiming East Timor”. *Ellipsis* 10 (2013): 21–34.
- “Master-Slave, Traitor-Nationalist, Opportunist-Oppressed: Political Metaphors in East Timor”. *Indonesia* 76 (2003): 69–85.
- “Progress and Propaganda in Timor-Leste: Visions of the Future in Comparative Historical Perspective”. In *The Promise of Prosperity: Visions of the Future in Timor-Leste*, edited by Judith Bovensiepen, 29–42. ANU Press, 2018.
- “Queens of Timor”. *Archipel* 84 (2012): 149–73.
- “Fantasy and Fossilization in the Study of Timor-Leste: Territoriality, Demography, and Status”. In *Doing Research in East Timor*, edited by Maj Nygaard-Christensen and Angie Bexley, 125–43. NIAS Press, 2017.
- “Trouble and Strife: Demographic Shocks, Agrarian Change, and Marriage in Portuguese Timor”. *Asian Population Studies* 17, no. 2 (2021): 250–65.
- “Between Violence and Negotiation: Rethinking the Indonesian Occupation and East Timorese Resistance”. In *Autonomy and Armed Separatism in South and Southeast Asia*, edited by Michelle Miller, 93–112. Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2012.
- “A Tape Recorder and a Wink?” Published as an Introduction to the Transcript of the May 29, 1983 Meeting between Governor Carrascalão and Xanana Gusmão”. *Indonesia* 87 (2009): 73–102.
- “The Armed Forces in Timor-Leste: Politicization Through Elite Conflict”. In *The Political Resurgence of the Military in Southeast Asia: Conflict and Leadership*, edited by Marcus Mietzner, 107–25. Routledge, 2011.
- “Subordinating Timor: Central Authority and the Origin of Communal Identities in East Timor”. *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 166, nos. 2–3 (2010): 244–69.
- “Gusmão’s Ruling Strategy: From Peace-Building to Purchase and Coercion”. In *The Routledge Handbook of Contemporary Timor-Leste*, edited by Andrew McWilliam and Michael Leach, 35–45. Routledge, 2019.
- “Fragments of Utopia: Popular Yearnings in East Timor”. *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 40, no. 2 (2009): 385–408.

Introduction

In the spring of 2001, while teaching at Hasanuddin University in Makassar on a Fulbright Fellowship, I attended a Fulbright function in Jakarta at which, in the course of small talk, a US Embassy official asked if I might know an American academic who would be interested in spending a year teaching at the new National University of Timor Lorosae. I smiled. I had never been to East Timor but my research on the Indonesian military had led me to write an article about the cyclical nature of the military occupation of the territory. The names of military officers and the numbers of infantry battalions raced through my mind—the 328th battalion of the Army Strategic Command, the 401st “Buffalo Raider” para-commando battalion, the “organic” 744th and 745th battalions made up of East Timorese, and many more. Perhaps aware that I was daydreaming, the official asked his question again, explaining that because Fulbright did not yet have a formal programme for Timor-Leste, the Department of State would sponsor the visiting professor. I said I would love to go. The US Embassy kindly arranged for me to fly to Dili to see the conditions for myself and to speak with the rector of the university. I was mesmerized by the chaos and enchanted by the possibilities. Dili lay in ruins from Indonesia’s vengeful last spasm of violence after the announcement of the 1999 UN-sponsored referendum on the territory’s future. Armindo Maia, the university’s soft-spoken first rector, who would soon be appointed Minister of Education, Culture, and Youth, was happy to have an American join the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences.

Arriving in Dili in September 2001, my wife and I stayed in a tiny room in a makeshift wing of Hotel Dili on the Lecidere waterfront for two weeks while we oriented ourselves and looked for a place to live. We were fortunate to find a house in the leafy Bidau neighbourhood, one street back from the beach road, that we rented for what seemed the hefty sum of

\$300 per month. Between the devastation of physical infrastructure and the post-referendum influx of UN personnel, people working for newly arrived international NGOs, and assorted carpetbaggers and curiosity seekers, housing was in short supply and, compared to Indonesia, expensive. We built a rickety wooden water tower with a 500-gallon tank. A thoughtful young Chinese-Timorese electrician installed some basic wiring and fixtures. We outfitted the house with cheap bamboo furniture and a gas cooker. Only later did we learn from neighbours that the army intelligence unit, Satgas SGI, had tortured detainees in the house, which was why no Timorese had occupied it after the Indonesian withdrawal in 1999.

My new colleagues in the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences could not have provided a warmer welcome, though they seemed to wonder how the courses I proposed teaching—the military and politics, politics in the Asia-Pacific, nationalism—would fit into the curriculum they knew from Indonesian days. In addition to my colleagues, we soon discovered an old friend I had known at Cornell University and a few activist friends from Indonesia who were in Dili. Through them, we got to know the community of wonderful, loony Timorese working with non-government organizations in the Farol neighbourhood. All sorts of interesting people came through, including a few who had conducted research during the last decade of Portuguese rule, and even one who, most unusually, had been allowed to conduct research while the territory was under Indonesian occupation. Every conversation taught me something new.

Our first venture out of Dili was with my colleague Abel Santos, who took us to his home sub-district, Maubara, an hour to the east. We sat on the wall of the old Dutch-era fort and I tried to imagine Dutch East India Company ships arriving to trade in the eighteenth century. We passed the old Chinese shophouses on the main street, most of which were empty, and I wondered where they had come from and where they had all gone. We visited Abel's home along the dry, rock-strewn riverbed. We drove up the twisting, pot-holed mountain road, first stopping to meet José Serra, a delightful Portuguese man who had come to Timor in 1964 and remained through the war and occupation. Continuing on to Guguleur, at the peak of the mountain, we were greeted with a dilapidated sacred house belonging to the local ruling family and breathtaking views of the Alor Strait, where eighteenth-century American and British whalers had

hunted, and from which Herman Melville named a whale: Timor Tom. I was captivated listening to Abel talk about the Portuguese officials who had established coffee plantations in the late nineteenth century, and who had left behind extended mestizo progeny whose intermarriages and enmities had contributed to the political conflicts during the first decolonization in 1974–1975. My fascination with Maubara grew over the years, eventually resulting in a microhistory, *Three Centuries of Conflict in East Timor*.

In addition to housing, the other necessity in Dili was transportation. In late 2001, we were lucky to buy a beat-up, beige, 1978 long-bed Toyota Landcruiser from a feral Australian named Dennis who had come over from Darwin by boat with a large rusty workman's box full of opal from the outback thinking he could sell jewellery, only to discover there was no market for cheap trinkets. Cleaned of years of oil and grime, outfitted with a queen-sized mattress, under which there was room for a five-gallon water jug and other supplies, the truck meant we were ideally outfitted to explore beyond Dili.

Together with a family we had befriended who were squatting in the old Republic of China consulate, we drove to Quelicai, on the slopes of Mount Matebian. When I asked an eighty-year-old man why he had supported the pro-independence party Fretilin in 1974–1975, his answer was my first glimpse into vernacular East Timorese political thought: “So I would not have to pay the head tax”. From Quelicai we continued to Los Palos and Tutuala, which felt like the end of the world. We visited Aileu and Remexio and many other places in the mountains. But our most frequent destination was our friend José Sanches's humble home on Mount Maubara, from where we could explore the overgrown Portuguese-era coffee plantations and talk to villagers about their family histories.

Another early eye-opener came when João Saldhana's East Timor Study Group invited me to participate in a panel discussion that included the head of the nascent East Timorese police force, Paulo Martins. Two or three recent murders in Dili had fuelled rumours of rising tension between people from the western districts, known as *Caladi*, and people from the east, called *Firaku*. Police Chief Martins, who had served in the Indonesian police force, insisted there was nothing political about the murders and no reason to be concerned about security. Although I had only just learned about these communal labels and was completely ignorant of the details

of the murders, I ventured that the circulation of rumours suggested that the issue had resonance, and that if it had resonance, it should not be dismissed. Four years later, the *Caladi-Firaku* divide provided a framework for grievances within the newly established military, which quickly spilled over into Martins's own police force, and engulfed Dili in a crisis.

In 2002 my teacher Ben Anderson came to visit with three old friends, who got into trouble with immigration for foolishly coming across the border from West Timor with a machete. Six of us piled into the rattling old Landcruiser and drove to Baucau and on to Jaco Island, where Ben got a horrifying sunburn on the fishing boat that took us around the island and then, in the midst of a tremendous downpour, slept in the growing puddle where his tent had been pitched. He never once complained. On the return we spent a lovely afternoon sitting in a chilly mountain stream, chewing the fat. Back in Dili, Ben gave a talk on nationalism for students at UNTL and we interviewed Mário Carrascalão, a member of one of the most prominent mestizo families, who had served as governor of the Indonesian province from 1982 to 1992. Mário graciously answered our questions for four hours and allowed us to publish the interview in the journal *Indonesia*.

There were certainly challenges, but it was a marvellous time to be in Timor-Leste. There was optimism about the future. My students were wide-eyed and eager, and a continual source of information and endless new questions. In retrospect, I was extremely fortunate that when I arrived in Timor-Leste I did not have a permanent academic position or any real interest in pursuing one. As a result, I was free from the constraints of a specific research agenda and the pressure to publish. Instead, I talked to people: my colleagues, old Indonesian friends who were in Dili, the many new friends working with NGOs, and all sorts of people I met in towns and villages. And I read whatever I could get my hands on. It wasn't a lot, but that had the advantage of allowing me to ask questions rather than think in terms of preconceived intellectual boxes or respond to what others had written. It was all excitingly new and infinitely puzzling.

The essays compiled here, produced over the course of more than two decades, are the result. In many cases, their seeds can be found in the initial encounters I have described in the preceding paragraphs: a Chinese-Timorese electrician and empty shophouses; Portuguese coffee

planters; an old man who supported independence because he dreamed of not paying taxes; irrational optimism; an afternoon with former governor Carrascalão; my students' papers on family history and nationalism, and so on. Other essays grew out of material I came across in the Portuguese colonial gazette, made available online by Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino in Lisbon, and several visits to the Macau archives where I scrolled through endless rolls of microfilm. Quite a few of these essays were produced thanks to an invitation to participate in a conference or contribute to an edited volume. In fact, I would never have written on most of these topics if not for these requests and invitations, so I am immensely grateful to the various organizers.

At the University of Timor Lorosae, the students in my course on nationalism in 2003 prompted me to write about Timorese views of their past, for which I identified recurrent permutations of the master-slave metaphor. The essay, with the ungainly title “Master-Slave, Traitor-Nationalist, Opportunist-Oppressed: Political Metaphors in East Timor”, was published in the journal *Indonesia* in 2003. I hope it will still be of some interest to East Timorese students and students of Timor today.

After teaching at the university for two years, and thanks to funding channelled through USAID, I joined the research team at the East Timor Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation. While my colleagues focused on particular types of human rights violations, I had primary responsibility for the Indonesian military: the specific units continuously rotated through, commanding officers, and the changing military structures. During that time, I stumbled on a remarkable transcript of a conversation in 1983 between Governor Mário Carrascalão and the leader of the pro-independence resistance, Xanana Gusmão. After several years wondering about their encounter and the puzzling, garbled Indonesian translation, I decided that it would be worthwhile to produce a full translation in English with an explanatory introduction that was published in the journal *Indonesia* in 2009. Only the short introduction is included in this volume.

The 2006 crisis, which stemmed from deep fissures in the political elite, was triggered by discrimination in the new East Timorese armed forces. It resulted in the displacement of up to 100,000 people, and shattered the euphoria of independence. The crisis prompted me to write “Fragments of Utopia”, which was published in 2009, and “Subordinating Timor”,

which appeared in 2010. The first of these was an attempt to think about competing poles in East Timorese political thinking; the second considered how the accumulated wreckage of the past had contributed to the making of regional (rather than ethnic) identities around which the 2006 crisis played out.

Marcus Mietzner of the Australian National University extended a kind invitation to contribute to a volume on civil-military relations in Southeast Asia, for which I wrote “The Armed Forces in Timor-Leste: Politicization through Elite Conflict” (2011).

The very first essay I wrote on East Timor, in the immediate aftermath of the 1999 referendum, was an exercise in mining data on the Indonesian military for clues to the institutional patterns of the occupation. Two years later, Ben Anderson decided that a number of essays published in the journal *Indonesia* would make a useful edited collection on violence in Suharto’s Indonesia, which prompted me to rework the essay on the military into “The Trouble with Normal”, published in 2001. Seven years later, thanks to an invitation from Michelle Miller of the Asian Research Institute to participate in a conference on autonomy and armed separatism in South and Southeast Asia, I extended the argument from the Indonesian military to include the resistance as well. This appeared, under the title “Between Violence and Negotiation”, in Michelle’s edited volume *Autonomy and Armed Separatism in South and Southeast Asia* (2012).

While working on the history of Maubara Sub-district, I made extensive use of the rich material in Arquivo de Macau and also submitted a few requests for documents to the Overseas Historical Archive in Lisbon. In 2009, the CD sent back from Lisbon contained one document I had not requested (or perhaps I had provided an incorrect catalogue number), which I was delighted to find contained a table of indigenous Timorese rulers in the mid-1850s that helped to fill out the data I had collected over a number of years. Among the rulers listed there were a surprising number of *rainha*. The result was the essay “Queens of Timor” (2012).

A guest editor of the journal published by the American Portuguese Studies Association asked if I would contribute an article for a special issue on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of Timor-Leste’s independence, for which I wrote the short piece “Proclaiming East Timor” (though it was published a year late, in 2013).

Yet another request came from Maj Nygaard-Christensen and Angie Bexley, who were putting together a volume on conducting research in Timor-Leste. I was initially at a loss as to what I could contribute, but finally recalled another trove of material on the size of Timorese settlements in the late nineteenth century that was stashed away in a folder within a folder on my computer. I wound up having a wonderful time writing “Fantasy and Fossilization in the Study of Timor-Leste” (2017).

In 2016, my dear friend Judith Bovensiepen asked me to participate in a workshop at the University of Kent, where she was teaching in the anthropology department, on visions of the future in Timor-Leste. Having written “Fragments of Utopia” a few years before, I thought it might be interesting to adopt a longer historical timeframe and consider the visions of different states. The result was “Progress and Propaganda in Timor-Leste: Visions of the Future in Comparative Historical Perspective”, which was published in Judith’s 2018 edited volume *The Promise of Prosperity in Timor-Leste*.

Two of the essays in this volume are new, or more precisely are being printed for the first time. “The Feudalization of Timor” was written a long, long time ago, but after friends provided extensive comments that I was unprepared, or perhaps just unwilling, to address, it languished in my files. This volume provided a reason to bring it to completion. The second new essay is “Blood and Witches”, though it, too, was conceived twenty years ago, only to make it onto the metaphorical page as I whiled away a week in Suai in May 2023. It was written for Alex Tilman, now Timor-Leste’s ambassador to Singapore, who lost his father in the purges. Finally, the conclusion, which addresses conceptions of “the people” in Timor-Leste, was produced in 2025 for a workshop in Vienna.

These essays, and more than a dozen more, were written as ideas emerged, when intriguing material cropped up, or simply when the spirit moved me from obsessively filling spiral notebooks to actual writing. In other words, these essays were written in no particular order and with no larger project in mind. In retrospect, I think that this was fortuitous, allowing me to explore intriguing encounters and try out new ideas as well as different approaches. In this volume, for the sake of coherence, they are organized into four categories. The first set is made up of longitudinal studies: “Proclaiming East Timor” (a riff on Ben Anderson’s tearful “Imagining East Timor”) covers 1702 until 2006; “Master-Slave”

is a retrospective look across 450 years; and “Progress and Propaganda” compares the Portuguese, Indonesian, and UN eras. The next set of essays covers Portuguese Timor during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, though the focus is largely on sociological change within East Timorese societies under colonial rule, not the Portuguese themselves or a timeless Timorese people. The third set considers aspects of the Indonesian occupation, both across the entire twenty-four-year occupation and in the crucial years from 1978 until 1983, including the execution of Fretilin figures in a narrow eighteen-month period (November 1978–May 1980) and the 1983 “ceasefire”. The final section is devoted to aspects of politics in independent Timor-Leste, including the formation of the new defence force, the 2006 political crisis, and the politics of budgeting, though in most cases with a heavy historical bent.

A word is also in order about the formatting of the texts. Because these essays were published in different venues with varying style guides, it has been necessary to impose some standardization. All references are now in-text citations, though footnotes are retained for additional explanation and for unwieldy citations of archival materials. For the sake of consistency, references to centuries are now written out in full (i.e., nineteenth century) in all of the essays. And, on the advice of a reviewer, I have updated verb tenses in a few places. No other changes have been made to the texts, even when errors of fact or interpretation have come to my attention. Note, as well, that the territory and country are referred to by a variety of names: Portuguese Timor for the period up to 1975, East Timor either in a generic sense or when specific to the years when the territory was under Indonesian control, and Timor-Leste for the period since independence in 2002, or when I am referring to the nation-state’s history.

Since 1999, there has been an enormous outpouring of scholarship on Timor-Leste. This includes an inordinate number of studies about the United Nations and its various missions in Timor-Leste, a healthy dose of serious (and some not-so-serious) works about East Timorese culture(s) and traditions, and a constant stream of rapportage on the new country’s often turbulent politics. Until quite recently, however, there has been relatively little examination of history, and even less serious consideration of sociological change. It is my hope that the essays collected here will help redress that lacuna and will suggest new directions for future research. I

also hope the volume will provide an off-centre point of entry for readers wishing to learn about the country and people of the newest member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

A luta continua.

Douglas Kammen

