
RESEARCH ARTICLE

Examining a Critical Geopolitics in the Determination of Indonesia and Timor Leste Land Boundaries in Noel Besi – Citrana Segment

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the determination of Indonesia and Timor Leste land boundaries, especially in the Noel Besi - Citrana segment. This study uses critical geopolitical analysis, especially the geopolitical vision according to Agnew (2013) and O Tuathail (1996), to explain the issue of land boundaries in the Noel Besi – Citrana segment. This study uses qualitative methods, in which the primary data is drawn from in-depth interviews with several key informants. The secondary data is through scientific literature and news in online media. This study shows that the issue of land boundaries in the Noel Besi – Citrana segment is caused by the different geopolitical visions of the two countries (Indonesia and Timor Leste). Although the two countries both refer to the 1904 Treaty between the Netherlands and the Portuguese, which contains a territorial boundary agreement on the island of Timor, the two countries have different geopolitical visions. Indonesia perceives the mouth of the Noel Besi River as the beginning of determining the boundary line in the east. Meanwhile, Timor Leste perceives that the delimitation should be drawn from Noel Besi, depicted in a small ditch (Nono Tuinan) in the west. The two countries then visualized the Naktuka region in constructing a map of the country's boundaries based on their respective perceptions. These results support the arguments of Agnew (2013) and O Tuathail (1996), which emphasize the role of geopolitical vision in writing the world by visualizing the surrounding environment based on perceptions as outlined in the construction of images and maps.

KEYWORDS

Geopolitics, Indonesia, Land Boundaries, Timor Leste, Unresolved Segment

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1. Introduction

The border area is one of the concerns in geopolitical studies since it is related to the state's territory, which is the boundary of state sovereignty and the state's veranda. Political, defense, security, economic, and socio-cultural problems often arise in various border areas with neighboring countries with direct borders. Regarding borders, Minghi (1963) asserts that political boundaries shape the regional expression of boundaries of jurisdiction and the power system they belong to; the political boundary is the most apparent geopolitical phenomenon.

In the context of contemporary geopolitical studies, it is colored by the debate between conventional geopolitical approaches and critical geopolitics. The conventional geopolitical approach – draws on the views of nineteenth-century scientists such as Halford Mackinder, Friedrich Ratzel, Alfred Mahan, Rudolf Kjellen, Karl Haushofer, and Nicholas J. Spykman – has a simplistic understanding of territory, borders, and political actors and is imperial, nationalist and racist. This approach emphasizes understanding power relations as a “zero-sum game” battle; belief in the importance of natural resources; contrasting differences between land-based

and sea-based powers; and the view that the state is a living organism, so the state needs to expand into new territories and requires new resources (Dodds, Kuus, & Sharp, 2013).

This understanding is challenged by a critical geopolitical approach that holds that the focus of geopolitical analysis is not on a set of pre-given categories such as territories, borders, or political actors but on the process by which these categories are generated (Dodds, Kuus, & Sharp, 2013, 7). Critical geopolitics then confronts and analyzes the geopolitical imagination of the state, the myths of the foundations of the state, and national exceptionalist knowledge. Geopolitical imagination works in projecting a geopolitical vision in the form of visual order of space, as outlined in cartographic surveys and national atlases; works on the formation of community constitutions and renegotiation of boundaries of citizenship and property; also works in contestation, particularly in multicultural competition over the reconsolidation of traditions, and the representation of historical memory (O Tuathail & Dalby, 1998).

In the context of Indonesia, to ensure Indonesia's geopolitical position and the management of national boundaries, the Indonesian government under President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono issued an Act (UU No. 43 2008) concerning State Territory. The law regulates Indonesia's sovereignty and jurisdiction and matters relating to managing state boundaries. The Act (UU No. 43 2008) also regulates the government's authority in determining state territorial policies and negotiating with other countries regarding state boundaries. The existence of the Act is a legal umbrella for ensuring territorial integrity, sovereignty, and order for the welfare of the entire Indonesian nation.

In the context of land boundaries, Indonesia has established territorial boundaries with several countries, one of which is Timor Leste. Regarding the land boundaries between Indonesia and Timor Leste, East Nusa Tenggara (NTT) is a province whose part of its territory is directly adjacent to Timor Leste. Four regencies in NTT have direct land borders with Timor Leste, namely Belu Regency, Kupang Regency, North Central Timor Regency (Timor Tengah Utara/TTU), and Malacca Regency. Of the four regencies, there are two sectors of land border areas: *first*, the eastern sector is Belu Regency and Malaka Regency, which are directly adjacent to Covalima and Bobonaro Districts in Timor Leste along 149.1 km; *second*, the western sector is TTU Regency and Kupang Regency, which are directly adjacent to Oecusse District, an enclave of Timor Leste along 119.7 km.

The delimitation of Indonesia's land boundaries with Timor Leste on Timor Island refers to the agreement between the Dutch East Indies and Portuguese Governments in 1904 (Treaty 1904) and the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) 1914, as well as a temporary land boundary agreement between Indonesia and Timor Leste in 2005, namely *the Provisional Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Indonesia and the Government of the Democratic of Timor Leste on The Land Boundary*. However, the temporary agreement leaves 4% of land border issues that have not been agreed upon and have not been surveyed by the Survey Teams of the two countries at that time, particularly in the three unresolved segments: *First*, the segment in Noel Besi – Citrana, North Netemnanu Village, East Amfoang, Kupang Regency, with an enclave of Oecusse, Timor Leste, involving rice fields along the Noel Besi River with an area of 1,069 hectares, whose land status is still a neutral zone. *Second*, the segment in Bidjael Sunan – Oben, in Manusasi Village, North Central Timor (TTU) Regency with the Oecusse enclave area, namely in arable land (plantation) of 489 plots of land along 2.6 km with an area of 142.7 hectares. *Third*, the segment in Dilumul – Memo, Belu Regency, which borders Bobonaro District, Timor Leste. The two countries have different identifications of the Median Mota Malibaka in the 2.2 km long river flow or an area of 41.9 hectares. In addition to the three unresolved segments, there is one *unsurveyed segment* in Subina – Oben. This segment is between Subina and Oben (approximately 14 km long) (See Figure 1).

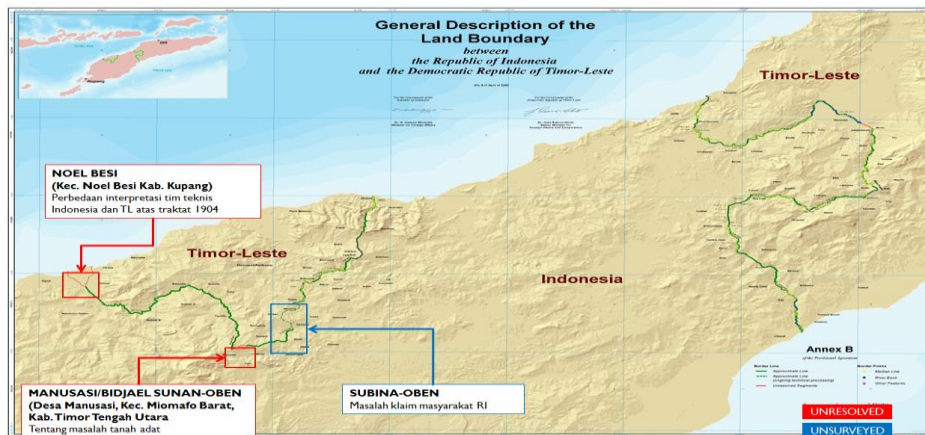


Figure 1. Map of Unresolved and Unsurveyed Segments of Indonesia and Timor Leste

Source: Unresolved dan Unsurveyed Segment Status of Indonesia - Timor Leste, Indonesian Geospatial Information Agency (BIG), 2020

Of the four problematic segments, the Dilumil – Memo segment was first resolved in 2013 through an agreement between the governments of Indonesia and Timor Leste. Meanwhile, other segments, such as the Noel Besi – Citrana (Naktuka) segment, the Bidjael Sunan – Oben segment, and the Subina – Oben segment were completed in 2019 through a territorial boundary agreement between the governments of Indonesia and Timor Leste. Specifically for the Naktuka segment, it was agreed that a common midpoint divides the Naktuka area into parts of Indonesia and Timor Leste. Given that there are four problematic segments of the land border between Indonesia and Timor Leste, this study focuses on the Noel Besi – Citrana segment because even though an agreement was reached on territorial boundaries in 2019, there has not been demarcation or installation of boundary markers along the boundary line, especially at the common midpoint agreed upon by the two countries, so the land border issue in this segment has not been fully resolved. In addition, Indonesia and Timor Leste have strong claims to the area, so the settlement in this segment takes a long time.

Based on the description above, this research focuses on issues related to the determination of the land boundaries of Indonesia and Timor Leste, especially in the Noel Besi – Citrana (Naktuka) segment. Considering that the land boundary of the two countries is a political border, as argued by Minghi (1963), this research focuses on critical geopolitical analysis, including the geopolitical vision of the state to explain the land boundaries issue in the Noel Besi – Citrana segment caused by differences in the geopolitical vision of the two countries.

2. Literature Review

This research is based on the concepts of critical geopolitics and border geopolitics as an analytical framework for looking at the relations of power, territory, sovereignty, and identity in the context of borders. Bachman & Sidaway (2016) argue that geopolitics is related to the political aspects of geographical concepts such as state boundaries and resources and explains the special relationship between the terrestrial (physical) environment and political activities that occur in that environment. Consequently, geopolitics provides a particular way of understanding the world by explaining how the location of territories and their natural resources influence the formation of national politics (Bachman & Sidaway, 2016).

Critics of the mainstream understanding of geopolitics emerged at the end of the Cold War to challenge the strategic doctrine of containing a territorial structure of geopolitical thought for 40 years and paying attention to the spatiality of power in geography and the social sciences. As a counter-point to state-centric conventional strategic analysis, this critical approach to geopolitics does not view geographic facts as pre-given but as a form of ideological and political analysis. Critical geopolitics aims not to describe political geography as pre-given, common-sense places but to analyze politics from the specifics of political geography (Dalby, 1990).

In this case, critical geopolitical concern does not rely on the sources and structures of power in general but on specific places and power relations. By conceptualizing geopolitics as a culturally interpretive practice and constructing ontological claims, critical geopolitical analysis challenges the conventional demarcations of foreign and domestic, political and non-political, and state and non-state (Dodds, Kuus, & Sharp, 2013).

Meanwhile, John Agnew in Dodds, Kuus, & Sharp (2013, 29) reveals that critical geopolitical studies offer three things: *first*, a conceptual matrix for political and geographic analysis based on thinking about geographical representation and socio-economic status resources. *Second*, emphasis on the role of vision, even in the mind's eye form, in the context of how the world is structured and operated by political agents. *Third*, how important is the fusion of territory and identity in modern nationalism, and how do both play a role in separating the world? *Fourth*, the emphasis on state elites has long been at the heart of geopolitical understanding.

Regarding the role of vision in critical geopolitics, O Tuathail (1996, 80) explains that the vision of a geographer goes beyond residents in visualizing the surrounding environment that is not only visible and present in the eye sight. A trained geographer can see the surrounding environment that is not visible to ordinary citizens. Furthermore, O Tuathail (1996, 83) argues that the mind's eye does not stand alone but is trained and socialized into a particular way of seeing (sighting sites/placing places). In practice, geographical observers become regulatory observers who observe specific epistemological systems. Therefore, to study geographical observation is to learn how to write the world. In this context, there is a connection between seeing, drawing, and mapping. Perception leads to the construction of nature's images (sights/sites) in imagination. A geographer attempts to reconstruct the picture by 1) drawing a landscape and 2) constructing a map (non-linguistic drawing).

O Tuathail & Dalby (1998) argue that critical geopolitics seeks to investigate geopolitics as a social, cultural, and political practice rather than merely political manifestations and realities. Critical geopolitics then confronts and analyzes the geopolitical imagination of the state, the myths of the foundations of the state, and national exceptionalist knowledge. Forming and specifying the state as a national community is a geopolitical act and involves the creation of national identity by forming a territorial boundary with the outside and incorporating several places/regions into a single unitary internal space. Geopolitical imagination

works in three ways: *first*, projecting a visual order of space, in the form of cartographic surveys and national atlases, along an uneven and territorialized landscape with lines delimiting administrative areas at home and abroad. *Second*, the geopolitical imagination is also at work in shaping community constitutions and renegotiating boundaries of citizenship and property. *Third*, the geopolitical imagination also works in contestation, especially in the multicultural competition over the reconsolidation of traditions and the representation of historical memory. In this case, the counter-narratives of a nation are a form of critical geopolitics (O Tuathail & Dalby, 1998).

Meanwhile, the geopolitical view of borders is based on the study conducted by Julian Minghi (1963) on the study of borders in political geography and the study of Victor Prescott (1965) on the geography of frontiers and boundaries. In this context, Minghi (1963) reminds us that boundaries are the most obvious geopolitical phenomenon. Henk van Houtum (2005) reveals that geopolitical studies that want to understand the relationship between territory, sovereignty, and identity by using a border lens do not focus on borderlines alone. Instead, the border is critically analyzed as a differentiator from the social construction of mindscapes and meaning by returning to geopolitical theory, especially critical geopolitics.

Van Houtum's argument is in line with Minghi's thought that the study of borders in geopolitics should view boundaries as a separator between politics and people of different nationalities. Consequently, geopolitical studies must also take into account social, cultural and economic factors in analyzing the effects of borders as national dividers. In this case, there is a shift in the focus of the study of border geopolitics, namely from the study of the border as a state political boundary to the border as a socio-territorial construction (van Houtum, 2005).

This study uses the critical geopolitical concept initiated by Dalby (1990); Agnew (2013); Dodds, Kuus, & Sharp (2013); and O Tuathail & Dalby (1983) and border geopolitics from van Houtum (2005) and Minghi (1963) to explain how the process of delimiting the land territory of Indonesia – Timor Leste, especially in the Noel Besi – Citrana (Naktuka) segment. By referring to these concepts, this study views the border context, not as a pre-given category, so the analysis will focus on the process of how the boundaries of the country are constructed and defined by the two countries (Indonesia and Timor Leste) based on a geopolitical vision.

3. Methodology

This study uses qualitative research methods. This research method allows researchers to explore and understand individuals or groups in interpreting human problems. The research process in this method consists of research questions and procedures, data collection, data analysis, and the process of interpreting data by researchers. This qualitative research focuses on the meaning of the individual and the importance of giving complexity to a situation (Creswell, 2014). In qualitative research, data collection techniques are carried out by in-depth interviews with key informants relevant to the research topic. In this study, the data is divided into two categories, namely primary data and secondary data. The primary data in this study were obtained from observations and in-depth interviews during field research. At the same time, secondary data is obtained from literature searches such as books, journals, research reports, websites, and other reliable data.

The researcher then analyzes the views and interpretations of the determination of the land boundaries of Indonesia and Timor Leste in the Noel Besi - Citrana segment, based on in-depth interviews with representatives of the central governments, traditional leaders, and academics. Interviews were conducted from June to October 2022. The researcher then simplified the data by grouping the statements of informants related to the arguments of this study. The researcher then interprets the data groupings to support the arguments in the analysis of this study.

4. Results

4.1 Land Boundaries Issues in Noel Besi – Citrana Segment

Since the East Timor province separated from the Republic of Indonesia (RI) and became a sovereign state called the Democratic Republic of Timor Leste (RDTL), the issue of the two countries' boundaries has become one of the priorities to be resolved. In order to define the territorial boundaries, the two countries' governments studied the history of the boundaries that once existed between West Timor and East Timor. The border history between West Timor and East Timor begins with the struggle for territory between the Portuguese and the Dutch in fighting for the dominance of the sandalwood trade on Timor Island, which took place from 1701 to 1755, which later produced an agreement known as the "Contract of Paravicini" in 1755. It was the agreement between the Dutch and the Portuguese to divide the island of Timor into two parts. The western part centered in Kupang belonged to the Dutch, and the eastern part centered in Dili belonged to the Portuguese. Even though the contract was signed, the boundary demarcation was never clearly negotiated. Further negotiations took place in 1846 when the Portuguese exchanged the Flores area, formerly controlled by the Portuguese, with an enclave on the north coast, now known as the Oecusse area, and two small islands off the north coast, namely Atauro and Jaco. Since then, Flores has been controlled by the Dutch, and Oecusse belonged to the Portuguese (Lake, 2016; Afulit, 2021).

On October 1, 1904, "the Portuguese and Dutch Dominions Convention on the Islands of Timor Demarcation" was signed in The Hague. It was followed by a simultaneous ratification process (by the Portuguese and the Dutch) on August 29, 1908. However, several years later, some areas that were not surveyed (including the Oecusse area) were still being discussed by the team formed by the two countries. In 1909, the border commission formed by the Dutch and Portuguese governments failed to reach an agreement on delimitation in the Oecusse region (including the Noel Meto River area). This failure brought the Dutch and Portuguese to the International Court of Justice. On April 3, 1913, the Dutch and the Portuguese signed a convention containing their agreement to take border dispute cases to the Permanent Court of Arbitration (arbitration court) in Paris. In its decision on June 26, 1914, the arbitral tribunal ruled favor of the Dutch claim to the disputed areas (Lake, 2016; Afilit, 2021).

Since Timor Leste's independence, Indonesia and Timor Leste have formed a new border area. The two countries set land boundaries by applying the legal principle of "uti possidetis juris". It means that new national boundaries must follow the territorial boundaries of the occupied countries and cannot be ruled out by the principle of the right of self-determination. Meanwhile, the International Court of Justice, in the Decision of the Burkina Faso vs. Mali case, 1986, stated that territorial boundaries originating from international borders determined by colonial countries must be respected and defended by new countries that have obtained independence (Ekon, 2021).

On February 2, 2002, the Indonesian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hasan Wirayuda, and the head of the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET), Sergio Vierra de Mello, signed an agreement to regulate the principle of "uti possidetis juris". It used the 1904 Treaty, signed by the Portuguese and the Dutch and the decision of the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) 1914 as the legal basis for regulating the border between Indonesia and Timor Leste.

Then, on April 8, 2005, Indonesian Foreign Minister Hasan Wirayuda and Timor Leste Foreign Minister Ramos Horta signed a provisional agreement. This provisional agreement agrees on 907 coordinates of boundary points or about 96% of the entire land boundary line. Several segments in the border areas are still hindering the achievement of a final agreement between the two countries. From 1999 – 2019, several segments still have unresolved segments, delineation, and demarcation of boundaries and other field issues. One of these segments is Noel Besi – Citrana (Naktuka), located in the East Amfoang subdistrict, Kupang Regency, which borders the Oecusse-Ambenu District. The disputed area of Naktuka is 1,069 ha, along 4.5 km.

If we look closely, the territorial boundary dispute in the Noel Besi – Citrana (Naktuka) segment occurs due to technical and non-technical problems. The technical problem stems from differences in the geopolitical visions of the two countries (Indonesia and Timor Leste), particularly related to the geographical interpretation between the technical team of Indonesia and Timor Leste regarding the 1904 Treaty as the basis used in determining the initial line of drawing the boundaries of the two countries.

Referring to the views of Agnew (2013) and O Tuathail (1996) that critical geopolitics emphasizes the role of geopolitical vision in writing the world by visualizing the surrounding environment by involving the connection between seeing, drawing, and mapping the surrounding environment. It is based on the perception that leads to the construction of images (sight/site) reconstructed in landscape depictions and map construction.

The difference in geographical perception between Indonesia and Timor Leste is related to the river toponym error in the Treaty map and the existing/actual conditions in the field. Article III of the 1904 Treaty, which regulates the boundary line at Noel Besi, which Indonesia and Timor Leste dispute, states that:

*"From the **mouth of the Noel Besi**, from where the summit of Pulu (island) Batek can be sighted, on a **30°47' NW astronomical azimuth**, following the **thalweg of the Noel Besi**, that of the Noel Niema and of the Bidjael Sunan".*

By referring to the provisions of the article, it is clear that the mouth of the Noel Besi River is the beginning of determining the boundary line. However, the estuary of Noel Besi (according to Indonesia's perception, it is in the east) is not depicted in the map attached to the 1904 Treaty (see Figure 2). It is only written as Noel Sutrana (Noel Barnabi). In contrast to Indonesia, concerning the same article, Timor Leste is of the view that the delimitation should be drawn from Noel Besi, which is depicted in a small ditch (Nono Tuinan) in the west and reaches a fork in the river connecting with the large Noel Besi (Mangku, 2017; Wuryandari, 2009).

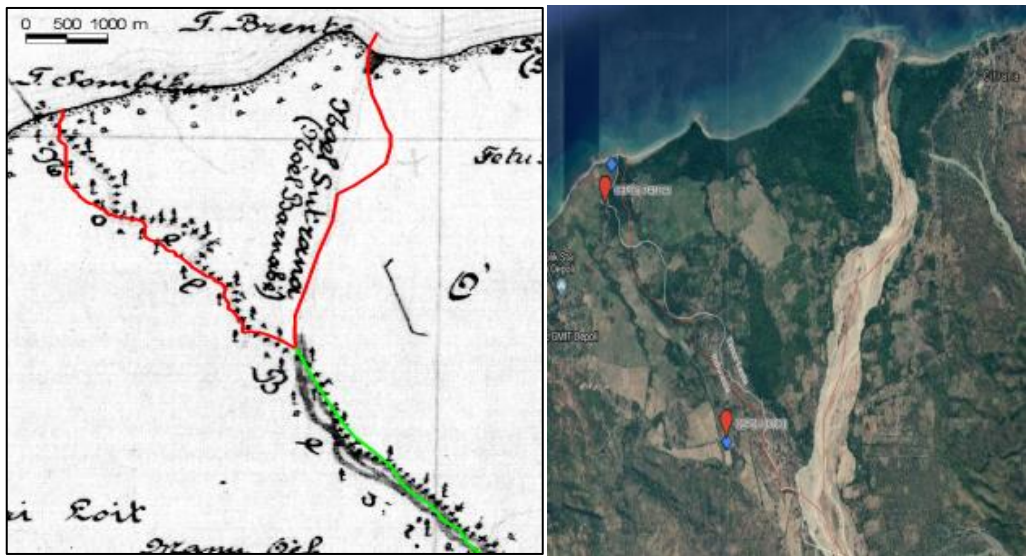


Figure 2. Map of the 1904 Timor Territory Treaty between the Netherlands and Portugal (Treaty 1904)

Source: State Boundary Marks of Indonesia – Timor Leste 2022, Indonesian Geospatial Information Agency (BIG), 2022

The results of the field findings of the Indonesian Geospatial Information Agency (BIG) show that: 1) the position of the river flow and the Noel Besi estuary is in accordance with the claims from the Indonesian side; 2) The mouth of the river claiming Timor Leste is not clearly visible in the field, as well as the Nono Tuinan river flow (small ditch) which is not visible from the Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV); 3) Timor Leste has difficulty in determining the position of the point to measure the azimuth towards Batek Island (See Figure 3).



Figure 3. Existing Condition of Noel Besi – Citrana

Source: Land Boundary Condition of Indonesia – Timor Leste, Indonesian National Border Management Agency (BNPP), 2020

In addition to technical problems, there are non-technical problems, namely the rejection of local communities over land boundaries as determined and the seizure of natural resources by local communities around the border areas for historical, economic, and socio-cultural reasons. The local community's rejection of the land boundary line used as a reference for the two countries can be seen in the spatial vision of the Amfoang community, which is based on historical justifications for the ownership of the Naktuka. According to historical narratives of traditional leaders of the Amfoang community, it was revealed that this delta area (which is bordered by Noel Besi and Nono Tuinan) has always been part of the territory of the former Amfoang Kingdom. The

Noel Besi River, also known as Kali Citrana, is the natural boundary between the former Amfoang Kingdom and the Ambenu Kingdom (Afulit, 2021; Wuryandari, 2009).

The spatial vision of the Amfoang people is reinforced by physical evidence of a monument on the Noel Besi river as a marker of the boundary between the two kingdoms. Based on the narrative of Amfoang community leaders on the Noel Besi river, three pillars define the boundaries of the Amfoang and Ambenu Kingdoms. The first pillar is at the mouth of the Noel Besi river; the second is in the Upper Noelbesi River, namely in Bidjael Sunan, Miomafu region, which is the boundary of the Miomafu and Ambenu kingdoms. However, due to natural activities such as scouring the banks of the Noel Besi river, most of the royal boundary signs on the river banks have disappeared. Only one pillar remains, at the mouth of the Noel Besi river, especially in Kolambesak (Wuryandari, 2009).

When Timor Leste became part of Indonesian territory, the Naktuka Valley was shared by two adjacent local communities from Amfoang and Ambenu without any procedural constraints. Before Timor Leste's independence in 2002, post-harvest traditional processions in the form of traditional ceremonies to strengthen family ties were often carried out. The closeness of this community relationship is shown in the form of giving agricultural land. For example, the Amfoang community, which owns part of the land in the Naktuka valley, gave up their land for the Ambenu people to cultivate. Unfortunately, this activity was stopped after Timor Leste's independence due to tight security from the two countries (Wuryandari, 2009).

In addition, a conflict related to the use of shared land in the Naktuka Valley is resolved by custom through a betel nut climbing ceremony. However, the traditional ceremony is no longer carried out, and the Amfoang people can no longer carry out their activities freely in the disputed area because 53 East Timorese families already inhabit the valley. Even Timor Leste has built several public facilities in areas that should have been vacant according to the agreement in 2003 because the area was declared a neutral zone (Sianipar, 2017)

In this case, there are several indications, such as the Timor Leste government deliberately carrying out propaganda by stating that Naktuka has become the property of Timor Leste; the discovery of the construction of agricultural offices, Immigration office development plan; the existence of a census activity by the government of Timor Leste in 2010 in the Naktuka region; and the discovery of a tractor engine aided by the government of Timor Leste. It is a violation because, as an area that is still in disputed status, it should be included in the neutral zone. It indicates that the RDTL party violated the agreement that the disputed area is a sterile or neutral zone (BNPP, 2015).

The Timor Leste border guard troops avoided being asked to patrol with the Indonesian military (TNI). It was conveyed by the former Commander of Kodim 1604/Kupang that the Timor Leste Border Area Guard seemed reluctant to reprimand its citizens not to engage in activities in the disputed area of Naktuka. As a result, the patrols were only carried out by TNI troops, while officers from Timor Leste did not do so and seemed to allow their citizens to occupy the Naktuka area. The Timor Leste government provides facilities and assistance in the form of money worth Rp. 1 million per month for citizens aged 50 years and over to occupy the disputed area. This condition creates a sense of injustice for Indonesian citizens around the disputed area because Indonesian citizens are still obedient to the provisions in force in the area (Saptohutomo, 2016).

The people of Timor Leste claim that the land in Naktuka is already included in the territory of Timor Leste. They even dared to block the border patrol troops (Satgas Pamtas) of the TNI. The latter carried out patrols in the Naktuka area because they thought the TNI troops had violated the territorial boundaries. The East Timorese blocked it with a machete, cut the bridge, and blocked the road that the TNI troops would pass (Mangku, 2019). According to Indonesian residents in the North Netemnanu Village, East Amfoang subdistrict (the closest village to the disputed area), before the independence of Timor Leste, the land in the disputed area was processed by 21 families) residents of North Natemnanu Village to cultivate crops. After the independence of East Timor from Indonesia, the 21 families left their land due to the disputed legal status of the territory. Then, in 2006, residents of Naktuka, Citrana Village, Oecusse District (Timor Leste) reprocessed 1,069 hectares of land in the disputed area. On the other hand, residents of North Netemnanu Village do not dare to carry out agricultural activities in Naktuka, considering that there is no guarantee of security from the Indonesian side. However, there are still residents of North Natemnanu Village who have land ownership documents in Naktuka (Mangku, 2019).

An initiative emerged from the local community of the two countries in 2012 to provide a settlement option by bringing together the King and Fettor as traditional royal leaders and community leaders of the two countries supported by the government. It was considering the prolonged territorial boundary dispute since 2002 and the central government being slow in resolving it. The last traditional dialogue in Oepoli on November 14, 2017, brought together the four major kingdoms of Timor. Three kings from Indonesia, namely Liurai Wehali, Liurai Sonbai, and King Amfoang, met with King Ambenu from Timor Leste. The four kings were united by the spirit of "Nekaf Mese Ansaof Mesa Atoni Pah Meto" (one heart, one soul as Dawan people).

The coordination meeting of the Kings, Fettor as traditional royal leaders, and local government officials were also attended by representatives of the central government. It was to formulate the wishes of the people of the Amfoang kingdom so that the problem of the Indonesia-Timor Leste border dispute in the Naktuka segment could be settled. An essential point in the agreement was the statement of the Ambenu Kingdom from Timor Leste, which recognized and affirmed the boundaries of the traditional territory between the Liurai Sila, Sonbai Sila, Beun Sila, and Afo Sila Kingdoms with their oath (Keda 2018). In the meeting, the East Timorese, represented by their king, namely Beun Sila, recognized the Naktuka region as part of the Kingdom of Amfoang (Indonesia). Another critical point is the statement by both parties that the boundary line between countries is not a point of dispute as it has been so far, but rather a social point and a point of brotherhood (Nomleni 2019).

4.2 Determination Process of Indonesia – Timor Leste Land Boundaries in Noel Besi - Citrana Segment

Since the 1999 transition period, before Timor Leste became formally independent, Indonesia has cooperated to discuss the issue of land boundaries on Timor Island with UNTAET. In 2001, the two parties formed a Technical Sub-Committee on Border, Demarcation, and Regulation (TSC-BDR), and the 2002 meeting resulted in an agreement to implement a joint demarcation survey program. When Timor Leste officially became an independent country on May 20, 2002, TSC-BDR RI-RDTL began operating in cooperation to resolve land boundary issues. In the same year (2002), unresolved segments were found during the survey after the 2nd TSC-BDR meeting.

In addition to the TSC-BDR, the RI-UNTAET Joint Border Committee (JBC) Forum was also formed, which agreed to use the 1904 Treaty as one of the determinations of the RI-RDTL land boundaries. In this case, the process of negotiating Indonesia - Timor Leste land boundaries is carried out at three levels, namely the Joint Ministerial Commission (JMC), the Joint Border Committee (JBC), and the Technical Sub Committee on Border, Demarcation, and Regulation (TSC BDR).

At the JMC level, the negotiation process is aimed at resolving problems that occurred after the 1999 widespread consultation, such as the issue of assets of the Indonesian government and Indonesian citizens left behind in Timor Leste, the settlement of civil servants' rights, the TNI ex-East Timor rights, the former East Timor Police rights, the problem of ex-East Timor refugee children, problems that occur at the border (illegal border crossings, smuggling of merchandise, and other illegal economic activities), and the problem of determining land and sea boundaries. At the JBC level, the negotiation process is aimed at resolving border issues such as cross-border issues (people and goods), security issues, borderlines, river management at the border, land boundary delimitation, and demarcation issues. Meanwhile, at the TSC-BDR level, it is related to technical work on land boundary delimitation, such as discussing and jointly reviewing the 1904 Treaty document, 1914 PCA document, maps, and other related documents. In addition, the TSC-BDR carried out joint work planning and scheduling; joint tracking in joint reconciliation surveys; joint delineation survey; mapping implementation; and documentation of related data and information (Anggitta, 2014).

Meanwhile, the Special Working Group (SWG) was formed to handle the unresolved segments. The Senior Official's Consultation (SOC) was only formed in 2017 and has held five meetings until 2019. The formation of the SOC itself is a medium to resolve the unresolved segments politically. Since the settlement at the technical level through technical and legal discussions at the TSC-BDR and SWG forums has been exhausted and deadlocked, other efforts are needed (Ministry of Defense, 2021).

Based on the results of the 5th SOC on agenda Number 5, it states that there is a commitment from the two countries to complete two unresolved segments, the Noel Besi – Citrana and Bidjael Sunan – Oben segments, before September 2019. As a follow-up, a meeting was held between the Chair of the SOC, namely Wiranto (Indonesia) and Xanana Gusmao (Timor Leste), at the Indonesian Coordinating Ministry on Political, Legal, and Security Affairs' office on 22 July 2019. The meeting of the SOC Chairs resulted in *Agreed Principles on The Final Settlement of Land Boundary* on how the two teams from Indonesia and Timor Leste will move forward in dealing with unresolved segments (BNPP, 2020). The SOC will finalize the agreement to be included in Addendum No. 2 of the *2005 Provisional Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Indonesia and the Government of the Democratic of Timor Leste on The Land Boundary*. It will be incorporated into a comprehensive agreement between Indonesia and Timor Leste (Polkam, 2019).

Based on the *Agreed Principles on the Final Settlement of the Land Boundary* between Indonesia and Timor Leste, both parties agree that by referring to the 1904 Treaty between the Dutch and the Portuguese, the Noel Besi – Citrana segment will be completed by applying a simplified median line approach. It is drawn from the north starting at the Bokos point, with coordinate points to be determined later. Determining land boundaries based on the common midpoint is a political settlement. So that the territorial boundary in the Noel Besi - Citrana segment, which was decided to be divided into two regions, is a political line that will be logically converted into a technical line by drawing a straight line down from the common midpoint. It was done by the Indonesian and the Papua New Guinea government when establishing the territorial boundary between Indonesia - Papua New Guinea by drawing a straight line following the flow of the Fly River in Papua New Guinea (See Figure 4).



Figure 4. Map of Land Boundary Division in Noel Besi Segment – Citrana

Source: The Development Status of Noel Besi – Citrana Unresolved Segment, Indonesian Geospatial Information Agency (BIG), 2021

On August 10, 2019, socialization of the determination of the boundaries of the area was carried out to the government and local communities in Kupang, NTT, in the Coordination Meeting for the Settlement of Indonesia – Timor Leste Boundary Disputes, which was attended by representatives of the central and regional governments as well as community/traditional leaders, regarding the agreement on territorial boundaries between countries.

However, the agreement has not detailed the land boundaries (demarcation) of the two countries' territories. Traditionally, the Naktuka territory should be included in Indonesian territory, as agreed by the kings of Indonesia and Timor Leste in 1917. However, since the territorial boundaries between Indonesia and Timor Leste, recognized by the United Nations, are based on a Legal Basis (Treaty 1904 and PCA 1914), a win-win solution is made that is different from the perspective of the local communities. In addition, according to the government's view, traditionally, the border community have "borders" that have been recognized for generations by the tribes in the two countries, but these "borders" are different from those contained in the two Legal Basis. Then, no written evidence was found that could support the "claim" of the border community, so the negotiators could not bring this "claim" to the meetings of the two countries (BNPP, 2015).

However, the Indonesian people at the Noel Besi – Citrana border felt aggrieved and objected to the results. The public views that the Indonesian government has failed to defend the Naktuka region's sovereignty fully. As stated by the Amfoang King, Robby G.J. Manoh said that the agreement made by Wiranto and Xanana Gusmao was very unfair and detrimental to the Amfoang community. Historical facts show that before the colonial era, King Amfoang (Indonesia) and King Ambenu (Timor Leste) had agreed on a traditional boundary between the two, marked by the Lakat Bi Ato meeting. It later determined Noel Setlan to be *bah bese/pagarbese*/boundary, so it was later known as Noel Besi. It proves that the Naktuka segment, a dispute between the Amfoang and Ambenu people, belongs to the Amfoang community (Afulit 2021).

An interview with one of the resource persons also revealed the disappointment of the Indonesian people in Naktuka and in two other disputed segments, namely in Manusasi (Bidjael Sunan – Oben segment) and Haumeni Ana (Subina – Oben segment), which decided to belong to the territory of Timor Leste. Especially in Haumeni Ana, which is an element of the surveyed segment, a decision has been made, although the two countries have not carried out a survey. The border community also regret it. In this case, most border communities stated that the result of the land border agreement between Indonesia and Timor Leste, which the governments of the two countries had agreed, had disappointed the border community living in the border areas. In the 2019 Indonesia – Timor Leste National Border Dispute Settlement Coordination Meeting, the local government (Kupang Regency) regretted the absence of the local government and community/traditional leaders in resolving the RI-RDTL state border dispute,

especially in the Noel Besi – Citrana segment. Furthermore, the Regent of Kupang proposed that the Noel Besi – Citrana segment be made a neutral zone or a joint zone managed jointly by the people of the two countries. Then during the Joint Field Visit, it is hoped that the community's proposals regarding the determination of the base point to draw the line to the north are not at Bokos but in the middle of the Noel Besi River.

5. Conclusion

Based on the analysis above, it can be revealed that the land boundary issue in the Noel Besi – Citrana segment is caused by the differences in the geopolitical vision of the two countries (Indonesia and Timor Leste). The difference in geopolitical vision is based on the perception of the Naktuka region. The two countries then visualized the Naktuka region in constructing a map of the country's boundaries based on their respective perceptions. These results support the arguments of Agnew (2013) and O Tuathail (1996), who emphasize the role of geopolitical vision in writing the world by visualizing the surrounding environment based on perceptions as outlined in the construction of images and maps.

Furthermore, the determination of land boundaries in the Noel Besi – Citrana segment by the two countries in 2019 by applying a simplified median line approach based on the common midpoint is a political solution that is different from the geopolitical vision of the two countries that has been visualized previously. The Indonesian government believes that the territory Naktuka is part of the Indonesian territory by adhering to the geopolitical perception that the boundary line of the Naktuka area is located from the mouth of the Noel Besi River as stated in Article III of the 1904 Treaty and is in accordance with existing conditions in the field at this time. Meanwhile, the Timor-Leste government is of the view that the Naktuka region is part of the territory of Timor-Leste by adhering to the geopolitical perception that the boundary line of the Naktuka area is located in the Nono Tuinan (small ditch) in accordance with the azimuth stated in Article III of the 1904 Treaty.

In addition to being different from the geopolitical vision of the two countries, the determination of the 2019 territorial boundaries based on the common midpoint is also different from the spatial vision of the local community, which, according to the results of the meeting between the traditional leaders of Indonesia and Timor Leste in 2017, the Timor Leste through their king, namely Beun Sila recognized the territory Naktuka as part of the Kingdom of Amfoang (Indonesia). The results of the 2017 meeting are in accordance with the traditional meeting of Lakat Bi Ato in the days before the colonialists (Portuguese and Dutch) established the Noel Besi River as the natural boundary between the Amfoang Kingdom (Indonesia) and the Ambenu Kingdom (Timor Leste).

Therefore, it can be stated that in the end, a political solution became a way out of ending the stalemate over the issue of land boundaries in the Noel Besi – Citrana segment that had lasted for a long time since 2002 by compromising the geopolitical vision of the two countries. The limitation of this study is that it is more focused on determining land boundaries in the Noel Besi – Citrana segment by Indonesia and Timor Leste governments in 2019. Other researchers can fill this limitation for future research by analyzing the implications of the land boundaries determination in the Noel Besi – Citrana segment on border communities after 2019. By doing this, the analysis of the study will be more depth.

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