

Legitimizing Culture The Case of Timor-Leste's Toponymy Laws

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JALAN AVENIDA A STREETNAME STORY IN TIMOR-LESTE



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transcript, slides, and more:



● JALAN AVENIDA

● TOPONYMY PROJECT IN TIMOR-LESTE

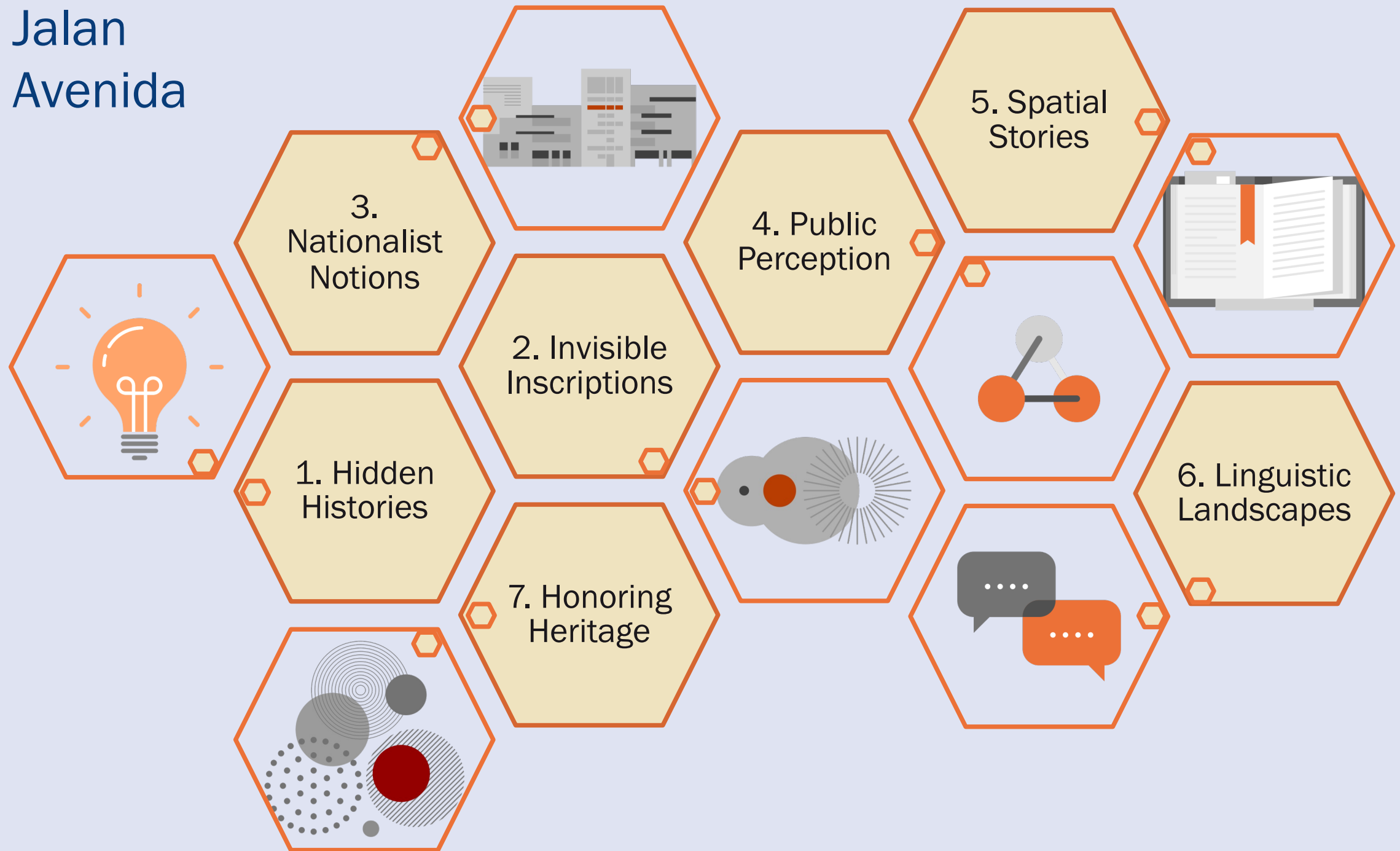
● 400 YEARS OF STREET NAME CHANGES

● CRITICAL TOPONYMY

● LINGUISTIC LANDSCAPES

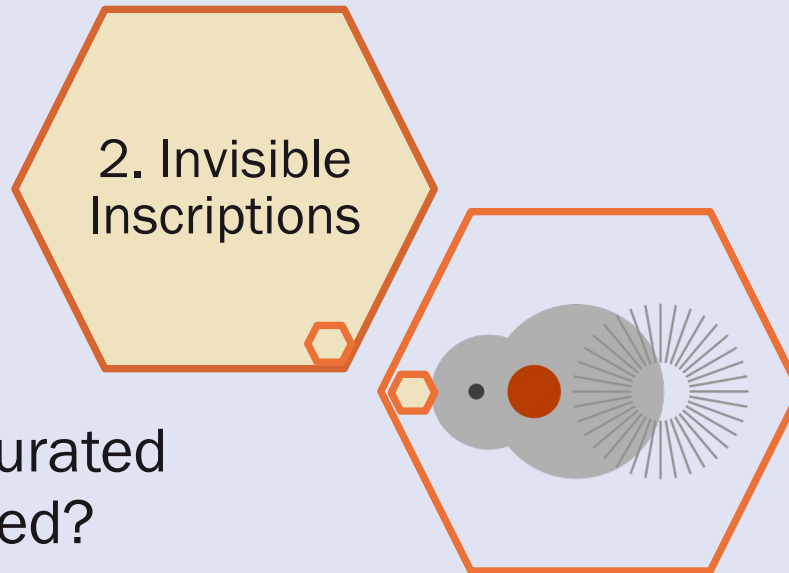
● CRITICAL DISCOURSE STUDIES

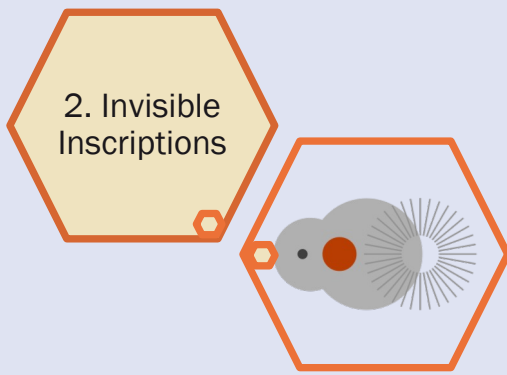
Jalan Avenida



Street Names, Advocacy, and Self-Determination

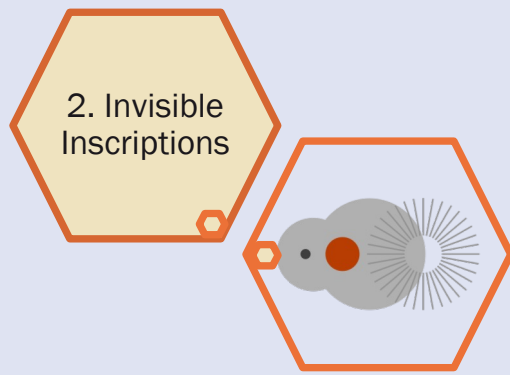
- **What** contextual backgrounds precipitate street name changes?
- **How** is ideologically-saturated street (re)naming justified?
- **Which** ideological orientations are identifiable in the resulting street names?
- **Do** observable (re)naming patterns play out in the Timor-Leste context?





Contexts and Patterns

- Street (re)namings tend to follow regime change of one kind or another
 - *Breaking with the past; delegitimze previous ideological constructs*
 - *Establishing the new; legitimize preferred ideological constructs*
- Two stages of re-namings (Fabiszak et al. 2021)
 - *The obvious: The new street names*
 - *The subtle: The structures and processes underlying the changes*

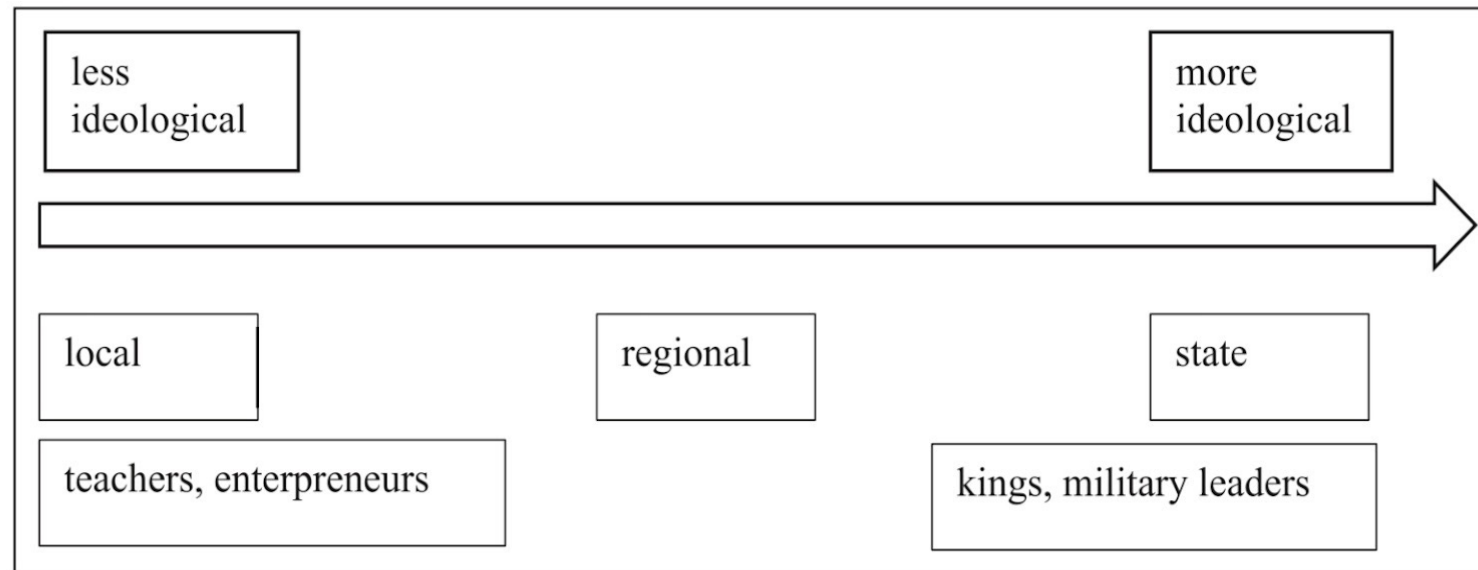


Contexts and Patterns

■ The resulting pattern:

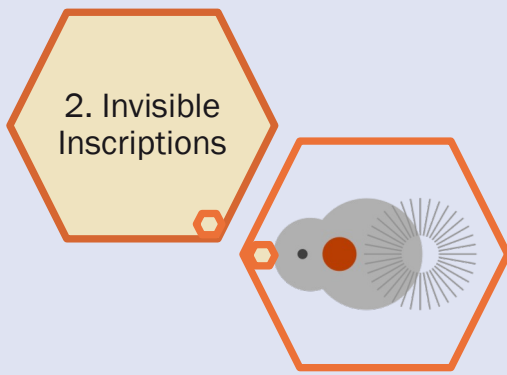
Fabiszak et al. (2021)

413



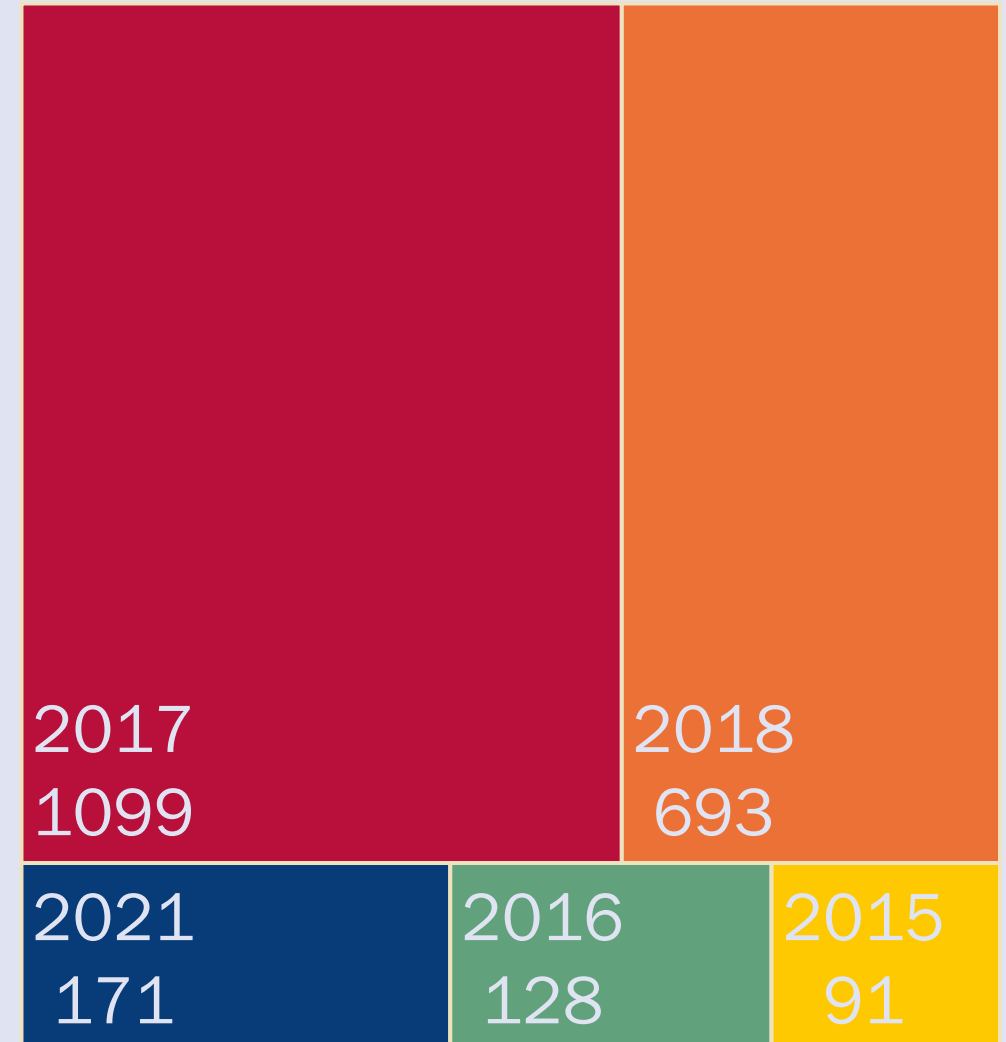
Gradable nature of the ideological weight of the 'semantics of the street name'.

Jalan
Avenida



Street Name “Officializing”

- 2015, Timor-Leste begins a pilot project on street names
- 2016, permanent law enacted
 - *Officially naming streets for the first time*
 - *Organizing street types (Avenida, Rua, Travessa, etc.)*
 - *Standardizing spelling and colloquialisms*
- Reached most of the country by 2018, all districts by final act in 2021
 - *Definite instances of covert renamings in 2015 and beyond*



3 Case Studies in Street Renaming

1999

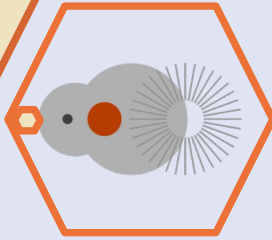


2011



2018





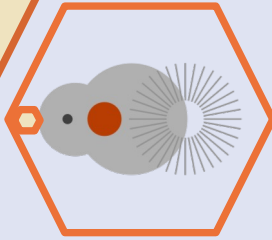
1999



1. Erasure and Promotion

Context

- 4 months after independence referendum, 24 years after invasion, *Jalan Ibu Tien Suharto* becomes *Rua dos Martires da Patria*
- Tien remembered in Timor-Leste as major patron of orphanage program which “transferred” children from their Timorese families to strangers throughout Indonesia



1. Erasure and Promotion

1999



Data

Associated Press December 7, 1999

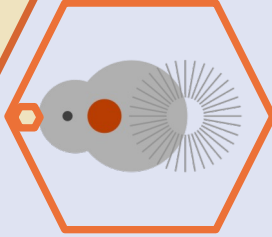
E Timor Begins Campaign To Expunge Indonesian Influence

DILI, East Timor (AP)—[...] East Timor's leaders Tuesday renamed Dili's main thoroughfare, which used to honor the dead wife of Indonesia's former dictator Suharto.

Ibu Tien Suharto Road is now Rua dos Martires da Patria, the street of martyrs of the homeland.

[...] Nobel laureates Jose Ramos Horta and [...] officiated at the simple ribbon-cutting ceremony.

It marked the start of a campaign to wipe out public references to Indonesian rule. Other street names will be changed, along with those of public buildings and utilities, officials said.



1999



1. Erasure and Promotion

Process?

Associated Press December 7, 1999

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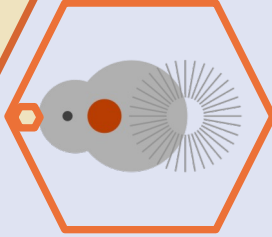
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Jalan
Avenida

2. Invisible
Inscriptions



1999



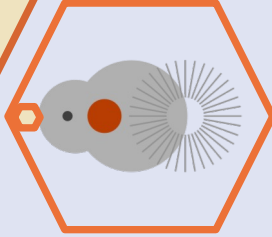
1. Erasure and Promotion

Process?

- **Actors:** *E Timor, East Timor's leaders, Jose Ramos-Horta, officials*
- **Action:** *expunge, renamed, officiated, will be changed*
- **Structure:** *campaign, simple ribbon-cutting ceremony*

Result

- One ideological name replaced by another
- No public consultation, legal framework
- Concept of 'martyr of homeland' enters public eye



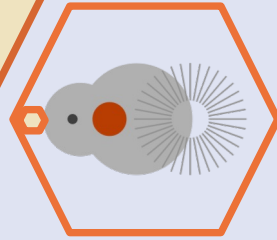
2. Representation

2011



Context

- In 2015, *Rua 15 d'Outubro* becomes *Avenida Liberdade de Imprensa* after public demonstration
- In September 1999, Dutch journalist Sander Thoenes is murdered by pro-Indonesian militias in Dili while covering the unrest
 - *Thoenes becomes a de facto Timorese martyr*
- In 2003, popular UN administrator in Timor-Leste 1999-2002 Sérgio Viera de Mello is murdered by al-Qaeda for his role in 'stealing' Timor-Leste from the Islamic caliphate
 - *de Mello becomes a de facto Timorese martyr*



2. Representation

2011



Data 1/2

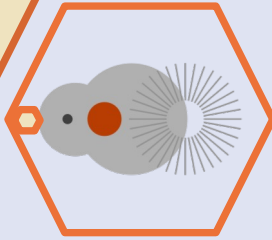
EAST TIMOR: Journalists promote 'free press' street name in Dili

Pacific Media Watch, 17 April 2011

DILI - The Journalist Association of Timor-Leste continues to promote "Liberdade Imprensa" [sic] [...] because this name was officially announced in 2000 by the late Representative of the United Nations Administration, Sergio Viera de Mello.

The organising committee leader, Francisco da Silva, said the main activity [...] is to hold a long march from Rua Liberdade de Imprensa to the grave of Sunder Stone [sic], an international journalist who was killed by pro-autonomy militias in 1999.

"We are organising this event in order to strengthen solidarity between journalists[...]" da Silva said.



2. Representation

Process? 2/2

2011



RESOLUÇÃO DO GOVERNO N.º42/2015

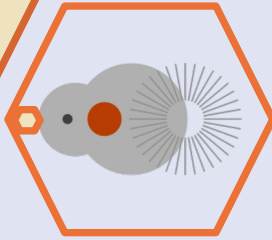
de 18 de Novembro

LISTA DE TOPÓNIMOS PARA A CIDADE DE DÍLI

O Governo resolve nos termos das alíneas c) do n.º 1 do artigo 115.º e da alínea c) do artigo 116.º da Constituição da República o seguinte:

1. Aprovar a lista de topónimos das Avenidas e Ruas [...]
2. Autorizar o Ministro da Administração Estatal a aprovar os topónimos a atribuir às Travessas e Becos dos seis sucos piloto de acordo com os critérios juntos em Anexo (II). [...]

Aprovado em Conselho de Ministros em 20 de Outubro de 2015.



2. Representation

2011



Process? 1/2

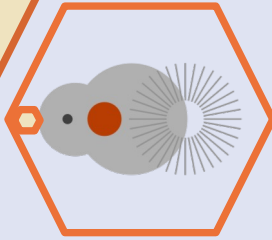
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2011



2. Representation

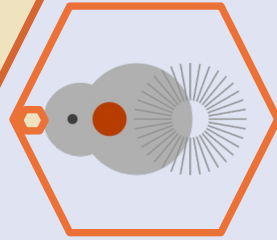
Data 2/2

RESOLUÇÃO DO GOVERNO N.º42/2015 de 18 de Novembro LISTA DE TOPÓNIMOS PARA A CIDADE DE DÍLI

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Aprovado em Conselho de Ministros em 20 de Outubro de 2015.



2. Representation

2011



Process?

■ Actors

2011 journalists, Journalists Association of Timor-Leste, Sérgio Vieira de Mello, Francisco da Silva

2015 the Government, the Ministry of State Admin., the Council of Ministers

■ Action

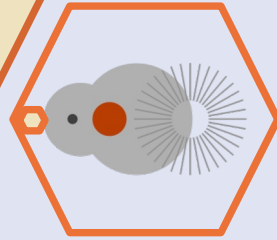
2011 promote, officially announce[d], hold a march

2015 resolve, approve, authorize

■ Structure

2011 'official announcement', demonstration

2015 Timor-Leste's Constitution, the annex to the Law



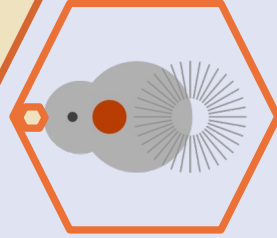
2. Representation

Result

- Public action (2011) clearly connected to government action (2015)
 - *No direct evidence of consultation, but clear alignment with public perception of historical events*
- Public: Invocation of ‘martyrs’ to legitimize ideological footing; used past promises to legitimize contemporary petition
- Government: Invocation of (still obscure) structures to legitimize action

2011





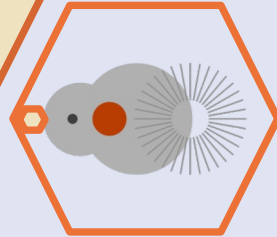
2018



3. Administration

Context

- In 2018, *Rua do Enfermeiro Matias* becomes *Rua de Resistência* by Decree Law
 - The street was named in the 2015 pilot project, but not located within the 6 pilot sucos
 - 2015's Decree Law did not include avenues for alteration or redress
 - Enfermeiro Matias (Duarte) is the (deceased) father of a 2015 political candidate
- 2016's permanent law on street-naming detailed alteration and redress
 - Community groups began immediately to take legal steps for change



2018



3. Administration

Data 1/2

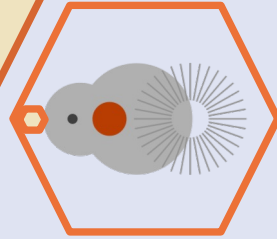
**RESOLUÇÃO DO GOVERNO N.º 9 /2018
PRIMEIRA ALTERAÇÃO À RESOLUÇÃO DO GOVERNO Nº 42/2015,
DE 18 DE NOVEMBRO**

Considerando que [...] “Rua do Enfermeiro Matias”, [...] tem sido objeto de conflito e reclamação por parte da população que serve, a qual destruiu por diversas vezes a placa toponímica aí colocada;

Considerando que as comunidades desta área apresentaram uma proposta [...] quer à Autoridade Municipal de Díli quer ao Ministro da Administração Estatal,

Considerando que as comunidades do Suco de Culuhun também enviaram uma carta de protesto [...] onde repudiam o nome atual e solicitam a sua substituição

Considerando a reunião [...] entre a Direção Nacional de Toponímia, a Autoridade Municipal de Díli e as comunidades que apresentaram o protesto;



2018



3. Administration

Data 2/2

[cont]

Na área [...] as lojas, as casas, os comerciantes e as ONG's, não se revêm no nome dado ao arruamento.

[...]

Considerando que a proposta [...] não foi devidamente discutida com a comunidade local, [...] por parte do Conselho Consultivo Municipal

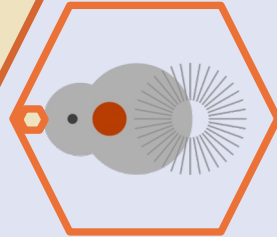
[...]

Considerando as alíneas a) e f) do n.º2 do artigo 10º do Decreto-lei no 29/2016, de 13 de julho, onde se estabelece a situação em que os topónimos podem ser alterados,

Considerando [...] que a maioria da população dessa área apresentou um pedido [...] que respeita os critérios [...] Resolução no 42/2015, [...] e nos artigos 6º e 7º do Decreto-Lei no 29/2016, [...];

O Governo resolve, nos termos da alínea c) do nº1 do artigo 115º e da alínea c) do artigo 116º da Constituição da República, o seguinte:

1. É alterado [...]



2018



3. Administration

Process? 1/2

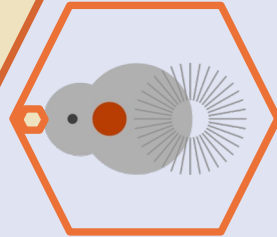
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2018



3. Administration

Process? 2/2

[cont]

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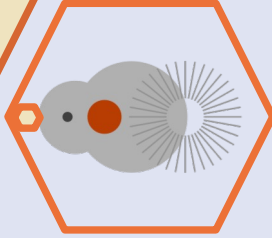
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2018



3. Administration

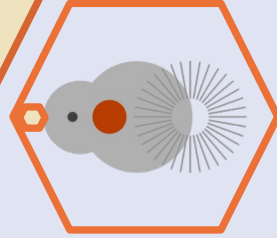
Process?

■ Actors

- communities, populations, stores, homes, businesses, NGOs, ‘a majority’
- Dili Mun. Authority, Ministry of State Admin., Natl Dir. of Toponymy, Mun. Cons. Council, the Government

■ Action

- destroy, submit proposal, send letter of protest, repudiate, request, submit protest, do not go by the name, present request
- did not properly discuss, establish scenarios [for] alteration, resolves, it will be altered



2018

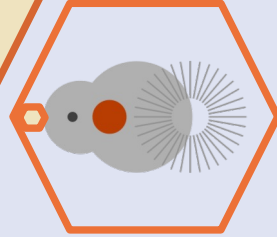


3. Administration

Process?

■ Structure

- *conflict, destruction, proposals, letters, protests, meetings*
- *proposals, meetings, (prior) discussion, Decree Law 42/2015, Decree Law 29/2016, Timor-Leste's Constitution*



2018

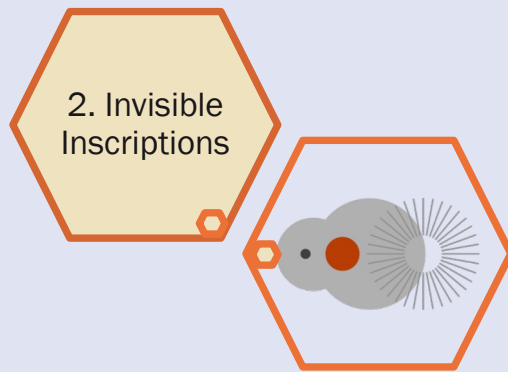


3. Administration

Result

- Structures employed by public and legislation begin to align
 - 1. Consultation clear in the course of this alteration (2018)
 - 2. Consultation legally supported in invoked structure (2016)
 - 3. Lack of consultation in pilot project (2015) lightly censured text of 2018
- Concept of ‘martyr’ makes up majority of arguments against *Matias* name, as well as for *Resistência* name

Jalan Avenida

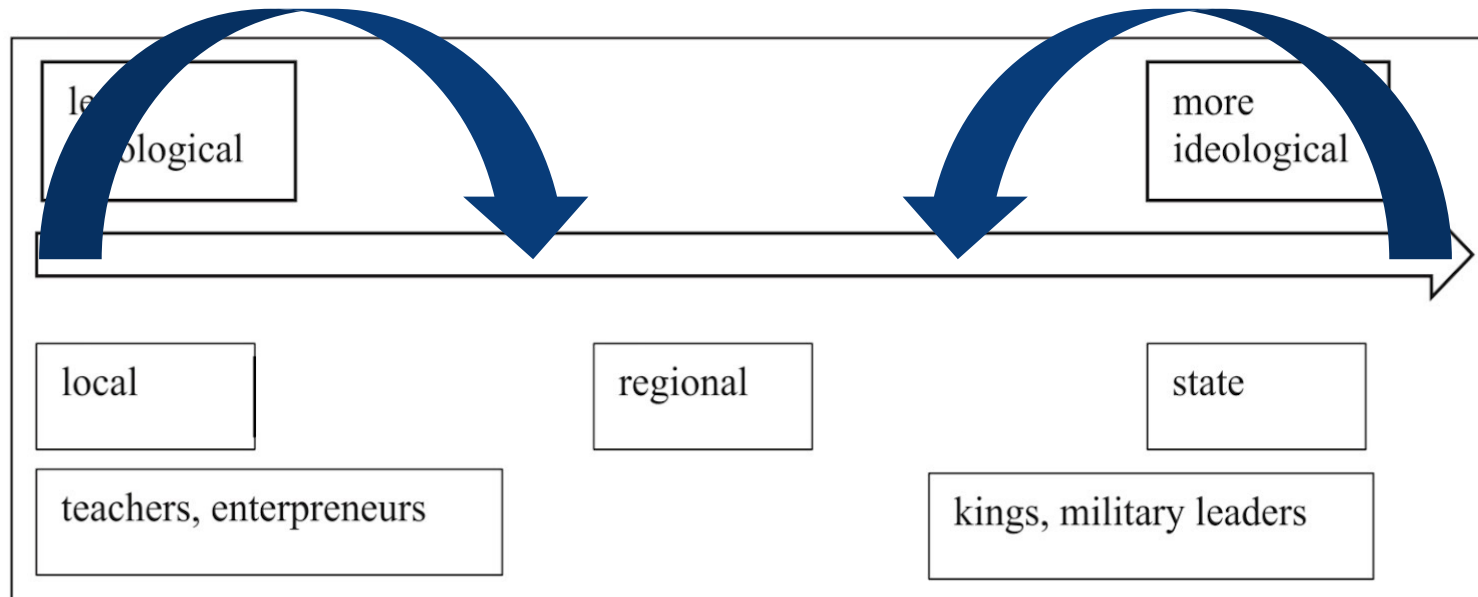


Conclusion(s)

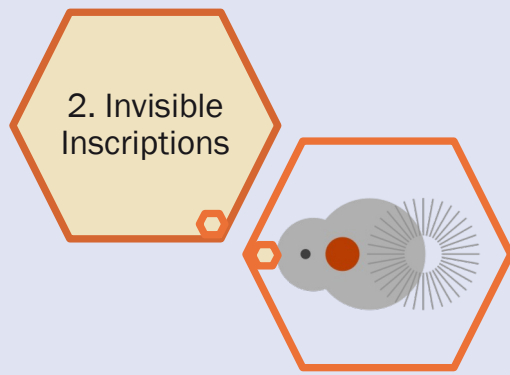
Case Study 3
~~Rua Enfermeiro Matias~~
Rua da Resistencia

Case Study 1
~~Jalan Ibu Tien~~
Avenida Martires da Patria

Case Study 2
(not specified)
Avenida Liberdade de Imprensa



Gradable nature of the ideological weight of the 'semantics of the street name'.



- The public's response (Case Study 2; *Avenida Liberdade de Imprensa*)
- Uptake minimal in the LL by mid-2017; Only 6 of 36 use new name;
- 10 don't use *any* version of 'official' names; Ideological avoidance?



Jalan
Avenida

2. Invisible
Inscriptions

Conclusion(s)

LOJA UNIQUE TRA
Vendas a Retalho & G
Rua, Liberdade da Imprensa, Audian,

Rua, Liberdade da Imprensa

LAF LOJA A
Vendas: Mobiliarios E Equipamentos Cozinha Por Grosso E
Rua, Liberdade da Imprensa, Audian, DILI - TIMOR

Rua, Liberdade da Imprensa

Loja
RUA LIBERDADO IMPRENZA DILI
DILI - TIMOR LESTE

RUA LIBERDADO IMPRENZA

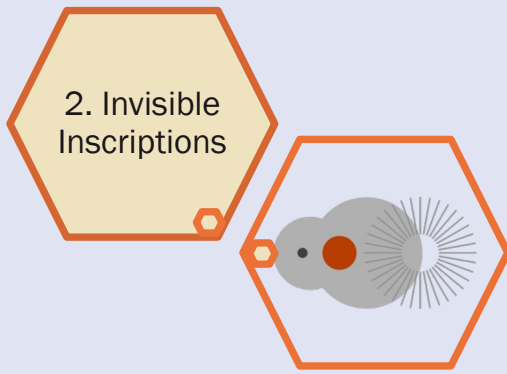
RUA LIBERDADO IMPRENZA DILI
DILI - TIMOR LESTE

SUPER XEROX
PHONE: +670 76900296
AV. LIBERDADE DA IMPRENSA - AUDIAN - DILI

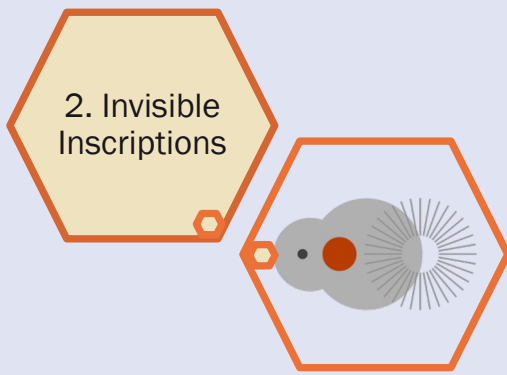
AV. LIBERDADE DA IMPRENSA

**GENERAL SUPPLY, CONSTRUÇÃO CIVIL, INSTALAÇÃO
LINHA ELECTRICIDADE e SERVIÇO DE LIMPEZA**
Rua : Liverdade Da Imprensa Bemori, Dili - Timor-leste
E-mail : britas un...
Tel...
ahoo.com

Rua : Liverdade Da Imprensa

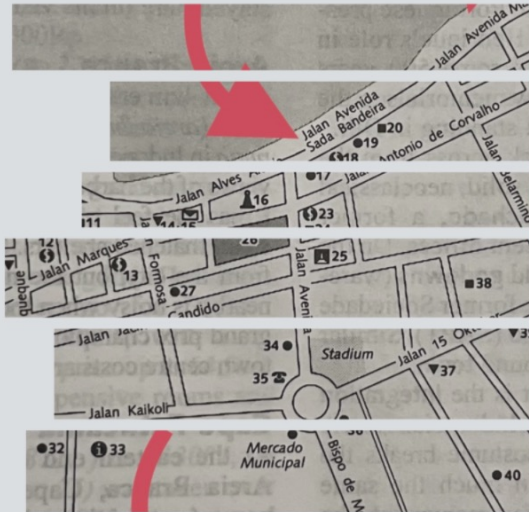


- Changes in processes over time more closely reflect Timorese values
- 1999's change used similar processes to previous regime
 - *Change for change's sake; no consultation; ceremony without legislation*
- 2011/2015's change shows transition to consultative values
 - *Change for administration's sake; presumed consultation; small ceremony accompanied legislation*
- 2018's change indicates confidence in both Timorese culture and the State
 - *Change for people's sake; documented consultative processes; consultation legitimated in legislation; no ceremony, only legislation*



- 1. Adds an 'international' dimension to the ideological cline
 - *Sort out the role of specific vs. generic naming - more or less ideological?*
- 2. Incorporates linguistic landscape into the public's response
 - *Frameworks of argumentation tactics in media well-established*
 - *Response in the LL indicative of ideological uptake?*
- 3. Uses processes to track changes over time
 - *Toward or away from ideological goals?*

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Thank you!

References, photo licenses,
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