



**RSC Working Paper No. 42**

**Dynamics of Conflict and Displacement  
in Papua, Indonesia**

A collection of papers developed in conjunction  
with a one-day workshop held on the 26<sup>th</sup> October 2006  
at St. Antony's College, Oxford

Edited by  
Eva-Lotta E. Hedman

**September 2007**

**Working Paper Series**

Department of International Development  
University of Oxford.



The **RSC Working Paper Series** is intended to aid the rapid distribution of work in progress, research findings and special lectures by researchers and associates of the RSC. Papers aim to stimulate discussion among the worldwide community of scholars, policymakers and practitioners. They are distributed free of charge in PDF format via the RSC website. Bound hard copies of the working papers may also be purchased from the RSC.

The opinions expressed in the papers are solely those of the author/s who retain the copyright. They should not be attributed to the project funders or the Refugee Studies Centre, Queen Elizabeth House or the University of Oxford. Comments on individual Working Papers are welcomed, and should be directed to the author/s.

Refugee Studies Centre  
Department of International Development (QEH)  
University of Oxford  
3 Mansfield Road  
Oxford OX1 3TB  
United Kingdom

Tel +44 (0)1865 270722  
Fax +44 (0)1865 270721  
E-mail: [rsc@qeh.ox.ac.uk](mailto:rsc@qeh.ox.ac.uk)  
Web: [www.rsc.ox.ac.uk](http://www.rsc.ox.ac.uk)

**Contents**

Glossary ..... 4

Introduction ..... 5

Map of Papua and West Irian Jaya ..... 5

Papua: the last frontier for democratization, demilitarization and decentralization in Indonesia  
*Eva-Lotta E. Hedman* ..... 6

Papuan and Indonesian nationalisms: Can they be reconciled?  
*Jacques Bertrand* ..... 16

Refuge, displacement and dispossession: responses to Indonesian rule and conflict in Papua  
*Richard Chauvel* ..... 32

Representations of violence, conflict, and displacement in West Papua  
*Stuart Kirsch* ..... 52

West Papua: the flawed integration into Indonesia  
*Liem Soei Liong* ..... 69

Annex 1 – Workshop Programme ..... 73

Annex 2 – Workshop Participants ..... 74

## Glossary

ABRI	Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia, Armed Forces of the Republic of Indonesia. Renamed TNI (Tentara Nasional Indonesia) in the post-Suharto period
'Brimob'	paramilitary mobile police brigade units
DAP	Dewan Adat Papua (Papuan Tribal Council)
DOM	Daerah Operasi Militer, Military Operations Zone. Designation for Aceh during the counter-insurgency operations from May 1990 to August 1998
DPR	Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat (national legislature)
DPRD	Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah (local legislature)
DPRP	Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Papua (Papua House of People's Representative)
ELSHAM	Institute for Human Rights Study and Advocacy
FORERI	Forum Rekonsiliasi Masyarakat Irian Jaya (Forum for Reconciliation in Irian Jaya)
GKI	Gerekan Kristen Injili (main protestant Church in Papua)
GoI	Government of Indonesia
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
Kopassus	Komando Pasukan Khusus, Army Special Forces
Kostrad	Komando Strategis Angkatan Darat, Army Strategic Reserve Command
LBH	Lembaga Bantuan Hukum – Legal Aid Foundation. Indonesian national human rights organization
MPR	Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat (People's Consultative Assembly)
MRP	Majelis Rakyat Papua (Papuan People's Assembly)
OPM	Organisasi Papua Merdeka (Free Papua Organization)
PDP	Presidium Dewan Papua (Papuan Presidium Council)
<i>pengungsi</i>	refugees, the same term is also used to refer to IDPs in Bahasa Indonesia
PNG	Papua New Guinea
Satgas Papua	Satuan Tugas Papua (Papua Task Force)
TNI	Tentara Nasional Indonesia (Indonesian Armed Forces)
TPN	Tentara Pembebasan Nasional (National Liberation Army of West Papua)

## Introduction

This document presents a collection of papers developed in preparation for a one-day workshop held under the auspices of the Refugee Studies Centre at St Antony's College, University of Oxford on 26 October 2006. This was the fourth in a series of RSC workshops to focus on conflict, violence and displacement in Southeast Asia organized at Oxford by Dr Eva-Lotta Hedman (Senior Research Fellow). Like previous such workshops, which examined issues of conflict and displacements in Aceh under martial law, southern Philippines and south Thailand, and Burma, the day of analysis devoted to Papua brought together perspectives and expertise from among a range of institutional contexts, including academic and advocacy, practitioner and policy.

Support for the workshop was generously provided by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and the Asian Studies Centre at St Antony's College.

## Map of Papua and West Irian Jaya<sup>1</sup>



©2006 International Crisis Group [www.crisisgroup.org](http://www.crisisgroup.org)

<sup>1</sup>On April 18, 2007, the name West Irian Jaya was changed to West Papua. See p. 6, fn. 1 for a brief explanation of the changing designations for the territory mapped above, which, unless otherwise indicated, is referred to simply as Papua in this collection of papers.

## **Papua: the last frontier for democratization, demilitarization and decentralization in Indonesia**

*Eva-Lotta E. Hedman, Refugee Studies Centre, University of Oxford*

The end of Suharto's long authoritarian reign in 1998 anticipated far-reaching political changes in Indonesian politics and society. Even as the calls for reform, or *reformasi*, were overtaken by the process of creating new political institutions and getting on with the everyday business of politics as usual, Indonesia has undergone a marked transformation of democratization, demilitarization and decentralization. In the aftermath of the 1999 referendum in East Timor and the 2004 tsunami in Aceh, which spelled the end of long-standing militarized conflicts and large-scale displacement of civilian populations due to military operations involving the Indonesian security forces in these formerly intensely contested areas, Papua remains the last frontier for democratization, demilitarization and decentralization in post-authoritarian Indonesia.<sup>1</sup> In further contrast to developments elsewhere in Indonesia, Papua also breaks the mould in terms of displacement.<sup>2</sup> In addition to some 13,500 refugees who remain across the border in Papua New Guinea where many fled conflict and violence in previous decades, an estimated 20,000 Papuans have been internally displaced since the Law on Special Autonomy for Papua was passed in 2001, and in January 2006, 43 Papuans arriving by outrigger canoe and flying the Morning Star flag, sought political asylum in Australia.<sup>3</sup>

Compared to the process of democratization evident elsewhere in Indonesian politics and society, Papua has instead seen the introduction of a series of measures aimed at closing down the political space that opened up in the early post-Suharto period. In sharp contrast with the demilitarization of Indonesian politics and society achieved in the wake of authoritarian rule, moreover, Papua has been returned to a state of *de facto* military operations area (*daerah operasi militer*). There is also widespread concern that the division of Papua into several provinces, as well as the carving out of new districts and municipalities, run counter to the realization of the decentralization of powers in political, economic, social and cultural affairs held out by the Law on Special Autonomy for Papua.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> A note on nomenclature here: unless otherwise indicated, 'Papua' is used in this collection of papers to refer to the territory which, controversially, was divided in 2003 to form two provinces (with effect in 2004), Papua and West Irian Jaya (renamed West Papua in April 2007). Under Dutch colonial rule, the territory was known as Netherlands New Guinea, while Indonesia renamed it West Irian (1962-1973) and then Irian Jaya (1973-2001). The term 'Papuan' was taboo under the New Order. In 2001, Indonesian President Abdurrahman Wahid announced the name change to 'Papua', subsequently ratified in the Special Autonomy Bill for Papua (Basic Law 21/2001) by the Indonesian Parliament.

<sup>2</sup> As indicated in a recent report by the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, figures for 'people displaced by conflict or human rights violations in Indonesia' fall into one of three categories: those unable to return home (Madura Island, Maluku), those yet to receive a government termination grant (Maluku, Central Sulawesi), and those without access to adequate housing, livelihood, or basic services on their return (Aceh, West Kalimantan). IDMC, 'Between 150,000 and 250,000 people still displaced by conflict in Indonesia at the end of 2006,' <http://www.internal-displacement.org/idmc/website/countries.nsf/Indonesia> (accessed on July 30, 2007). These categories clearly fall short of capturing the dynamics of ongoing displacement in Papua. The Indonesian government no longer issues national figures for IDPs, and, indeed, has officially declared the end of conflict IDPs in the country as of January 2004.

<sup>3</sup> For a useful account of Papuan refugees in Papua New Guinea, see Glazebrook (2004), UNHCR (2006). For an analysis of the on-going displacement, see Richard Chauvel, this volume.

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, Council on Foreign Relations (2006), International Crisis Group (2003).

## The past in the present crisis

In the early 1960s, Indonesia's first president Sukarno and the Army united in a common front on the annexation of West New Guinea, or, as Sukarno proclaimed in his *Trikora (Tri Komando Rakyat)* speech in December 1961, the *liberation* of West Irian from Dutch colonial rule. This common front allowed for the Indonesian military's invasion in 1962, under then Maj. Gen. Suharto's Mandala command, thus paving the way for the annexation (as 'Irian Barat' or West Irian) in 1963 and subsequent integration through the UN-sponsored so-called 'Act of Free Choice' in 1969 (Salford 2003). Having thus re-established the outer perimeters of the old colonial map of the Dutch East Indies, Jakarta's 'retrocession' of this territory anticipated the deep militarization and further entrenchment of the armed forces in this region, which has, in many ways, outlasted the Suharto regime itself. It also prepared the ground for one of the world's largest gold and copper mines, operated by Freeport-Indonesia, a subsidiary of the American transnational mining corporation Freeport-McMoRan, – 'the first foreign company to sign a contract with the new regime' in 1967, and, in due time, Jakarta's largest taxpayer – and the Indonesian military's murky business of 'protection' in the region.<sup>5</sup>

Indonesian military campaigns and neo-colonial administration in 'West Irian' anticipated dynamics of displacement, which have in many ways only deepened since their early manifestation in the 1960s. The most easily recognizable form of such displacement has involved trans-border crossings into neighbouring Papua New Guinea, with which West Papua shares a long land border, as well as marked linguistic and other socio-cultural affinities. In the period between Suharto's Mandala campaign in 1962 and the UN-sponsored 'Act of Free Choice' in 1969, a total of almost 4,000 West Papuans crossing the border were registered by the Australian Administration in Papua New Guinea, with the numbers peaking at 1,695 in the same year (Glazebrook 2004: 207; see further Blaskett 1989). Intensified military operations extending from Jayapura, the capital, on the north coast and inland, south and east, in the mid-1980s, saw some 11,000 people seek refuge across the border with Papua New Guinea between February 1984 and October 1985 (May 1986). Due to the scale of displacement, the UNHCR offered *prima facie* refugee recognition and also helped establish a single inland relocation site at East Awin, away from the seventeen informal camps on the international border with Indonesia (Glazebrook 2004: 209).

In addition to such trans-border movements, which have typically spelled longer-term refuge for thousands of Papuans in Papua New Guinea, and indeed the establishment of a sizeable refugee settlement in East Awin under UNHCR auspices, Indonesian rule over West Papua has also seen waves of internal displacement during military operations. Such operations have included, for example, the strafing of communities near Enarotali in the mid-1960s, and the recurring pattern of 'sweeping' or house-to-house searches for activists and sympathizers of the OPM (*Organisasi Papua Merdeka*, or Papuan Freedom Movement) in the decades since its founding in the mid-1960s (Osborne 1985). Indonesian military campaigns against the OPM in the 1970s and 1980s saw large-scale forced displacement of villagers seeking refuge from execution-style killings during sweeping operations, as well as from

---

<sup>5</sup> Leith (2003), p. 3. For a recent report, see also Global Witness (2005). Other major resource extraction operations embedded in the wider political economy of protection in Papua include the BP Liquid Natural Gas plant at Bintuni Bay and illegal logging with significant new investment focused on plantations, in particular palm oil for emerging bio-fuel markets. See, for example, International Crisis Group (2007), p. 4.

aerial bombings (Osborne 1985). In this context of deep militarization, the killing of unarmed villagers continued into the 1990s, and, with the demise of the New Order, Papua saw the shooting of pro-independence protesters in Biak, Nabire, Sorong, Wamena, and Timika in 1998 and 1999 (Mote and Rutherford 2001: 120). During the long years between Indonesia's annexation of Papua in 1962 and the end of Suharto's authoritarian rule in 1998, an even more pervasive pattern of internal displacement emerged in Papua due to the combined effects of government-sponsored (*transmigrasi*) or spontaneous migration of Indonesian citizens, and relocation of indigenous populations (*relokasi*) (see for example McGibbon 2004).

### **The limits to democratization in Papua**

Compared to the process of democratization evident elsewhere in Indonesian politics and society, Papua has instead seen the introduction of a series of measures aimed at closing down the political space that opened up in the early post-Suharto period. In 1998, for example, the transitional government of President Habibie entered into informal talks with Foreri (*Forum Rekonsiliasi Rakyat Irian Jaya*, or Forum for the Reconciliation of Irian Jaya Society), but when the so-called 'Team of 100,' representing a wide social, religious and geographic spectrum of Papuan society, presented a statement demanding independence to the reportedly stunned President and his cabinet colleagues in 1999, this signaled the end rather than the beginning of national dialogue.<sup>6</sup> Meanwhile, Indonesian military and police had kept up repression of pro-independence demonstrations in Jayapura, Biak, Sorong and Wamena in 1998.

Under Habibie's successor, President-elect Abdurrahman Wahid, Papua saw the opening of a political space and the emergence of pro-independence activities not seen since 1962. However, against the president's permission for the flying of the Morning Star flag<sup>7</sup> over the newly renamed province of Papua, and his overall position of accommodation, the flurry of pro-independence activities and the emergence of a new Papuan leadership was met with mounting concern by the Indonesian military and parliament, which was also scathing in its criticism of Wahid's policy on Papua. Jakarta thus moved to sideline the new Papuan leadership from political centre-stage and to silence expressions of Papuan nationalism in public discourse through a combination of measures, including repression of pro-independence manifestations by Indonesian security forces.<sup>8</sup>

As Wahid himself fell foul of a successful impeachment move in Jakarta and was replaced by his former vice-president, Megawati Sukarnoputri, in June 2001, the so-called 'Papuan Spring' also came to an end, followed by a new season of military and political counter-measures.<sup>9</sup> Within a month of the passing of the Special Autonomy Law by the DPR,

---

<sup>6</sup> For a useful summary of Jakarta's responses to calls for Papuan independence during this period, which saw a mixture of repressive and accommodating measures, see Chauvel and Bhakti (2004), pp. 24-31.

<sup>7</sup> The Morning Star, or *Bintang Kejora*, flag was adopted as the Papuan national flag and raised on 1 December 1961. It first flew during an uprising in 1942 which coincided with the Japanese invasion and the collapse of Dutch rule. See, for example, Rutherford (1999), p. 55.

<sup>8</sup> For a detailed analysis of these developments, see Mote and Rutherford (2001) pp. 131-138. On the punitive treatment of even peaceful expressions of pro-independence sentiments, see especially Human Rights Watch (2007a).

<sup>9</sup> For a more detailed account of this period, see, for example, Chauvel and Bhakti (2004), especially pp. 33-34 and 37-39.

prominent Papuan leader Theys Eulay was assassinated by members of the Indonesian Army Special Forces (Kopassus), and although seven Kopassus officers were subsequently put on trial, they only received light sentences and were proclaimed ‘heroes’ by General Ryamizard Ryacudu. A wider pattern of violence has also been observed with ‘Papuan attacks on the security forces followed by indiscriminate reprisals’ almost immediately after October 2001 (Chauvel and Bhakti 2004: 33). Moreover, within less than a month of signing the Special Autonomy Law in December 2001, Megawati, daughter of Indonesia’s first president Sukarno and leader of the successor to his Nationalist Party of Indonesia, issued a presidential instruction (Inpres 1/2003) to speed up the division of Papua into three provinces—a decision in evident contradiction with the provisions for Special Autonomy and one that has drawn active opposition from across a wide spectrum in Papua.

### **Conflict, violence and displacement in Papua**

In sharp contrast with the demilitarization of Indonesian politics and society achieved in the wake of authoritarian rule, moreover, Papua has been returned to a state of *de facto* military operations area (*daerah operasi militer*) in recent years. Indonesian security forces, including army troops, mobile paramilitary police (*Brigade Mobil* or Brimob), and police units, have continued to conduct so-called village ‘sweeping’ operations in search of OPM fighters and supporters, operations which have involved ‘excessive, often brutal, and at times lethal force against civilians,’ as well as large-scale internal displacement, particularly in the Central Highlands.<sup>10</sup> Such village sweepings by Indonesian security forces have reportedly been conducted in different parts of the Central Highlands in recent years, including the Kiyawage area (2003), and the Tolikara regency (January-March 2005), with Puncak Jaya the target of repeated rounds, including on-going operations (2004; August-October 2005; December 2006) seemingly at odds with the end of military offensives declared by TNI Commander in Chief Marshal Djoko Suyanto in July 2006.<sup>11</sup>

While some recent developments in the deployment of security forces in Papua have parallels elsewhere in Indonesia, the effects of increasing numbers of military and paramilitary police commands, posts and troop levels remain especially troubling in the context of conflict, violence and displacement, past and present. As elsewhere, the process of creating new administrative units (*pemekaran*) has seen the division of provinces and districts accompanied, in places, by the creation of new military and police commands, and, in the case of Papua, the recent establishment of Boven Digoel as a district also added a district military command (*Kodim*), as well as a district police command (*Polres*) to existing security forces (International Crisis Group 2007: 10). According to recent reports, moreover, an Indonesian border security programme initiated in June 2006 will also serve to increase the number of border posts in Papua from 20 to 94 along the 760-kilometre border with Papua New Guinea, a border which has long had a strong security presence (*ibid.*).

---

<sup>10</sup> Human Rights Watch (2007b), p. 2. Such ‘sweeping’ operations are an established repertoire of Indonesian military counter-insurgency warfare, and were practised widely in Papua in the 1970s and 1980s. See further Osborne (1985).

<sup>11</sup> Human Rights Watch (2007b), p. 25. See also TAPOL (2005). On the on-going operations and their effects in parts of Puncak Jaya, see further TAPOL. Suyanto reportedly made his statement in response to OPM leaders declaring the end of armed struggle during a meeting in Papua New Guinea in July 2006. See ‘Suyanto: TNI still keeping on guard against OPM,’ *Tempo Interactive*, 1 August 2006.

In sharper contrast to the wider process of demilitarization in post-Suharto Indonesia, Papua has experienced an increase in Indonesian security forces which numbered more than 12,000 military troops and between 2,000 and 2,500 paramilitary police in the province by 2006, with further expansions planned for 2007.<sup>12</sup> There have also been more recent reports of several thousand military and paramilitary police troops deployed in connection with military operations in parts of the Central Highlands.<sup>13</sup> While difficult to confirm, there are further reports of increased activity of pro-Indonesian militia groups, involving meetings with senior military and police officers, including Col. Burhanuddin Siagian, Regional Commander of the Military District Command (KOREM 172) in Jayapura, where one such meeting of some 500 people was held on 6 July 2007. Previously posted to East Timor during the 1999 referendum, where he earned particular notoriety for his role in supporting the mobilization of armed Indonesian nationalist or pro-integration militias, Siagian has been indicted for crimes against humanity, including the deportation or forcible transfer of a civilian population.<sup>14</sup>

As noted above, an estimated 20,000 people have been internally displaced due to military operations in Papua in recent years, and the population of the central highlands has borne the brunt of such displacement. According to figures cited in a recent Human Rights Watch report, for example, the 2004 and 2005 military operations in Puncak Jaya left some 15,000 people internally displaced.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, a January 2007 report by the Pastoral Team of the Ecumenical Council of Papuan Churches (PGGP) estimated that more than 5,000 people had been displaced in Puncak Jaya due to military operations initiated in December 2006 (Pastoral Team 2007). The following summary captures something of the impact upon local populations of recent rounds of displacement in the central highlands of Papua:

[C]ivilian lives are lost when communities, forced from their homes to set up makeshift shelter in the forests, succumb to illnesses caused by poor nutrition, inadequate housing, and lack of access to health services. Widespread destruction of private and community property—including crops, livestock, and schools—looting, and desecration of churches by security forces are common occurrences and make it very difficult for returning communities to rebuild and sustain themselves, protracting the experience of displacement.<sup>16</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup> The last two years have reportedly seen an increase in the size of three infantry battalions permanently stationed in Papua (751, 752, and 753) from 650 to 1,050 soldiers each, with further such expansion planned for three additional battalions by the end of 2007. See International Crisis Group (2006), p. 3.

<sup>13</sup> TNI Commander in Chief Djoko Suyanto reportedly announced such a deployment to Puncak Jaya on 12 December 2006, and local estimates put the figure to 3,000 extra troops. See TAPOL, 'Huge Troop Buildup in West Papua,' 30 December 2006.

<sup>14</sup> See, for example, Jamieson (2007). Two separate indictments were issued against Siagian by the Special Panel for Serious Crimes of the Dili District Court in Timor Leste -- the Cailaco indictment on 3 February 2003 and the Maliana indictment on 10 July 2003. He has been charged with individual and command responsibility for crimes against humanity, including torture, murder, persecution, and deportation. See further <http://jsmp.minihub.org/indictmentspdf/Cailacoindnannexeeng07feb03> and [http://jsmp.minihub.org/indictmentspdf/Maliana\\_Burhanudding22\\_7\\_03.pdf](http://jsmp.minihub.org/indictmentspdf/Maliana_Burhanudding22_7_03.pdf).

<sup>15</sup> Human Rights Watch (2007b), p. 25. According to one unpublished account based on information from the Papua-based Institute for Human Rights Study and Advocacy (ESLHAM), in 2004, 'at least 6,000 Papuans from 27 villages took refuge in the jungle, causing 35 people (15 of them children) to die in refugee camps. The whole area was closed off by TNI and no access given to humanitarian workers including the media.'

<sup>16</sup> Human Rights Watch (2007b), pp. 24-25. For more specific details on recent local displacement situations, see the PGGP Report cited above.

In as much as reports on the numbers and conditions of internally displaced persons in Papua remain contested by the Indonesian military, they also highlight the Indonesian government's continued reluctance to grant formal access for international humanitarian and human rights organizations, as well as foreign journalists and diplomats, NGOs and researchers, to enter Papua. Indeed, the Indonesian government, a member of the UN Commission on Human Rights since 2006 and, in 2007, the UN Security Council, has refused official permission to enter Papua to the UN Commission on Human Rights since 1993, and has also persisted to date in denying access to international observers such as Human Rights Watch, as well as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Official permission to enter Papua has also been denied individual researchers and even US Congressman Eni Faleomavaega, whose presence in the province, the Foreign Ministry suggested in July 2007, would 'create riots'.<sup>17</sup> According to a statement from the Jakarta Foreign Correspondents' Club in early 2006, moreover, no foreign journalist had had access to Papua during an 18-month period.<sup>18</sup> Meanwhile, human rights monitors from organizations based in Indonesia, such as ELSHAM, Legal Aid, KontraS, the Catholic Office for Justice and Peace, and other national NGOs, are reportedly 'frequently harassed or intimidated'.<sup>19</sup>

While an issue of wider import and significance, the Indonesian government's efforts at restricting access to Papua spells an especially acute and potentially harmful situation for internally displaced populations. For example, there is evidence of the Indonesian military contesting the numbers of refugees reported by local observers, and citing widely divergent (and smaller) figures in estimating the need for eventual humanitarian assistance. Trikora Military Command spokesman Lt. Col. Imam Santoso, who claimed the number of displaced people facing food shortages was 2,000 not 5,000 as reported by the PGGP, underlined the importance of allowing for independent observers in Papua when he challenged the figures presented by the Pastoral Team thus: 'Are there any photos indicating that? Has anyone seen the refugees?'<sup>20</sup>

Moreover, the very concept of *pengungsi*, used interchangeably to refer to 'refugee' and 'IDP' in Bahasa Indonesia, remains a contested one among Indonesian military and local government officials alike, thus further undermining the recognition of the specific needs of internally displaced persons, and the commensurate rights and guarantees relevant to the protection and assistance of such populations (see further the *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement*). According to Santoso, for example, the thousands of people displaced due to reported 'military and police attacks on Free Papua Movement (OPM) rebels' in Yamo district, Puncak Jaya, 'were *not refugees*, but rather people avoiding the threat from an armed group who had broken the law by killing a soldier.'<sup>21</sup> Yamo district head Philipus Tabuni provided yet another example of how refugees may be 'disappeared' in Indonesian official

---

<sup>17</sup> Human Rights Watch (2007a), pp. 6-7. See also 'Indonesia Bars US Congressman from Papua,' *Jakarta Post*, 3 July 2007.

<sup>18</sup> TAPOL, 'Curbs on Access to Papua Must Be Lifted,' 13 February 2006. <http://tapol.gn.apc.org/press/files/pr060213.htm>

<sup>19</sup> Human Rights Watch (2007a) p. 21. According to numerous reports, local Churches and their affiliates have been the targets of considerable repressive measures from Indonesian security forces, including the forcible occupation by police of the Gereja Kingmi Church Synod office in Jayapura on three separate occasions.

<sup>20</sup> 'Papua Refugees Encouraged to Return Home,' *Jakarta Post*, 2 February 2007.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, italics added.

political discourse, as he reportedly claimed that ‘those fleeing were not classified as refugees, but only as people seeking refuge.’<sup>22</sup>

In the absence of independent observers, including the UNHCR, such statements from civilian and military officials in Papua raise serious questions about the Indonesian government’s failure to recognize its obligations to internally displaced persons under international humanitarian and human rights legal and normative frameworks. That is, any eventual practices of official under-reporting or reclassifying of IDPs, for example, constitute a violation of the *Guiding Principles*, which stipulate that ‘[n]ational authorities have the primary duty and responsibility to provide protection and humanitarian assistance to internally displaced persons within their jurisdiction’ (Principle 3:1, Section I). ‘At a minimum,’ according to the *Guiding Principles*, ‘regardless of circumstances, and without discrimination, competent authorities shall provide internally displaced persons with and ensure safe access to... essential food and potable water; ... basic shelter and housing; ... and ... essential medical services and sanitation’ (Principle 18, Section III). In the case of Papua, moreover, the Indonesian government is ‘under a particular obligation to protect the displacement of indigenous peoples... and other groups with a special dependency and attachment to their lands’ (Principle 9, Section II).

While difficult to confirm, there are also reports indicating further violations of international humanitarian and human rights law due to military operations under way in Papua. For example, the checkpoints, roadblocks, and so-called sweeping operations by the Indonesian military and paramilitary police threaten to undermine the rights to freedom of movement for local populations, including internally displaced persons, as suggested by the following recent account of the situation in and around Mulia, capital of Puncak Jaya in the Central Highlands:

Local indigenous West Papuans live continuously under heavy terror and intimidation because the Indonesian military has isolated them [from food gardens or other help] and because of the military’s harsh control/sweeping.... Every corner of Mulia town and the entry points from Guragi (from the East), Yamo (North), Mepagaluk (West), and Yambi (South) are heavily guarded by military and mobile brigade personnel (Yoman 2007, cited in Elmslie 2007: 12).

In as far as some local populations have also been displaced, the Indonesian government has a particular responsibility to ensure their ‘right to liberty of movement ...to move freely in and out of camps or other settlements... [and] to seek safety in another part of the country’ (Principles 14 and 15, Section III, *Guiding Principles*). There is also some indication that the travel permit system (*surat jalan*) requiring visitors to Papua to report their movements to local military and police has been applied to Indonesian citizens of indigenous Papuan descent in some localities.

As for restrictions on the freedom of movement associated with military operations, they have also been linked to other violations against local populations, including the internally displaced. The report cited above, for example, notes the following practice in Mulia in early 2007:

---

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

Every passing indigenous Papuan was searched thoroughly and their belongings were seized. For example, the military took and kept the Papuans' kerosene, which is important for woodcutting (*ibid.*).

In terms of affected displaced populations, this constitutes a clear violation, as does the reported destruction of their private and community property (e.g., crops, livestock and schools), of the *Guiding Principles*, which states that '[t]he property and possessions of internally displaced persons shall in all circumstances be protected' (Principle 21, Section III).

## **Aims and scope of papers**

This collection of papers provides critical insights into the contested place of Papua and the continuous displacement of Papuans in Indonesian politics and society since the fall of Suharto. It draws on research by established scholars whose work fruitfully straddles interdisciplinary area studies and their respective disciplines of anthropology (Stuart Kirsch), history (Richard Chauvel), and political science (Jacques Bertrand). First presented at the RSC Workshop on Conflict, Violence and Displacement in Papua (October 2006), the revised papers published here point to important dynamics shaping conflict, violence and displacement in Papua to date. In addition, the brief postscript by Liem Soei Liong, founding co-director of Tapol - The Indonesian Human Rights Campaign, recalls coming of age during the campaign to 'liberate West Irian,' a personal experience of wider significance for capturing something of the place of Papua in the Indonesian post-colonial social imaginary of a generation, or more.

Highlighting the importance of political and legal institutions for shaping the nature and direction of centre-periphery relations in Indonesia, Jacques Bertrand examines the far-reaching changes in the Indonesian state due to constitutional amendments and successive acts of legislation since 1998 (see also Bertrand 2004). He argues that, as a result of such changes, the Indonesian state has been transformed into a much more accommodative one compared to the strongly integralist and unitary nature of the state consolidated under the New Order regime, which also saw greater restrictions upon cultural expressions through the educational system or other public fora in Papua compared to other regions. However, in focusing particular attention on the Special Autonomy Law, which took effect in January 2002, Bertrand suggests that, in light of Indonesian history, there are reasons to remain concerned about the nature and direction of political change in Papua, including the implementation of prescribed reforms.

In illuminating contrast to Bertrand's rigorous exploration of changing state institutional frameworks and their political effects in society, Richard Chauvel presents a careful analysis of responses to Indonesian rule and conflict in Papua, focusing on dynamics of displacement and dispossession (see also Chauvel 2005). He argues that displacement, both internal and across the border with Papua New Guinea, serves as a barometer of political tensions and the intensity of military operations in Papua. Chauvel also underlines the significance of a deeper sense of dispossession and marginalization in Papua due to the massive demographic transformation since the 1960s for fueling the conflict with Indonesia. Finally, he turns attention to the importance of the international community in Papuan conceptions of *merdeka*, or independence, with particular emphasis upon the role of the United Nations.

In his contribution to this collection of scholarly papers, Stuart Kirsch offers a critical re-examination of the representations of violence, conflict and displacement in West Papua (see also Kirsch 2006). Examining depictions of ‘perpetual war’ in the highlands in classical anthropology, as well as contemporary practices of so-called ‘extreme tourism,’ he argues that such representations have served to reflect and reproduce political discourses of legitimation on the part of both the Indonesian state and its critics. However, Kirsch also points to the political possibilities for alternative representations of West Papua and its troubled relationship to the Indonesian state, allowing for new interpretations of the concept of *merdeka* as social justice in the post-Suharto era.

In combination, the papers collected here underline the importance of revisiting dominant representations of conflict, violence and displacement in Papua. To that end, the Indonesian government has a responsibility not merely to allow international humanitarian and human rights workers access to affected local areas, but also, crucially, to uphold the rights of internally displaced persons in Papua. To the extent that the Indonesian security forces remain very much part of the problem in Papua, as indicated by reports of ongoing military campaigns and abuses against civilian populations, including IDPs, it is also imperative that international allies of the government in Jakarta recognize their complicity in lending uncritical support to Indonesia, not least in matters of security.<sup>23</sup>

## References

- Bertrand, Jacques. 2004. *Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict in Indonesia*. Cambridge University Press.
- Blaskett, Beverley. 1989. ‘Papua New Guinea - Indonesia Relations: A New Perspective on the Border Conflict’ (Ph.D. dissertation, Australian National University, unpublished).
- Chauvel, Richard. 2005. *Constructing Papuan Nationalism: History, Ethnicity, and Adaptation*. East-West Center Washington: Policy Series 14, January.
- Chauvel, Richard and Ikrar Nusa Bhakti. 2004. *The Papua Conflict: Jakarta’s Perceptions and Policies*. East-West Center Washington: Policy Studies 5.
- Council on Foreign Relations. 2006. *Peace in Papua: Widening a Window of Opportunity*. Council on Foreign Relations, Washington DC. April.
- Elmslie, Jim with Peter King and Jake Lynch. 2007. *Blundering In? The Australia-Indonesia Security Treaty and the Humanitarian Crisis in West Papua*. University of Sydney: Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, March.
- Glazebrook, Diana. 2004. “‘If I Stay Here There is Nothing Yet If I Return I Do Not Know If I Will Be Safe’”: West Papuan Refugee Responses to Papua New Guinea Asylum Policy 1998-2003,’ *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 17(2): 205-221.
- Global Witness. 2005. *Paying for Protection: The Freeport Mine and the Indonesian Security Forces*. London: Global Witness, July.
- Human Rights Watch. 2007a. *Indonesia—Protest and Punishment: Political Prisoners in Papua*. Human Rights Watch 19(4) (February).

---

<sup>23</sup> For discussions of recent such support, see, for example, Elmslie (2007) on the November 2006 Australian-Indonesia Security Treaty, and Kendal (2007).

- Human Rights Watch. 2007b. *Indonesia—Out of Sight: Endemic Abuse and Impunity in Papua's Central Highlands*. Human Rights Watch 19(10) (July).
- International Crisis Group. 2007. *Indonesian Papua: A Local Perspective on the Conflict*. Jakarta/Brussels: ICG Asia Briefing No 66, 19 July.
- International Crisis Group. 2006. *Papua: Answers to Frequently Asked Questions*. Jakarta/Brussels: ICG Asia Briefing No 53, 5 September.
- International Crisis Group. 2003. *Dividing Papua: How Not To Do It*. Jakarta/Brussels: ICG Asia Briefing No. 24, 9 April.
- Jamieson, Matthew. 2007. 'West Papua: Indonesian Military Colonel Siagian, Indicted for Crimes Against Humanity, Rallies Militias in West Papua,' Institute for Papuan Advocacy and Human Rights, 26 July 2007. [http://www.infopapua.org/artman/publish/article\\_1489.shtml](http://www.infopapua.org/artman/publish/article_1489.shtml).
- Kendal, Elizabeth. 2007. 'Papua, Indonesia, the TNI and the USA,' *Journal Chretien*, 2 March. <http://www.spcm.org/Journal/spip.php?article7011>.
- Kirsch, Stuart. 2006. *Reverse Anthropology: Indigenous Analysis of Social and Environmental Relations in New Guinea*. Stanford University Press.
- Leith, Denise. 2003. *The Politics of Power: Freeport in Suharto's Indonesia*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- May, R.J. (editor) (1986). *Between Two Nations: The Indonesian-Papua New Guinea Border and West Papuan Nationalism*. Bathurst: Robert Brown Associates.
- McGibbon, Rodd. 2004. *Plural Society in Peril: Migration, Economic Change, and the Papua Conflict*. East-West Center Washington: Policy Studies 13.
- Mote, Octavianus and Danilyn Rutherford. 2001. 'From Irian Jaya to Papua: The Limits of Primordialism in Indonesia's Troubled East,' *Indonesia* 72 (October): pp. 115-140.
- Osborne, Robin. 1985. *Indonesia's Secret War: The Guerrilla Struggle in Irian Jaya*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin.
- Pastoral Team of the Ecumenical Council of Papuan Churches. 2007. *Report on the Situation in Mulia Based on a Visit by the Pastoral Team of the Ecumenical Council of Papuan Churches (PGGP)*. Jayapura, 29 January.
- Rutherford, Danilyn. 1999. 'Waiting for the End in Biak: Violence, Order, and a Flag Raising,' *Indonesia*, 67(April).
- Salford, John. 2003. *The United Nations and the Indonesian Takeover of Papua, 1962-1989: The Anatomy of Betrayal*. London: Routledge.
- TAPOL - The Indonesian Human Rights Campaign. 2005. *Tapol Briefing on the Current Situation in West Papua*. 14 March. <http://tapol.gn.apc.org/reports/r050315wpbriefing.htm>
- UNHCR, 2006. 'Refugee Sites on the Border between Papua New Guinea and Indonesia (As of March 2006),' <http://www.unhcr.org/publ/PUBL/4416888c0.pdf>.
- Yoman, Socrates Sofyan (Rev.). 2007. *Genocide, Military Operations, and Islamization under Special Autonomy in West Papua*. Jayapura, March.

## **Papuan and Indonesian nationalisms: can they be reconciled?**

*Jacques Bertrand, Department of Political Science, University of Toronto*

Since 1998, Indonesia's institutions have been gradually transformed to accommodate ethnic tensions. After the fall of the authoritarian regime of President Suharto, which lasted more than thirty years, the constitution was amended and new laws were passed to democratize Indonesia's political system. As part of this democratization, new measures were taken to increase the flexibility of the political system to accommodate pressures in favour of decentralization, devolution of power, and accommodation of demands from ethnonationalist groups in East Timor, Aceh, and Papua.<sup>1</sup>

Yet, these changes have occurred against the backdrop of a long history that emphasized strong, integrationist strategies. Indonesian nationalism, which underlay the creation of the Indonesian state, was premised on building a single nation from the diverse peoples of the former Dutch East Indies. The Constitution of 1945, which was drafted quickly to declare independence as the Japanese retreated in defeat, embodied the concept of a single nation and gave little recognition to ethnic diversity. Even more so, this constitution was inspired by 'organicist' ideas that espoused strong centralized and integrative mechanisms to tie together state and society. This 'integralist state' became the basis of Indonesia's authoritarian state, as the Constitution of 1945 was readopted in the late 1950s, and was kept after the military take-over of 1965, which began the New Order regime of President Suharto. When the regime crumbled in 1998, the 1945 constitution was again preserved, while amendments and legislation intended to introduce accommodation and democratic principles were adopted.

The Special Autonomy Law of 2001 (no. 21, 2001) was designed to respond to Papuan demands for self-determination. Since Papua was integrated with Indonesia in 1969, an ethnonationalist movement has sought independence from the Indonesian state. When the New Order regime collapsed, a large civilian movement emerged and made strong demands in favour of independence. The armed movement, the Free Papua Movement, continued some of its activities but allowed the civilian movement to take precedence as it garnered vast support among the Papuan population. The Indonesian government has responded with successive pieces of legislation to appease demands for independence and accommodate Papuan demands. After the failure of regional autonomy laws to appease Papuan demands, the Special Autonomy law was adopted. It went into effect in January 2002.

How successful has been this new law for accommodating ethnonationalist demands and reducing conflict? In light of Indonesia's history, there are some reasons to be sceptical. The Special Autonomy law was implemented against the objections of many Papuan leaders who made stronger demands for accommodation and redress of historical grievances. Furthermore, there have been many complaints at the lack of proper implementation of the legislation.

These tensions should not be surprising in light of Indonesia's history. The latest trend toward decentralization, devolution and accommodation is near revolutionary. Although no

---

<sup>1</sup> I use the term 'Papua' since it refers to the current name of the province of Indonesia. When referring to the territory prior to 1969, I use the term 'West New Guinea' as it was officially known at the time. My use of the term does not express any particular opinion on the political status of the territory.

new constitution was adopted and no sudden break was made with the past, constitutional amendments and successive legislation have very significantly transformed the Indonesian state into a much more accommodative one, whereas historically it was very strongly integrationist. The spirit of the Indonesian Constitution and the basis of some of its institutions, however, continue to support such an integrationist approach. Furthermore, in practice, there are strong norms of behaviour that have consistently pulled the Indonesian political elite in the direction of supporting strong measures to preserve national unity, instead of accommodating diversity. These tendencies have not disappeared and may make some of the institutional accommodation meaningless, if weaknesses are exploited.

The paper examines the specific provisions of the Special Autonomy Law of 2001, in relation to the Indonesian Constitution and other laws relevant to Papua. There are three reasons why such an analysis can be useful to understand current dynamics of conflict in Papua. First, the content and language of the Special Autonomy Law and, most importantly, its legal clout in relation to other legislation reveal the Indonesian perspective on the limits of challenges to Indonesia's national identity and unity. As a result, it allows for an assessment of the degree to which the Indonesian state is likely to accommodate Papuan aspirations. Second, despite the weaknesses in the application of the rule of law in Indonesia, legal instruments provide the Indonesian state with tangible means of restricting Papuan mobilization in favour of independence but they also open up opportunities for Papuans to seek greater representation, resources, and autonomy from the Indonesian state. The proper implementation of these laws, or failure to respect them, can reveal ulterior intentions or strategic manipulation of these instruments but the starting point remains the compromises and negotiated outcomes written in law. Even at the level of rhetoric, they can close off or open up opportunities to advance Papuan interests. Third, negotiation and compromise are the most likely means of obtaining concessions that can accommodate ethnonationalist demands in Papua. To the extent that legislation reflects these compromises, the substance, interpretation and implementation of laws for Papua represent a promising, although not exclusive, approach to secure gains in a gradualist manner.

### **The Indonesian state: accommodationist or integrationist?**

The literature on ethnic conflict and institutional design has traditionally been separated between accommodationist and integrationist supporters (McGarry and O'Leary 1993). Arguments in favour of integrationist strategies usually emphasize the need to build strong central states, provide rights to individuals and protect minorities through the implementation of such a regime of rights and democratic representation. Under such institutional designs, groups have incentives to seek collaboration across ethnic lines, thereby reducing the tendency to use ethnicity as a source of political mobilization (Horowitz 1985; 1989). Accommodationists, however, argue that stability is most likely to be reached when ethnic minorities are given institutional means of advancing their interests. Various institutional schemes allow ethnic groups to be represented and to advance their group interests through formal institutional channels. Some of these include forms of power sharing at the centre (Lijphart 1969) and federalism.

One way of accommodating ethnic diversity is 'multination federalism.' In this kind of institutional structure, levels of government represent territorially-based ethnic groups. As an accommodation strategy, units of the federation tend to coincide with the territorial homeland of ethnic groups (Stepan 1999, 2001).

In many cases, such accommodation is accomplished through asymmetric federalism, or federacy, which entails that not all the territory of the state is federalized, or that units do not receive equal powers. Again, these instruments can be used either as accommodative tools, or as mixed instruments of integration and accommodation. For instance, while Spain recognizes regional autonomy, and has allowed all regions to claim such autonomy, it has also attempted to recognize ‘historical regions’ that are entitled in principle to receive more devolution of power in order to protect and represent ethnic communities—namely the Basques and the Catalans. At the same time, by not calling itself a federation and by not implementing a formal federal system, Spain is presented constitutionally as a unitary state. Canada, on the other hand, has been relatively inflexible despite being a federal state. While it recognizes and enshrines representation for the Québécois—and in this sense is accommodative—at the same time the principle of asymmetric federalism has been repeatedly rejected by other provinces of the federation. In this respect, further representation or devolution of power to Québec is constrained by the requirement that other provinces receive the same conditions.

Federacies, or territorial autonomy, are probably the most accommodative of territorially based ethnic groups. In those situations, decentralization and devolution of power is designed to specifically address the demands of a particular ethnic group. The Philippines created an Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao with specific powers to accommodate Muslims in the Southern Philippines while retaining essentially a unitary state in the rest of the country. Autonomy agreements tend to be drafted after negotiations between ethnic groups and the central state, rather than arising out of constitutional negotiations involving a large number of stakeholders, such as in the case of federal states.

Indonesia raises interesting questions since it has elements both of integrative and accommodative solutions. It is primarily a unitary state based on a historical development of a unique, Indonesian nation. At the same time, there are over fifty different ethnic groups. While most of these groups have never mobilized along ethnic lines, despite a clear sense of identity and belonging to their distinctive ethnic groups, others have repeatedly fought for self-determination. Indonesia’s brief experience with federalism left its political elite loathe to resurrect it as an accommodative model. Instead, territorial autonomy has been used in response to demands made by Acehnese and Papuans.

Such concessions on autonomy, however, were extended against the backdrop of a long history of integrative practices. Born out of a strong Indonesian nationalist movement, the Indonesian Republic was conceived as a unitary state to resist disintegrative tendencies. Faced with several challenges to the unitary state in the first decade after independence, the integrative measures were reinforced, rather than relaxed. When concessions were made to give recognition or representation to ethnic groups, they were undermined in practice in order to strengthen the power of the central state (Bertrand 2004, chap. 3)

The Constitution of 1945 reflected ideas emerging out of Indonesian nationalism, which grew out of an emerging consciousness of shared common experience under Dutch colonial rule. As the Dutch educated peoples from various areas of the archipelago to serve in its colonial bureaucracy, it also supported the spread and development of the Malay *lingua franca*. Malay provided a common language of commerce and communication that created a bond, along with Islam, between elites from various areas of the archipelago. At the same time, the shared experiences, common references, postings in various areas to serve the

colonial administration, strengthened a sense of common belonging among the rising local elite (Anderson 1983, chap. 7).

The subsequent growth and expansion of the movement revolved around a common language, organization, and eventually a 'revolution'. The adoption of Malay, renamed Indonesian, as the official language of the movement in 1921 gave a cultural character that distinguished the new Indonesian elite from the colonial rulers, while creating a stronger basis for a common bond. Language acquired this particular character where Islam failed, in large part because the Christian areas of the archipelago would subsequently be reluctant to join the movement. Sukarno was very much aware of the need to underplay Islam as a common bond in order to gain support from Christian areas, where he had spent some significant amount of time (Boland 1971: 27-35).

The nationalist movement became most strongly organized by the Indonesian Nationalist Party. Sukarno gained ascendancy as the leader of the nationalist movement and was particularly skilful at bridging various streams of nationalist groups, including Islamists and Communists who shared in the struggle against colonial rule but who also fought for states based on alternative ideologies. The Japanese occupation gave support to the Nationalist Party by preparing it to lead an independent government. Furthermore, by training an Indonesian militia, the Japanese laid the basis for the formation of the Indonesian army, which would fight the returning Dutch after the Japanese defeat in 1945. As a result, the National Party was in the best position to broker an agreement between various parties at the time of the declaration of independence and adoption of the 1945 Constitution.

The 1945 Constitution, written in haste in the dying days of the Japanese occupation, laid the basis for the current state of Indonesia. Supomo, its main architect, advocated the adoption of *integralism* or organicism, 'a theory in which the state was committed not to individual rights or particular classes but to society conceived as an organic whole' (Bourchier 1997: 161). This principle, highly influenced by totalitarian ideas and the examples of Japanese imperialism and the Third Reich, guided the writing of the Constitution. Apart from a few exceptions, such as article 28 that guarantees the freedom of association and expression, the Constitution rejected individual protections as well as checks on the executive. It created the basis for a strong presidency and for conceptualizing the institutional framework of the state as a single, organic whole, with the authority to create strong linkages to society (Bourchier 1997: 161-162).

The state's basic structures reflected this strong role of the executive and an organic whole. The original Constitution of 1945 states that Indonesia is a unitary state, and a Republic. Ultimate power is vested in the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR), which is composed of members of the People's Representative Assembly (the legislature), as well as representatives from regions and *functional groups*. The idea of representing functional groups vested the Assembly with the principle of inclusiveness of society as a whole within the highest body of the state (*Undang-undang Dasar*, 1945, art. 1, 2 and 4). The president, who is selected by the MPR, is vested with executive power. At the same time, he is not subjected to any responsibilities relative to the legislature, except with respect to declaring war or negotiating treaties with other states, where the legislature must be consulted (art. 11). Article 12 gives the President the powers to declare states of emergency. Article 21 requires that the President approve all laws passed by the legislature and gives ultimate veto to the President. Article 22 gives the President the power to pass regulations to replace laws in exceptional circumstances, as long as the legislature subsequently approves.

Regarding the administrative and political divisions of the state, article 18 of the Constitution states that the divisions will follow the logic of administrative hierarchy (*susunan pemerintahan*), while keeping in mind the principles of deliberation (*musyawarah*) in the governmental system, as well as rights of consultation in accord with regional specificities. In its annotations, article 18 clearly states that no subdivisions will be ‘states’ since Indonesia is unitary. The rest of the constitution did not mention any special representation for regions or ethnic groups. As a result, the principle of unity was clearly enshrined above any accommodation of Indonesia’s ethnically diverse communities.

The ‘revolution’ of 1945 to 1949 reinforced the nationalist credo of unity. When the Dutch returned in 1945, they proceeded to divide various regions in order to undermine the growing strength of the Republic. States were created to correspond to large ethnic groups—such as Pasundan in West Java—with the intent of creating an alternative basis to the nationalist appeal of the Indonesian Republic. By 1949, a federation was proposed that would join the Republic and these federated states into a United States of Indonesia. This federation, however, lasted only nine months before it was abandoned and a new Constitution was adopted. This latest version readopted the principle of the unitary state under a Republic and abandoned the idea of a federation.

There were two important lasting effects of the Revolution with respect to enshrining the idea of a unitary state. First, federalism was definitely rejected as a Dutch strategy to divide Indonesians and undermine the Republic. In subsequent years, federalism was therefore always viewed as divisive and dangerous. The Republican ideal and the unitary state, on the other hand, were repeatedly seen as the most adequate institutional expression of the unity of the Indonesian nation, and therefore have been retained to this day. A second effect of the Revolution was the organizational consolidation of nationalist forces. When the Dutch withdrew, the government of the Republic, which was led by the Nationalist Party with Sukarno at its helm, became the uncontested leader of the new unified Indonesia. Although requiring compromise and coalition governments with other parties, the Nationalist Party and Sukarno had nevertheless gained ascendancy, along with their vision of Indonesia. The speed with which Dutch-created states disbanded and joined the Republic solidified this strength (Bertrand 2004: 189). In addition, the armed forces gained strong support among the population for their role as a revolutionary force, thereby giving them an aura of legitimate defenders of the state, which would be subsequently used to justify their role in politics and their control of the polity under the New Order.

The Constitution of 1945 was readopted in 1959, when Sukarno abandoned liberal democracy in favour of Guided Democracy. During the 1950s, successive governments faced a series of economic and political crises that led to stalemate and instability. A Constituent Assembly, formed in the aftermath of the 1955 elections, failed to agree on the basis of the state. There were significant divergences in particular between nationalists favouring Pancasila as the basis of the state, and Islamists seeking to create an Islamic state. Pancasila had been developed by Sukarno at the time of drafting the 1945 Constitution in order to affirm five basic principles for the new Republic. The most important principle was ‘Belief in (one) God’, which was meant to acknowledge the importance of religion in Indonesia without adopting Islam as a religion of state. The government also faced regional crises in Sulawesi and Sumatra, where disgruntled regional elites contested the increasing centralization of power in Jakarta. Faced with these successive crises, Sukarno decreed a return to the

Constitution of 1945 and to Pancasila. With a return to strong executive power in the hands of the President, he would steer the country in an authoritarian direction.

The creation of the New Order regime in 1965 sealed the authoritarian future of the Indonesian state. General Suharto, who effectively assumed power in 1965 before being officially selected as President in 1967, reaffirmed the Constitution of 1945 and Pancasila. By eliminating the Communist party, which had gained increasing power in the early 1960s, the armed forces gained ultimate supremacy. The Constitution of 1945 allowed the regime to consolidate the power of the President and the armed forces, while appearing to follow constitutional processes. The Constitution's basic framework had provided the President with strong powers and with responsibility only to the People's Consultative Assembly. Since exact representation in the Assembly was to be determined by law, it was relatively easy for Suharto to manipulate legislation in such a way as to ensure that members of the armed forces were strongly represented, and regional as well as functional group members' selection could be influenced by the President. Through legislative and extra-institutional means, the President could also control membership in the legislature. As a result, the executive reached ultimate power in accordance with the Constitution of 1945.

The spirit of the Constitution and its unitary principles guided the regime's responses to regional challenges. The regional law of 1974 established the framework for regional representation within the state. The law clearly placed provinces and regencies/municipalities under the authority of the central government. Governors (provincial heads) and bupati (regency heads) obtained powers that were devolved from the central government. They held dual responsibilities of representing their constituencies while also being the implementing arm of the government at the provincial and regency levels. They were unelected officials who were selected by regional and provincial assemblies, with the approval of the Ministry of Interior and the President. Fiscally, all revenues, except for minor taxes, were collected by the central government before budget allocations were redistributed to provinces and regencies. Only relatively small portions of total revenue were actually redistributed to lower levels of government, while the central government reserved the larger part to allocate directly through various development programs and presidential initiatives.

As a result, the New Order state created a whole infrastructure that strengthened the integralist and unitary nature of the state. In this framework, there was no space for regional differences or for accommodation of ethnic groups. In fact, the regime went even further with its Village Law of 1979 to attempt a full homogenization of village government and administration across the archipelago, in spite of large variance in village governance found across regions. The educational system was homogenized and a top-down curriculum was adopted with very little space for regional differences, thereby building a unique narrative of the country's history to inculcate a sense of a single Indonesian nation. Local languages could be used only in the first few years of primary school, in selected regions, whereas Indonesian was subsequently the only language for all levels of education. Cultural differences were acknowledged only with respect to material culture that could be displayed in museums, in colourful dress for weddings, or to promote tourism, as long as they did not seep into the realm of politics, government and administration (Bertrand 2003; Pemberton 1994).

It is no surprise that the New Order regime adopted such an approach when it integrated Papua and East Timor to the Republic. Sukarno had abandoned the claim to West New Guinea in negotiations with the Dutch, but not without having made forceful arguments for its inclusion within Indonesia. Despite a colonial administration and a history that was

largely separate from that of the rest of the Dutch East Indies, West New Guinea was seen by Sukarno as belonging within an independent Indonesia. Following the same logic, the Suharto regime pursued the issue and was ready to use armed intervention to forcibly integrate it if necessary. Negotiations with the United Nations and the Dutch eventually led to the cession of West New Guinea to Indonesia, and later to the Act of Free Choice in 1969 that led to its official integration with United Nations approval. The Act of Free Choice was widely contested on the basis of its process, which was undemocratic and where representatives were pressured into choosing integration to Indonesia.

After its integration, West New Guinea, renamed Irian Jaya, was restructured to conform to Indonesia's political and administrative structure. It obtained the status of province and its territory was subdivided into regencies, districts and villages, as specified in the Regional Law of 1974. There were no modifications made to account for the different socio-economic, political and cultural differences that distinguished the area from the rest of Indonesia. A parallel military command structure was also created, which paralleled the internal security structure across the archipelago.

This view was further reinforced by strong integrationist policies. Even more strongly than in other regions, the government imposed stringent restrictions on cultural expression through the educational system or other public fora. Indonesian was adopted as the sole language of education, the national curriculum was readily imposed on Papuans with basically no local content, and even local songs were banned in some instances. Political expression such as the raising of the Morning Star flag was strongly repressed, as well as any indication of calls to revisit the integration of West Irian, or to discuss alternative political representation (Bertrand 2004: 151-153).

The application of such homogenizing structures fitted comfortably with the unitary view of the state, the strong Indonesian nationalist principle underlying the regime, as well as its integralist orientation. For the Indonesian government, the state represented the successful struggle of all peoples of the archipelago against Dutch colonial rulers, and therefore by extension Papuans were simply late-comers to this Indonesian family. Once integrated, they would gain a sense of loyalty to the Indonesian nation and would create linkages with other groups who shared a similar colonial experience.

Against this backdrop, the changes after 1998 have been near revolutionary. The Constitution of 1945 was amended to recognize regional differences and enshrine principles of autonomy. New laws created autonomous regions and decentralized fiscal power to these autonomous entities. Special autonomy laws were passed to accommodate stronger demands from Aceh and Papua, while East Timor was allowed to hold a referendum on independence and secede from Indonesia. These measures constituted a radical turn in Indonesia over less than a decade, thereby reversing the strong, centralizing tendencies of the Indonesian state over the previous fifty years.

The Constitution of 1945 was preserved but it has now included several clauses that allow for regional differences and autonomy. Article 18 was modified and expanded to specify that provinces, regencies and municipalities (the basic regional units) would exercise their duties 'in accordance with principles of autonomy.' The regional units (provinces and regencies) were to exercise wide-ranging autonomy in all realms except those that, by law, were specified to be within the jurisdiction of the central government. The rest of the article also specifies the need to respect the 'diversity of regions' in adopting laws to regulate regional administration. A further clause 'respects units of regional authorities that are special

and distinct.’ Under these conditions, the Constitution could allow for Special Autonomy provisions, such as those adopted for Papua and Aceh (*Undang-undang dasar*, amended).

In addition, regions are now represented in a separate legislative chamber, the Regional Representative Council (DPD). Initially only represented at the People’s Consultative Assembly, with a number of designated seats alongside functional groups and members of the People’s Representative Assembly (DPR), the third amendment to the 1945 Constitution gave regions their own assembly, thereby granting a quasi-accommodation of ethnic differences in as much as they coincide to some extent with regional units. Each province obtained the same number of representatives despite large variations in population. The DPD was given powers to propose legislation to the DPR, as well as to participate in the discussion of bills and oversee the implementation of laws on issues relating to regions specifically, or relating to region-centre relations, such as regional autonomy, the management of natural resources, the redrawing of regional boundaries, the financial balance between central and regional governments, as well as taxation, education, and religion as it relates to provinces. The DPD was not provided with full legislative powers, in sum, but mainly created as a consultative body which could also take initiatives to suggest legislation or provide criticism of the implementation of certain laws within their jurisdiction.

These Constitutional changes were implemented alongside legislation that significantly altered the architecture of state-regional relations. Laws no. 22 and no. 25, 1999 established new frameworks for regional autonomy and fiscal decentralization. They were subsequently replaced by Laws no. 32 and no. 33, 2004 respectively. These laws gave wide-ranging autonomy to regional units which included provinces and regencies. The earlier laws had only provided wide-ranging autonomy to regencies, while keeping provinces as administrative arms of the central government because of fears that more power to provinces might eventually fuel secessionist activities. In the end, the central government gave in to pressures from provinces and allowed the later laws to decentralize powers to the provincial as well as the regency level. Regions therefore obtained powers in all jurisdictions except foreign policy, defense, security, justice, monetary and fiscal policy, as well as religion. The law remained vague, however, on the jurisdictional divisions between provincial and district levels, dividing up powers between mandatory and optional administrative areas. For mandatory areas, the central government plays an important role in specifying minimal standards across different regions but there is little distinction between obligations under provincial and regency jurisdictions (art. 10-14). Law no. 33, 2004 and subsequent government regulations provided a very significant devolution of fiscal resources to provinces and districts, as well as revenues from the exploitation of natural resources.

Alternative legislation aimed at accommodating the more forceful demands of East Timorese, Acehnese and Papuan ethnonationalists. Initially, the Habibie administration had hoped that its autonomy laws would alleviate some of the grievances in these regions but, as mobilization escalated in all three areas, alternative solutions were sought. For East Timor, Habibie offered a referendum that eventually led to the territory’s secession. For Aceh, several laws were passed. Initially, the Habibie government offered Islamic law but, again, to no avail as violent conflict continued to deepen. Subsequently, a Special Autonomy law was adopted, to devolve more powers to the provincial level and allow more fiscal resources to be retained locally. Again, in the face of continued conflict, the law was not implemented and, instead, a military emergency administration was formed. Only later, in 2006, after the devastating effects of the December 2005 tsunami and signs that the Free Aceh Movement was losing strength, did the two parties reach a peace agreement that led to new legislation on

Aceh's administration, designed to implement the Helsinki accord of February 2006. In the case of Papua, a Special Autonomy Law was also passed in 2001, which is currently in effect.

In less than a decade, the Indonesian government proceeded to amend the Constitution and pass a set of laws that dramatically shifted the balance of power between the central government and regions. The Constitution now recognized the importance of regions and their diverse character, and empowered them in principle by providing a new institution to represent regions in the central government while giving autonomy to lower levels of administration. With more resources and more authority, the more than 300 regencies could tailor their administrations to the distinct needs of their varied localities, with much greater independence from central government directives. Furthermore, the central government recognized the distinct character of particular regions and adopted legislation that was tailored to the particular needs of these regions. On paper, it appeared that the Indonesian state had moved rapidly from a highly centralizing, homogenizing state to a decentralized one that allowed for asymmetrical accommodation of particular groups. Would this be sufficient to accommodate Papuan demands? Do these changes alter sufficiently the Indonesian state's perspective on ethnonationalist demands to provide an acceptable arrangement for Papuans? The next section offers analysis of these questions.

### **Special Autonomy: an ambiguous accommodation of Papuan demands**

Against the backdrop of the significant changes in relations between the central government and its regions, the Special Autonomy Law of 2001 appears as a strong initiative to accommodate Papuan demands and can be interpreted as one of many signs that the Indonesian government has taken a turn toward accommodationist rather than integrationist strategies toward ethnic conflict. The Law extends many new areas of authority, large amounts of fiscal resources, much greater control over the region's natural resources, as well as new institutions to recognize the specific traditions and customs of Papuans.

At the same time, there are two sets of reasons to be cautious about these effects of the Special Autonomy Law. First, from an institutionalist analysis, when we take a closer look at the Constitutional Amendments and the Special Autonomy Law, it is not entirely clear that Papuans have gained irreversible and secure authority to manage their affairs. Although autonomy provides wide new areas of administrative and political authority, it is far from constituting a federacy between Papua and Indonesia, if we take federacy to imply constitutionally guaranteed divisions of power between the federated unit and the unitary state. Furthermore, the Indonesian state continues to be unitary but, more importantly, the Constitution preserves powers for the central government that can override powers of the autonomous Papuan government. Second, in its implementation of the law and subsequent actions toward the province, the central government has continued to display evidence that it is still driven by its history as a strong, central state that represents the unity of the Indonesian nation over and above regional differences.

The Special Autonomy Law of 2001 provided, on paper, a large number of new powers for Papuans. It provided autonomy at the provincial level, whereby the Papuan government obtained jurisdiction over all matters except foreign policy, defence, monetary and fiscal policy, religion, and justice. In addition to the Papuan legislature, the Papuan People's Representative Assembly (DPRP), a new assembly was also created. The Papuan People's Assembly (Majelis Rakyat Papua, MRP) was meant to represent *indigenous* Papuan

groups and included local customary groups, as well as religious and women's groups. It was given the mandate of promoting and protecting the rights and customs of Papuan people. It was also given powers of consultation and assent over candidates for the position of governor and over decisions and regulations relating to the basic rights of Papuans. Finally, the law provided for the creation of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission to investigate the process of Papua's integration to Indonesia, with the objective of reconciling the Papuan people to the Indonesian state and preserving its unity.

In fiscal matters, the law provided large new revenues for the province. The most important source of revenue was from the exploitation of natural resources, particularly mining. Papua was to receive 80% from mining, forestry and fisheries, and 70% from oil and gas exploitation. In addition, a greater proportion of tax revenues were to accrue to the province (Bertrand 2004: 206-207).<sup>2</sup>

Overall, the Special Autonomy Law has provided unprecedented accommodation of Papuan demands. In addition to acknowledging the need to revisit the process of integration to Indonesia, it also gave large powers, wide-ranging autonomy, and fiscal resources to the Papuan government. It also created unique institutions to represent various Papuan groups, in the form of the MRP.

At the same time, there were no guarantees that Special Autonomy could not be undermined by the Indonesian state, which had historically favoured the empowerment of the central government over the regions, as well as taking strong measures to preserve national unity. When comparing the jurisdictions granted under Special Autonomy and the amended Constitution, there are several clauses that could undermine the new powers obtained for Papua.

First, internally to the Special Autonomy Law, there are a number of areas of ambiguity. Most importantly, the distinct roles of the DPRD and the MRP are not entirely specified. One important difference between the DPRD and the MRP is that the former represents all the people living in Papua, therefore including migrants from other regions who constitute a significant portion of the population. The MRP, however, more specifically represents the Papuans, through various local groups. At the same time, the process by which the MRP can review legislation affecting their rights is not entirely clear. Aside from being able to voice and formally contest legislation or regulations that infringe on Papuan rights or customs, there are no legal mechanisms by which these measures can be halted. There are significant risks that the MRP can become a powerless body, particularly since representatives in the DPRD can claim to be equal representatives of the Papuan people and the DPRD has legislative powers, whereas the MRP has only restricted rights of consultation and approval on issues related to native rights and only in relation to special regulations for implementation of the Special Autonomy Law. No such approval is required for normal legislation and regulations of the DPRD. As of October 2006, only one regulation had been passed to implement the Special Autonomy Law, whereas it was estimated that at least 24 were required in order to specify necessary details for the implementation of the Law. One of the reasons for

---

<sup>2</sup> Law no. 33, 2004 gave similar percentages to regions for mining, fisheries, and forestry, but less for oil and gas (15.5% and 30.5% respectively). Law no. 33, 2004 and subsequent regulations, however, were much more specific about fiscal categories, their definition, and precise methods of redistribution than the Special Autonomy Law for Papua.

the delay was the ambiguity in the division of roles between the MRP and DPRP (Sinar Harapan, October 4, 2006).

The Governor, as head of the Papuan administration, also maintains an ambiguous role. Article 14 of the Law lists some of the Governor's tasks as leader of the Papuan province, including enforcing and implementing statutory regulations, improving the standard of living of Papuans, maintaining peace and order, and submitting bills to the DPRD. However, two of the clauses specify the roles of upholding the Constitution of 1945 and maintaining the integrity of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. Article 15 spells out obligations as representative of the Government (i.e. the central government), that includes 'to socialize the national policies and facilitate the enforcement of statutory regulations in the Papua Province,' as well as 'to foster harmonious relations between the Government and the Regional Government and among the Regional Governments to establish the integrity of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia.' These clauses imply a responsibility not only to the local population and the DPRD but also to the central government, and an obligation to ensure that central government policies are well implemented in Papua. This dual role can undermine the Papuan government's actual ability to serve as representative of Papuan interests, and gives the central government some legal leverage to pressure the Governor to respond positively to its policies, particularly since the President has the power to remove the Governor from his position.

Security forces are not subjected to the authority of the Papuan government. Article 48 of the Special Autonomy Law stipulates that the Papuan police is a part of the State Police of the Republic of Indonesia. The Governor of the province is consulted with respect to the nomination of the Head of the Papua police, and with respect to policies in the province. However, the Head of the Papua police is responsible to the State Police, and not to the provincial government. Furthermore, the dismissal of the Head of the Papua police is the power solely of the Head of the State Police of the Republic. There are no provisions in the Law for consultation with any of the executive or legislative branches of the Papuan government with respect to the policies or operations of the Indonesian military in Papua. As a result, the Papuan government has little leverage over security operations involving either the police or the military in the province, which could be subjected to abuses and could undermine its effective authority.

In comparison to other laws, the language and level of details of the Special Autonomy Law for Papua is weak. Laws no. 32 and 33, 2004 very significantly revised the original laws of 1999, with a view of making them more specific and more detailed. In particular, the decentralization of revenues and fiscal resources was defined much more precisely. Along with further specifications in subsequent regulations, the law provided clear definitions of categories, mechanisms of allocation, and clear specifications of the means of calculating percentages for various levels of government. The Law on Aceh (2006) is a much more extensive law that covers a much broader range of social and political issues but, more importantly, spells out in much greater detail and more precise language the responsibilities and duties of various branches of government. As a result, there are much fewer ambiguities that could be subsequently interpreted to undermine regional powers.

Finally, several articles in the Law, as well as several of the clauses in the preamble, stress the integrity of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. It provides limitations as well as active obligations to preserve the integrity of the Unitary State. These limitations could be interpreted as simply an assumption that no actions should be taken to violate the

unity of the state. However, it can have wide ranging implications since proposals to hold referenda, or even consultations on possible secession, could be construed as violating the law. The Law was clearly designed to prevent such political actions from being taken. In the original draft that had been proposed by a special committee of Papuans, which included the Governor, a clause had been included to allow for a referendum on independence to be held if the Special Autonomy Law was deemed to have failed to reach its objectives. However, such a possibility was rejected and the language of the Law strongly prevents any official discussion or consultation on such a possibility.

A second set of weaknesses relates to the relationship between the Special Autonomy Law and the Constitution. Several clauses in the Constitution make it possible to undermine the Special Autonomy Law or to render it ineffective. First and foremost, because the Special Autonomy Law was promulgated by Parliament, it could as easily be changed or revoked by parliament as well, without any Constitutional constraints. As specified above, article 18 of the Constitution merely enshrines vague principles of wide-ranging autonomy and provisions to respect the diversity of regions without specifying any special rights for particular regions. Article 77 of the Law allows proposals for amendments to the Law to be made by either the DPRP or the MRP to the national parliament or the central government but there are no provisions for consulting these bodies when the national parliament decides to amend or revoke the Law. As a result, there are no Constitutional restrictions on the central government to change the status of the province, its autonomy, or the various concessions that have been made. In this sense, it could not be perceived as a true federacy.

In terms of security matters, which have already been mentioned, there is a Constitutional clause that can over-ride the Special Autonomy Law in times of crisis. Article 12 of the Constitution, which was preserved from the original Constitution of 1945, gives the President emergency powers. Under these provisions, the President could suspend the Special Autonomy Law, as was done in Aceh in 2003 under a military emergency that was declared by President Megawati. Furthermore, the armed forces can pursue operations in the province in order to preserve national security without constraints.

Despite its various amendments that appear to have shed the centralist past and decentralized the polity, there are number of clauses that have strengthened the presidency. According to King, 'following the full implementation of all four amendments in October 2004, Indonesia will have one of the most powerful democratically-elected presidencies in the world.' With direct elections for the President, he/she obtained greater autonomy from the People's Consultative Assembly and the legislature. Furthermore, after the impeachment of President Wahid in 2001, further amendments curtailed the impeachment powers of the Assembly to redress some of the powers that had been shifted in favour of the legislature. In combination with wide decree and emergency powers, the President therefore could undermine the Special Autonomy provisions particularly by the use of security forces in a time of crisis (King 2004).

Beyond the constitutional and legal provisions that shed some doubt on the long term viability of Special Autonomy in Papua, the Indonesian government's implementation of the law and actions toward Papua show further evidence that past practices have not disappeared. As soon as the Special Autonomy Law was passed, the government revived Law no. 45, 1999 on the division of Papua into three provinces. As part of the strategy to undermine the secessionist movement, the Habibie government had introduced the law to create three distinct provinces in Papua. Faced with strong local resistance, the Law was not implemented.

President Megawati, however, decided to revive the law and passed decree no. 1, 2003 that reaffirmed the division of the province. When protests were renewed, particularly over the creation of the province of Central Irian Jaya, the latter was postponed indefinitely. The province of West Irian Jaya was created nevertheless and it remained uncertain whether the Special Autonomy Law would extend to this new province. Not only then would Special Autonomy be potentially undermined by ambiguous divisions of power between the MRP, DPRP, and even the role of Papuan representatives in the national parliament and the DPD (Regional Representative Council) but there were also potential conflicts of authority and legal ambiguities in the event that the province of West Irian Jaya would also fall under the jurisdiction of the Special Autonomy provisions.

The formation of the MRP also suffered many delays. Despite being officially implemented since January 2002, the MRP was only formed after numerous criticisms from local groups, who accused the government of willfully delaying its implementation to undermine special autonomy. On August 12, 2005 more than 10,000 people protested against the failure to implement special autonomy, specifically in relation to the failure to create the MRP and the creation of the province of West Irian Jaya.

Security forces continued to increase their presence in the region, despite complaints from local groups. The total number of troops increased between 2004 and 2006, although plans to create a new strategic reserve command were shelved after protests that this would significantly increase the number of troops in the area. Nevertheless, operations along the border have continued and access to border areas has been restricted. Internal security matters have increasingly been transferred to the local police but some units, particularly Brimob, have over-stepped their powers on occasion. In March 2006, for example, after clashes between students and Brimob troops in Abepura in which three policemen were killed, some Brimob troops stormed student dormitories in the following days, beat up civilians and fired shots in the air, with one stray bullet killing one girl (ICG 2006: 10).

### **Conclusion: reconciling Indonesian and Papuan nationalism?**

The Special Autonomy Law for Papua constitutes an important step in accommodating Papuan ethnonationalism. Since their integration to Indonesia in 1963, Papuans have been mobilizing to obtain self-determination. For several decades, no concessions were made to accommodate these demands, despite Papuans' very different colonial history, absence of shared experience with other Indonesians, and socio-economic disparity with the rest of Indonesia.

The logic of an integralist state, best expressed in the original Constitution of 1945, dictated that the Indonesian state represented a unified, indivisible Indonesian nation. For several decades, the successive regimes of Guided Democracy under the leadership of Sukarno and the New Order under President Suharto sought to enforce increasingly centralizing policies, homogenizing institutional structures, and denial of accommodation to ethnic diversity in order to strengthen the integration and unity of the Indonesian Republic.

Even the late-comers of East Timor and Papua were subjected to the same policies as the rest of Indonesia. They were integrated to a centralized state in which they became provinces that were hierarchically below the central administration, with very little administrative or fiscal autonomy.

Changes to state-regional relations after 1998 constituted somewhat of an institutional revolution but many of the tendencies of the past remained intact. Constitutional amendments recognized principles of autonomy for regions and the need to respect diversity, which was a new departure from the previously homogenizing and centralizing policies. Legislation designed to implement wide-ranging autonomy at the regency level strongly decentralized the polity administratively and fiscally. Special autonomy laws for Aceh and Papua further contributed to accommodating ethnic and regional demands and differences.

In light of these changes, I've argued in this paper that a careful scrutiny of current laws and their implementation can help to understand constraints and opportunities for solutions in Papua. Although institutions are often disregarded, particularly in countries such as Indonesia with weak legal traditions and inconsistent judiciary systems, they nevertheless constitute administrative and political frameworks that significantly transform the status quo, particularly in the case of legislation such as the Special Autonomy Law, which creates a new autonomous government. At the very least, such laws provided concrete standards against which to evaluate existing practices, and can constitute significant leverage to obtain more powers, resources, and recognition. In this sense, the Special Autonomy Law has provided some significant devolution of power and fiscal resources to accommodate Papuan demands and, on paper, constitutes a very strong departure from the past centralist and integralist tendencies of the Indonesian state.

The Special Autonomy Law for Papua, nevertheless, suffers from many vulnerabilities. There are several ambiguities in the divisions of powers between the DPRD and the MRP, and the role of Governor is divided between representing Papua as well as being responsible for implementing central government policies in the region. The language of the law, duties and responsibilities, and areas of jurisdiction remain vague and imprecise in relation to laws such as the Regional Autonomy Laws of 2004 and the Law on Aceh of 2006. More importantly, the Law can be undermined by powers of the central government, which includes the ability of the national parliament to revoke or amend the Law, the sole authority over military operations in the province as well as the main authority over the provincial police, as well as Presidential emergency powers that can be used to over-ride the Special Autonomy Law in times of crisis.

Central government actions have continued to show some tendencies toward the integrationist past. Most importantly, President Megawati's decision to implement the partition of Papua into three provinces significantly delayed and undermined the implementation of the Special Autonomy Law. It has contributed to dividing the Papuans, when discussions were required to fully implement the Law. As a result, with the creation of one of the provinces, West Irian Jaya, it remained ambiguous whether special autonomy extended to this province as well as the rest of Papua. Furthermore, the central government delayed the creation of the MRP until a large movement of Papuans began to call the Special Autonomy Law a failure and symbolically 'returned' the Law to the central government.

Special autonomy is at a cross-roads in Papua. As a whole, the package provides large amounts of powers and resources to accommodate Papuan demands. Five years after its promulgation, however, most of the regulations required to implement it have not been drafted. Jurisdictional ambiguities as well as the above obstacles have contributed to its slow implementation. If Special Autonomy fails there will be few alternatives available. The central government is strongly opposed to allowing any considerations of independence, as was strongly emphasized throughout the Special Autonomy Law. Adopting a constitutional

amendment that would establish Papua in a more formal federacy arrangement also seems unrealistic given Indonesia's past resistance to federalism in any form and its integrationist past.

A significant revision of the Law, however, along the lines of the Law on Aceh, might provide a significant avenue for overcoming some of the current weaknesses. Despite its risks, vulnerabilities and weaknesses, the Special Autonomy Law continues to present a good compromise for the time being but could be significantly strengthened by including more clauses, further limiting the powers of the central government (particularly military and police forces), and using much more specific language to spell out powers, jurisdictions, and distribution of revenues. The Law on Aceh provides a very strong model in this respect that could provide a good basis for a new Special Autonomy Law for Papua.

## References

1945. Undang-Undang Dasar Republik Indonesia 1945 (Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia).
2001. Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia, Nomor 21 Tahun 2001 tentang Otonomi Khusus bagi Provinsi Papua.
2004. Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia nomor 33, tahun 2004 tentang perimbangan keuangan antara pemerintah pusat dan pemerintahan daerah.
2004. Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia, Nomor 32, Tahun 2004 tentang pemerintahan daerah.
2006. Pemda, DPRD, dan MPR Saling Menyalahkan. *Sinar Harapan*, October 4, 2006.
- Anderson, Benedict R. O'G. 1983. *Imagined communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*. London: Verso.
- Bertrand, Jacques. 2003. 'Language policy and the promotion of national identity in Indonesia.' In *Fighting words: language policy and ethnic relations in Asia* edited by M. E. Brown and S. Ganguly. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Bertrand, Jacques. 2004. *Nationalism and ethnic conflict in Indonesia, Cambridge Asia-Pacific studies*. Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Boland, B. J. 1971. *The struggle of Islam in modern Indonesia, Verhandelingen van het Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 59. The Hague: Nijhoff.
- Bourchier, David. 1997. 'Totalitarianism and the "National Personality": Recent controversy about the philosophical basis of the Indonesian state.' In *Imagining Indonesia : cultural politics and political culture*, edited by B. Martin-Schiller and J. W. Schiller. Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Center for International Studies.
- International Crisis Group. 2006. *Papua: answers to frequently asked questions. ICG Asia briefing paper 53*: International Crisis Group.
- Horowitz, Donald L. 1985. *Ethnic groups in conflict*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- King, Blair Andrew. 2004. 'Empowering the presidency: interests and perceptions in Indonesia's constitutional reforms, 1999-2002.' Ph.D. thesis, Ohio State University.

- Lijphart, Arend. 1977. *Democracy in plural societies: a comparative exploration*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- McGarry, John, and Brendan O'Leary. 1993. *The politics of ethnic conflict regulation: case studies of protracted ethnic conflicts*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Pemberton, John. 1994. *On the subject of 'Java'*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Stepan, Alfred C. 2001. 'Federalism and Democracy: Beyond the U.S. Model.' *Journal of Democracy* 10(4): 19-34.
- Stepan, Alfred C. 2001. 'Towards a New Comparative Politics of Federalism, Multinationalism, and Democracy: Beyond Rikerian Federalism.' In *Arguing comparative politics* edited by A. C. Stepan. Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press.

## **Refuge, displacement and dispossession: responses to Indonesian rule and conflict in Papua**

*Richard Chauvel, Associate Professor, Victoria University*

In January 2006 forty-three Papuans sought political asylum in Australia. The outrigger canoe in which they landed on the other side of the Torres Strait flew the Papuan Morning Star flag and carried a banner pleading for freedom, peace and justice. The banner also asserted that the Indonesian military was committing genocide in Papua. The quest for asylum was a political act designed to attract Australian and international attention to the struggle for Papuan independence. Two months later there was a violent demonstration at Abepura, just outside the capital of Jayapura, which left five members of the Indonesian security forces dead. The demonstrators had demanded the closure of the giant Freeport copper and gold mine. Many of the demonstrators fled the sweeping operations of the security forces into the hills and subsequently over the border into neighbouring Papua New Guinea (PNG).

These two cases are but recent examples of the displacement and demographic change that have been central features of Indonesian rule and Papuan responses to it. West Papuans' flight across the border into PNG began within weeks of Indonesia assuming administrative control in 1963. Today there are approximately 13,500 West Papuans living in exile in PNG. Not all Papuan flight from Indonesian security operations and political tensions has been manifested as flight across the border into PNG. Security operations some distance from the border more often have resulted in internal displacement. This paper will examine three recent cases of armed conflicts in Wasior and the central highlands generating displacement of thousands of Papuans. There are similarities in the patterns of conflict that have generated internal and external displacement. However, the periods of external displacement have tended to be longer term. Most of the Papuan political refugees who fled to PNG in the 1960s have not returned to Papua and many involved in the large scale exodus of the mid 1980s remain in refugee camps in PNG. Internally displaced Papuans are not confronted with the same logistic problems and ideological questions in returning to their original place of residence.

Herman Wanggai and his fellow asylum seekers also followed a well established political strategy of campaigning for independence from outside Indonesia. The most senior of the Papuan politicians of the last years of the Netherlands administration, Nicolaas Jouwe, Markus Kaiseipo and Herman Womisor left with the Dutch and lobbied for international support for Papuan independence from a secure base in The Netherlands. They were followed in 1969 by Clemens Runawery and Willem Zonggonau<sup>1</sup>, who made an abortive attempt to present the Papuan case to the United Nations. The flight into exile of pro-independence leaders reflects not only the restrictions on political activities in Papua but also the importance of the international community in how Papuans think of their struggle for independence. This reflects the role the United Nations played in brokering the 1962 New York Agreement, its subsequent supervision of the 'Act of Free Choice' in 1969 and contemporary Papuan demands that the UN re-examine its acceptance of the results of the 'Act of Free Choice'.

---

<sup>1</sup> Willem Zonggonau died in Sydney in October 2006. He and Clemens Runawery were conducting a pro-independence campaign.

The paper will argue that these displacements, both internal and external, are barometers of political tensions and the intensity of military operations in Papua. This is a somewhat different pattern of displacement from the one evident during the military operations in Aceh, 2003-2004, where forced relocation of populations was part of the military's strategies. The displacement of Papuans, particularly activists, into PNG or the flight of asylum seekers to Australia is not the objective of Indonesian military operations, but rather something that the military has tried to prevent. External displacement of Papuans has highlighted the role that Australia has played as a 'gate-keeper' for Indonesia in curtailing Papuans' ability to conduct an international campaign for independence, using Australia as a base or a point of transit. The Papuan asylum seekers in Australia have been a considerable embarrassment to the Indonesian government and the focus of diplomatic tensions between Indonesia and Australia.

### **Dispossession: plural society, dual economy**

The movement of Papuan leaders out of Papua has been important for how the campaign for independence has been conducted. The flight of refugees into PNG and the internal displacement of Papuans have caused great material hardship and alienation from their means of livelihood for tens of thousands of Papuans. However, in terms of the scale of demographic change, it pales into insignificance when compared with the influx of Indonesian settlers into Papua. The massive demographic transformation Papua has experienced since 1963 has changed the dynamics of Papuan-Indonesian relations for all of Papuan society and has given Papuan nationalism a sharp ethnic expression. In 1960 the 'Asian' population, mainly eastern Indonesians, Javanese and Chinese, numbered just 18,600 out of an estimated population of 736,700 or 2.5%.<sup>2</sup> The 2000 Census indicated that the number of non-Papuans resident in the province was 772,684 or 35%. In the capital Jayapura the settler communities constitute about 68% of the population, as they do in Sorong and Fakfak.<sup>3</sup> The sense of having lost control of their own homeland to the Indonesians and having become marginal to Papua's political and economic life gives Papuan nationalism a strong ethnic expression. In contrast to the refugee flows into PNG and internal displacement, the sense of dispossession and marginalization is one of the factors that fuel the conflict with Indonesia and Papuan alienation from the Indonesian state. The refugee flow into PNG, internal displacement and the flight of political leaders overseas are a consequence of conflict. The paper will argue that this sense of dispossession is much more broadly felt in Papuan society than the displacement experienced by the Papuan communities that have lost their land to transmigration settlements.

In order to analyse how demographic change has shaped displacement and fuelled conflict it is necessary to examine the different ways demographic change has taken place. Indonesian settlers were a small but influential part of society in Papua under the Dutch colonial administration. Christians from eastern Indonesia—mostly Ambonese, Menadonese and Keiese—served in the colonial administration as officials, teachers, missionaries, police and military. Under Indonesian rule settlement of Indonesians from elsewhere in the archipelago in Papua has taken two forms: government organized programmes of

---

<sup>2</sup> Netherlands Government Annual Report to the United Nations on Netherlands New Guinea, 1960, The Hague, pp. 6-7.

<sup>3</sup> *Tifa Papua*, Minggu ketiga Mei 2002, p. 5.

transmigration and voluntary or spontaneous migration. Although 'transmigration' is the term frequently used to describe the process, many more Indonesians have settled in Papua as a result of their own initiative than those sponsored by the government as transmigrants. In the period 1970–2000 transmigration resulted in the settlement of some 220,000 people. In the same period over 560,000 people came to Papua as 'spontaneous' migrants (McGibbon 2004: 23). The government's transmigration programmes ceased in the late 1990s as a result of the financial crisis and Papuan opposition. There are no signs that the rate of 'spontaneous' migration has slackened. Indeed, the influx of 'spontaneous' migrants is one of the most sensitive issues in Papuan politics and fuels the sense of being disadvantaged and marginalized. When two of Papua's senior religious leaders addressed the provincial parliament (DPRD) in June 2005, they asked rhetorically: 'Are you sending the migrants from outside because this is the only way to build our land? What is the purpose of sending the six white ships [Indonesian Royal Passenger Ships, paid for out of Special Autonomy funds] who every week bring thousands of migrants from Java, Sumatra, Kalimantan, Sulawesi and Ambon to Papua? Is this what you call building Papua?' (Saud and Yoman 2005).

The distinction between government sponsorship and 'spontaneous' migration is unimportant in itself, except for the highly differential impact on Papuan society and difference in ethnic and economic backgrounds of the two groups of settlers. Government-sponsored transmigrants tended to come from the densely populated island of Java and were settled in rural areas in Papua. The migrants who came on their own initiative were more often from South Sulawesi—Makasarese, Buginese and Butonese—and elsewhere in eastern Indonesia. They tended to settle in urban areas and around resource projects. They were attracted by the economic opportunities of Papua's frontier economy.

The government's transmigration projects tended to be focused in particular regions of Papua. In the immediate area of transmigration projects the balance between Papuans and non-Papuans changed over a short period, with the transmigrants quickly outnumbering the Papuans. For example, in Arso, located between Jayapura and the PNG border, in 1999 there were only 3,000 Papuans compared with 18,000 transmigrants. A Papuan demographer, the late Michael Rumbiak, argued that the local community was dominated by the transmigrants and the Papuans were displaced from their own lands and their culture overwhelmed by the Javanese. The economically weak Papuans, deprived of access to their own land, were not capable of developing their own culture. Rumbiak observed that the transmigrants lived and worked by themselves, separate from the local Papuan community. Neither group had developed mechanisms of cooperation. Rumbiak concluded that 'the transmigration programme implemented over decades in Papua had not yet provided any positive direct benefit for local societies. The local society was isolated from the transmigrants because of differences in vision and culture' (Rumbiak 2000: 7-9).

Transmigration intensified the competition for scarce land resources suitable for agricultural use. Examining land acquisition for transmigration settlements in Papua, Agus Semule calculated that 160,000 hectares of arable land had been appropriated. To put this into some perspective, this was three times the area used for the cultivation of sweet potato in 2000 (cited in McGibbon 2004: 23). The large scale land acquisition for the establishment of transmigration settlement was conducted with little regard for Papuan *adat* law and communal land ownership (*hak ulayat*) (*ibid.*: 20). It is worth noting that the recognition of *hak ulayat* was central to the Papuan proposals for the Special Autonomy Law. Benny Giay, the Papuan theologian and intellectual, gave the displacement created by transmigration political expression when he wrote of the intimidation experienced in signing over thousands of

hectares of land as part of the suffering—*Memoria passionis*—endured by the Papuan people during 35 years of Soeharto's *pembangunan* (development) (Giay 2000: 55).

The impact of the transmigration settlements on the Papuan communities in the immediate area is obvious. Yet, the scale and speed of the demographic transformation is most apparent in the urban areas. By 2000 Indonesian settlers comprised 66% of urban populations (McGibbon 2004: 26). In 2000 Clemens Runawery observed the displacement of Papuans that had taken place in Hamadi, a suburb of Jayapura, in the thirty-one years since he went into exile. Filmed standing in the Hamadi market, he noted: 'There is no place like home,' but it was not the home he remembered. Runawery explained that Hamadi used to be a suburban paradise full of nice houses inhabited by Papuans. Hamadi was the dormitory suburb developed by the Dutch to house the emerging elite of Papuan government officials and politicians, people like himself. In 2000 it was a market dominated by traders from South Sulawesi, including Buginese-owned shops selling Papuan artefacts. As he paused to listen to the call to prayer from a nearby mosque, Runawery said, 'Now you can hear Muslim sounds in the midst of what used to be Melanesia. So strange, but that is the reality.'<sup>4</sup>

The 'spontaneous' migrants have tended to settle in the urban areas of Papua. The census data cited above support the visual impression that Jayapura, in particular, is an 'Indonesian' city. Settlers have been economically successful. They dominate the city's economic life. The streets of Jayapura's central market reflect the economic hierarchy. The shops are Indonesian Chinese and settler owned. Settler traders run the market stalls in front of the shops. In front of stalls sit Papuan traders, mainly highlanders, selling small quantities of fruit and vegetables. The economic structure is even more starkly illustrated in the centre of Jayapura. Next to the building that once housed the New Guinea Council where the Papuan Morning Star Flag was raised for the first time on 1 December 1961, there is a supermarket and a Kentucky Fried Chicken outlet, unremarkable in Jakarta, but new in Jayapura. In the late afternoon and evening in the car park in front of the supermarket Papuans are permitted to sell fruit, vegetables and betel nut. One Papuan observer noted that the '...presence of the settlers has created a colonial economic structure, where only the traditional sector is run by the indigenous population.'<sup>5</sup>

There is something of Furnival's plural society in Indonesian Papua. Just as Furnival observed of the pre-war Netherlands India, Papua has become '...a society, that is, comprising two or more elements or social orders which live side by side, yet without mingling, in one political unit' (1976: 448). Furnival contended that there was no social demand common to all sections of the plural society. The market place was the only common ground where all sections of the plural society met (1976: 449).

In Papua, Indonesian settlers and Papuans meet in the market place, but it is a segmented and stratified market. The 'meeting place' has also become a site of conflict between the settler traders and Papuans. The markets symbolize the economic disparities between the communities. In 1984 the Hamadi market was the site of violent riots that gave part of the stimulus to the exodus of Papuans into PNG discussed in the latter part of this paper. In April 2000 there were clashes between Papuans and Bugis-Makassarese settlers in Entrop, one of the principal market centres in Jayapura. Most of the people injured were

---

<sup>4</sup> Worth (2004). Runawery had been permitted to return to Papua to attend the Kongres Papua in mid 2000.

<sup>5</sup> *Tifa Papua*, 11-16 December 2000, p. 6.

traders from the Entrop market and Papuans from neighbouring villages. In the clash fire damaged much of the market.<sup>6</sup> In November 2000, the market at Abepura was the site of a couple of violent clashes between Papuans and Bugis-Makassarese settlers. The first violence occurred when three Papuans (highlanders) refused to pay for a meal and a fight followed, in which the settlers armed with homemade weapons wounded five Papuans.<sup>7</sup> The police account of the incident noted that disputes between settlers and Papuans were common around the market. 'The migrants are usually vendors who work hard to earn their money, while some locals tend to extort money from them. In the Abepura case, the migrants fought back.'<sup>8</sup> A couple of days later a further clash occurred involving larger numbers of Papuans and leaving 16 people injured.<sup>9</sup>

The security forces' sweeping operations following the Abepura demonstration in March 2006 caused the flight of demonstrators and students into the hills around Jayapura and over the border into PNG. It also changed the environment for those Papuans who remained in Jayapura. Socratez Sofyan Yoman, the leader of the Baptist Church in Papua, observed of Jayapura in the weeks following the riots:

On public market and public shopping centre and public road no space for the Papuans, specially people from Highland. But, for the migrant they actually get more and more freedom for walking, for working and for speak and what else if they want. Because they get the best and strong protection from Indonesian intelligent, military, and police. The Indonesian intelligent, military and police without uniform dominate in every corner of city, town and villages in West Papua to spy the Papuan's activities. The Papuan are live under very strong pressure from Jakarta (English original; email 30 March 2006).

The demographic transformation of Papua has created a complex pattern of displacement, marginalization and isolation. The Indonesian settler-dominated urban areas have experienced rapid economic change and have become integrated into the modern economy of Indonesia and beyond. The Papuan bureaucratic, political and professional elite form part of that urban society, but Papuans are a much stronger presence in government employment than in the private sector. Other Papuans live at the margins of urban society more as observers than participants. In contrast, the regions where Papuans still constitute the vast majority of the population are the highlands, where there is an isolated subsistence economy. Highland societies are the most disadvantaged in terms of education and health. Some of these Papuan-dominated communities have been the locale for the political conflict and mass displacement discussed later in the paper. It is significant that civilian Indonesian settlers have been the victims of the conflicts in the central highlands and Wasior.

There is a touch of Boeke's 'dual economy' in Papua. The importance of the duality is not so much in the difference in socio-economic and cultural values that Boeke identified in the westernized and indigenous sections of the Netherlands India economy, but rather in spatial separation of the Indonesian settler and Papuan economies. Where the two economies do meet in the urban areas, the market places are segmented and stratified (Boeke 1934: 33-34).

---

<sup>6</sup> 'Pasar Entrop Jayapura Dibakar Massa', *Kompas*, 26 March 2000; 'One killed in Entrop market fray', *Jakarta Post*, 28 March 2000; 'Market fire injures 11', *Jakarta Post*, 27 March 2000.

<sup>7</sup> 'Insiden di Pasar Abepura', 11 and 12 November 2000, ELSHAM, Jayapura.

<sup>8</sup> 'Papua council leaders to go on trial soon', *Jakarta Post*, 15 November 2000.

<sup>9</sup> 'Abepura market brawl leaves 16 injured', *Jakarta Post*, 14 November 2000.

## Demographic transformation and Papuan nationalism

The demographic transformation has fueled Papuan resentment of Indonesian rule and given Papuan nationalism a sharp ethnic tinge. The sharp distinction Papuan nationalists make between Papuans and Indonesians, the latter being known locally as *amberi*, had its origins in the Dutch period and related specifically to the role played by Indonesians as servants of the colonial administration. E.J. Bonay, one of the founders of the first Papuan nationalist political party and the first Governor of Indonesian West Irian, argued that Papuans viewed the *amberi* as ‘accomplices’ and ‘stooges’ of the Dutch colonial government. *Amberi* treatment of Papuans was inhuman, because they looked down on Papuans as stupid, dirty, and curly haired. He asserts that the *amberi* sense of superiority had become even worse since 1963, as the Indonesians became the new colonizers of Papua. Thus, the conflict and antagonism between Papuans and *amberi* is a continuity from the Dutch colonial past (Boney 1984: 84).

Bonay likened the Papuans’ experience to that of the Native Americans in North America, the Aborigines in Australia, and the Maoris in New Zealand. He said the Papuan experience was even worse, because the World Bank had paid for the transmigrants’ settlement, while in the New World the European immigrants had at least been using their own capital. Bonay said the ‘flood’ of transmigrants had generated tensions between indigenous Papuans and the settlers, as Papuans had been forced to leave the lands of their ancestors (*ibid.*: Bab 1, pp. 3-4). Herman Wayoi, like Bonay a member of the 1960s generation of Papuan nationalists, asserted in a presentation for President B.J. Habibie in February 1999 that:

It was as if the Indonesian government sought only to ‘dominate’ (*menguasai*) the territory, then planned to exterminate the ethnic Melanesians and replace them with ethnic Malays from Indonesia. Transmigration ‘proved’ this impression; transporting thousands from outside to settle in the fertile valleys of the land of Papua.<sup>10</sup>

One of the delegates from Nabire at the *Musyawahar Besar Papua 2000 (MUBES, Papuan Mass Consultation)* of February 2000, made the connection between the demographic transformation of Papua and the demand for independence:

Indonesians have never given Papuans a proper place. Because indeed they are Indonesians and we are Papuans. We are murdered, enslaved and colonized by Indonesians. In another 10 years’ time Papuans will be finished, murdered by the Indonesian military. Because of that it is better that we just become independent (Giay 2000: 15).

## Escape to continue the struggle

This section of the paper will examine the flights into exile of Clemens Runawery and Willem Zonggonau in 1969 and that of Herman Wanggai and his colleagues in 2006. Although these two cases of flight were motivated by the desire to continue the campaign for independence overseas, the political circumstances of each were distinct, as were the position

---

<sup>10</sup> Agus Alua, *Dialog Nasional, Papua dan Indonesia 26 Februari 1999, ‘Kembalikan Kedaulatan Papua Barat, Pulang dan Renungkan Dulu’*, Seri Pendidikan Politik Papua No.2, Sekretariat Presidium Dewan Papua dan Biro Penelitian STFT Fajar Timur, Jayapura, Desember 2002. p. 64.

and status of the politicians in Papuan politics. Runawery and Zonggonau fled Papua on the eve of Indonesia conducting the 'Act of Free Choice', with the objective of campaigning against Indonesia overseas in a way that had proven impossible in Papua itself. Shortly before their departure they had been organizers and supporters of a substantial student demonstration against Indonesia's conduct of the 'Act of Free Choice' in Jayapura. They had been intermediaries with the head of the UN mission, Ortiz Sanz, outside whose house the demonstration took place. Ortiz Sanz reputedly told them: 'Your people and your leaders will be oppressed by the Indonesian authorities. It's up to you whether you make it [the demonstration] or not.'<sup>11</sup> Runawery and Zonggonau's opportunities for political activity had been curtailed since the end of 1968 when the Indonesian government-appointed provincial representative council (DPRD), of which they were prominent young members, was abolished and they had not been appointed to the new council. Like other members of the Dutch-educated elite, Runawery and Zonggonau had been both members of Indonesian representative institutions and leaders of the OPM (Organisasi Papua Merdeka, Free Papua Organization). On arrival in PNG, they told Australian officials that, as leaders of the 'West Irian' people, they wanted to ascertain the attitude of the Australian government to the independence of West Papua. Did Australia favour continued Indonesian control of West Irian? Did Australia favour an independent West Papua? Most importantly, they wanted to remain in PNG in order to proceed to the UN prior to the conduct of the 'Act of Free Choice' to present the case of the people of 'West Irian'.<sup>12</sup>

The Herman Wanggai group departed Papua at one of the low points of the struggle for independence and during a period of tight political controls. Herman Wanggai had been imprisoned on two recent occasions for nationalist activities. Since the end of 2000, with the detention of Theys Eluay and four of his Presidium<sup>13</sup> colleagues and then Theys Eluay's assassination in 2001 and the failed implementation of the 2001 Special Autonomy Law, both the non-violent pro-independence and the pro-autonomy sections of the established elite had little to show for their strategies. What remained of the Presidium leadership has conducted few activities in Papua, while the position and credibility of the pro-autonomy elite had been undermined by President Megawati's policies of divide and rule. Although Megawati failed in her ambition to divide Papua into three provinces, the establishment of a new province of West Irian Jaya in the western part of Papua and the proliferation of local governments has sharpened competition within the Papuan elite for bureaucratic and elected positions as well as control of increasing government revenues facilitated under decentralization. The elite and political organizations in Papua were much more united in 2000, with a seemingly dominant Presidium, than they were in 2005-2006. Herman Wanggai was one of many Papuan activists preoccupied with the disunity and internal tensions and one of the objectives of exile in Australia was to forge more unity in Papua's international lobby campaigns. The planning of the voyage took place over more than two years (Fitzpatrick 2006). In Raymond Bonner's words it was a 'calculated and clandestine journey' (Bonner 2006). According to Herman Wanggai's co-organizer, Edison Waromi, 'We wanted to show the world a small picture of the terrible human rights situation across all of Papua. It was a tactical move in the struggle, to publicize the situation here' (Fitzpatrick 2006). 'This is part of the Papuan National

---

<sup>11</sup> Secret Report 801/5839, 'Background and Motives of 11<sup>th</sup> April 1969 Demonstration in Jayapura, 11-6-69,' item 1969/1446, A452, NAA.

<sup>12</sup> Cable 1858, Canberra to Jakarta, 11-5-69, TS 696/3/1 pt 3, A1838, NAA

<sup>13</sup> The *Presidium Dewan Papua* (Papuan Presidium Council) was established in 2000, under the leadership of Theys Eluay and Thom Beanal. It was, briefly, the dominant pro-independence organization advocating a non-violent struggle.

Authority's international agenda. The asylum-seekers are intended to attract international attention. From the day of Papua's integration until today, it is militaristic' (Powell 2006).

In each of these cases the Australian government played a key role as gatekeeper and its decisions influenced the effectiveness of Indonesia's ability to impose a political quarantine on Papua and Papuan strategies to escape isolation. The Australian Ambassador in Jakarta, Gordon Jockel, saw Runawery and Zonggonau's escape as a '...clear and premeditated plan by West Irianese to cross into TPNG (Territories of Papua and New Guinea) illegally for political purposes.' Jockel noted 'the possible serious consequences of the effect of the lobbying of these two West Irianese among African and other delegations in New York where they would represent a new and volatile element in the situation.'<sup>14</sup> According to Jockel, Indonesian Foreign Minister Adam Malik feared the damage that Runawery and Zonggonau could do internationally to Indonesian interests. In contrast to the other exiles, they had come directly from Papua with first hand stories and documentation and had the credibility of being 'freedom fighters'. They were not like the older exiles, living off Dutch money.<sup>15</sup> Australia responded to Malik's appeal to Jockel: 'Can you not stop them?'<sup>16</sup> Runawery and Zonggonau ended up in Manus Island rather than New York.

With respect to the Herman Wanggai group, the Australian government's handling of the case created significant tensions in relations with Indonesia and rekindled domestic debate about Australia's refugee and asylum seeker policies. The 43 Papuans were granted temporary protection visas despite the Indonesian President giving his personal guarantee of the asylum seekers' security, if Australia returned them to Indonesia. Indonesia withdrew its Ambassador in protest. Although Herman Wanggai does not have the status and influence Runawery and Zonggonau enjoyed in the Papuan elite, Indonesia was concerned by the way the Herman Wanggai group used their presence in Australia to attract attention to the independence cause and display the symbols of Papuan nationalism. Because of the opposition from some government MPs and the opposition parties the Australian government failed in its attempt to tighten up asylum seeker processing procedures and meet Indonesia's concerns by denying any future Papuan asylum seekers the opportunity of using Australia as a campaign base. Some accommodation of Indonesia's concerns was achieved in the 2006 Framework for Security Cooperation Agreement. In the 'Papua' provision of the agreement, Australia and Indonesia agreed to '...not in any manner support or participate in activities by any person or entity which constitutes a threat to the stability, sovereignty or territorial integrity of the other Party, including by those who seek to use its territory for encouraging or committing such activities, including separatism, in the territory of the other Party'.<sup>17</sup>

### **Border crossers and exiles in PNG**

The demonstrators who escaped the security forces' sweeping operations across the border into PNG after the violent demonstration at Abepura in mid March 2006, like Herman Wanggai, were political activists. However, their flight was not carefully planned with the

---

<sup>14</sup> Cable 1607, Jakarta to Canberra, 13-6-69, Item 696/3/1 pt 3, A1838, NAA.

<sup>15</sup> Cable 1668, Jakarta to Canberra, 18-6-69, Item 696/3/1 pt 3, A1838, NAA.

<sup>16</sup> Cable 1621, Jakarta to Canberra, 14-6-69, Item 696/3/1 pt 3, A1838, NAA.

<sup>17</sup> Article 2.3, Government of The Republic of Indonesia and Government of Australia, 2006, Agreement Between the Republic of Indonesia and Australia on the Framework for Security Cooperation, signed 13 November 2006. <http://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/indonesia/ind-aus-sec06.html>.

objective of continuing the campaign for independence from exile. They escaped to avoid capture, imprisonment, or worse. A couple of weeks after the riots, the Head of Police in Papua, Drs. Tommy T. Jacobus, announced that, in anticipation of demonstrators attempting to seek refuge in PNG, border security had been tightened.<sup>18</sup> The police had a list of some 19 people they suspected of being involved in the demonstration, who they were endeavouring to detain before they escaped into PNG.<sup>19</sup> A report of the Australia-based 'Free West Papua Campaign' claimed that there were 100 students from the Abepura demonstration in PNG by early July 2006 (Chesterfield 2006: 14).

As noted earlier there is a substantial West Papuan exile community of some 13,500 in PNG. The West Papuans are geographically dispersed with 2,677 living in the East Awin camp in Western Province, about 5,000 Muyu along the border in Western Province, 3,000 in Port Moresby and Lae and 500 elsewhere (Glazebrook 2004: 206; Maclellan 2006). In 2005 the UNHCR gave the Indonesian refugee population in PNG, nearly all of whom were West Papuans, as 9,991 (UNHCR 2007). The exile community had its origins in the 1960s after Indonesia assumed control of Papua. It was in this community that Runawery and Zonggonau became prominent and successful members. The 1960s exiles could be divided into two groups: those who made their own way across the border and the 'Dutch pensioners'. The latter were Papuans who had worked with the colonial administration and were known to be anti-Indonesian and whose lives were thought to be in jeopardy if they had remained in West Irian. They were supported financially by the Netherlands Government (Neumann 2004: 67). In 1973, four years after the 'Act of Free Choice' when PNG was granted self-government, there were 500 West Papuans with permissive residence in PNG (*ibid.*: 71).

In 1964 the Australian Department of Territories, whose responsibility PNG was, distinguished two types of Papuan refugees: 'political' and 'non-political'. The 'Dutch pensioners' were among the former group, but the latter also included political activists whose activity took place after Indonesia assumed control. These people were to be returned to West Irian (Neumann 2004: 67-68). During the controversies over Runawery and Zonggonau's escape in mid 1969, Ambassador Jockel referred to the 'tacit agreement' that prevailed over the previous couple of years that Indonesia would not question who was granted residence in PNG provided that 'we eliminate them from the area of effective activity against Indonesia.'<sup>20</sup> This understanding between Australia and Indonesia was placed under great pressure as the exiles in PNG were a vital conduit of information between Papua and the exiled leadership of Jouwe and Kaisiepo in The Netherlands. Foreign Minister Malik was convinced that Papuans were being trained in PNG.<sup>21</sup> The sensitivities were also evident on the Australian side, as one colleague remarked to Jockel: '...the last thing we would want would be an armed clash between the Indonesians and ourselves.'<sup>22</sup>

The largest group in the PNG exile community crossed the border in the mid 1980s. The movement of about 11,000 Papuans across the border commenced in March 1984 in

---

<sup>18</sup> 'Pengamanan Perbatasan Diperketat', *Cendrawasih Pos*, 29 March 2006, <http://www.cendrawasihpos.com/Utama/h.7.html>.

<sup>19</sup> 'Seorang DPO Kasus Bentrok Abepura Ditangkap di Kotaraja: Dua Orang Lainnya Datang ke Polda Untuk Klarifikasi', *Cendrawasih Pos*, 26 April 2006, <http://www.cendrawasihpos.com/Utama/h.1.html>.

<sup>20</sup> Cable 1668, Jakarta to Canberra, 18-6-69, Item 696/3/1 pt 3, A1838, NAA.

<sup>21</sup> Cable Jakarta 1418 to DEA, 28-5-69, item 3036/2/1 Pt 13, A1838 T 184, NAA.

<sup>22</sup> TPNG Border Contingency Planning, meeting 23-8-68, item 3036/2/1 Pt 9, A1838 T 184, NAA.

response to military operations, which in turn were Indonesian responses to OPM activities. This number included a group of about 1,000 who crossed the border near Vanimo, with villagers from the border area, but also educated, urban activists, civil servants and academics from Jayapura, Manokwari, Serui, Biak and Sorong. International Commission Jurist interviews with the refugees cited human rights issues, discrimination against Melanesians, marginalization and impact of transmigration (Glazebrook 2004: 208). In contrast, the Muyu people, who lived along the central region of the border, crossed the border into Western Province in much larger numbers (est. 9,435) in 1984-1985. Stuart Kirsch argues that the Muyu fled because of the Indonesians' refusal to treat them as equals or establish reciprocal relations with them (cited in Glazebrook 2004: 208-209). This explanation may not be phrased in the usual discourse of Papuan nationalism, but it nevertheless echoes Papuan descriptions of their relations with Indonesians.

The distinction made in this paper between the elite political activists like Runawery, Zonggonau and Herman Wanggai leaving Papua to campaign for the independence cause overseas and those fleeing Indonesian military operations should not be drawn too sharply. Diana Glazebrook's interviews with exiles in PNG show the importance of the political motivation of the initial flight and how political considerations influence the exiles' decisions to remain in PNG or return to Papua. For many refugees to return to Papua before *Merdeka* had been achieved would signify that exile had lost its purpose and that there was no longer any hope of independence. Continuing to live in exile was a protest against Indonesian rule in Papua (Glazebrook 2004: 212-213). The provincial authorities in Papua are aware of the political nature of the decision confronting the Papuan refugees in PNG. Barnabas Suebu, the recently elected Governor of Papua, during a visit to PNG to mark the anniversary of its independence, appealed to his fellow countrymen to return to Papua and together build a new just, peaceful and prosperous Papua. He would guarantee their safety.<sup>23</sup> Indonesian interest in facilitating the return of Papuan refugees has continued since the Governor's visit. S.P. Agustadi, the Secretary of the Security Minister, announced in March 2007 that some 200 refugees would be repatriated to Papua.<sup>24</sup> Berty Fernandez, the head of the Provincial Office for Border and Regional Cooperation, explained that the repatriation would be conducted on voluntary basis, without any pressure from the Governments of Indonesia or PNG. Fernandez believed that the refugees wanted to return home because of the increasingly rapid economic development in Papua and the 'conducive' security situation.<sup>25</sup> The relationship between political developments in Papua and the Papuan exile communities in PNG is not merely a concern for the refugees and the authorities in Papua. Somewhat contrary to the proposition advanced by Berty Fernandez that the relative stability and prosperity in Papua was a factor attracting the refugees to return, the UNHCR contingency plans show that the relationship between conflict in Papua and displacement in PNG is a significant factor in its thinking:

'Its (PNG) proximity and cultural ties to the Indonesian province of Papua means there is potential for a mass influx of West Papuan refugees. Given the continuing political instability

---

<sup>23</sup> 'Suebu Ajak Masyarakat Papua di PNG Mudik', *Gatra*, 18 September 2006, <http://www.gatra.com/2006-09-22/artikel.php?id=97912>.

<sup>24</sup> '200 Warga Papua Akan Dipulangkan dari PNG: Agustadi: Masih Ada 25.000 Warga RI (Papua) di Sana', *Cendrawasih Pos*, 22 March 2007 ([www.kabar-irian.com](http://www.kabar-irian.com)). It is worth noting that the figures for Papuan refugees in PNG cited by Agustadi are more than double the numbers used elsewhere in this paper.

<sup>25</sup> '200 WNI yang di PNG Sedang Diidentifikasi', *Cendrawasih Pos*, 24 March 2007 ([www.kabar-irian.com](http://www.kabar-irian.com)).

and the security situation in Papua, regular revision of PNG's contingency plans and training of GoPNG officials is considered important.<sup>26</sup>

## **Displacement within Papua**

Conflict between the Indonesian security forces and Papuan resistance groups as well as political tensions more broadly have led to the displacement of Papuans within Papua. We have seen that conflict and military operations occurring near the border with PNG often mean flight across the border and exile in PNG. The pattern of displacement is different where seeking sanctuary in PNG is a less practical option. Jayapura, as the administrative and political centre of Papua, has also been the site of conflict. Jayapura's proximity to the border has meant, as in the case of the Abepura demonstrators in March 2006, escape over the border is relatively easy. Given the poor transport infrastructure in Papua, flight from conflict and military operations in many other regions of Papua involves internal displacement, often as flight into the jungle.

In order to illustrate how the patterns of conflict in remote regions of Papua have led to large scale displacements in local communities, this paper will now examine two recent cases of Papuan resistance, Indonesian retaliation and Papuan flight in Wasior and the Central Highlands.

## **Wasior**

The conflict in Wasior<sup>27</sup> became violent on 30 March 2001 with the killing of three non-Papuan employees of one of the logging companies operating in the area, PT Darma Multi Persada. The killings occurred four months after the Indonesian government had brought to an end the period of relative political openness—the Papuan Spring—that had developed in Papua after the fall of President Soeharto.

The Wasior conflict illustrates how displacement is related to other aspects of the conflict in Papua. The dispute between the community and the logging company dates from the early 1990s. It was a struggle for control of resources and how the resources were exploited and for whose benefit. The local community felt that it had not been adequately compensated by the company for the timber and use of its ancestral lands. Amnesty International reported that: 'As was the case elsewhere in Papua and indeed throughout Indonesia, concessions were negotiated between the companies and the central government without any meaningful participation by members of the local population affected by the operations. Compensation for loss of land and livelihoods was low. Inadequate compensation, together with the impact of the logging on the environment, livelihoods and local traditions

---

<sup>26</sup> UNHCR, Country Operations Plan, Papua New Guinea, Planning Year 2006.

<sup>27</sup> Wasior is located in the southern part of Manokwari district, where the Birds Head is joined to the rest of Papua. The veteran Papuan nationalist, Moses Werror, sought to locate the Wasior conflict in the history of Papuan nationalism. Werror noted that Wasior was near where the Dutch missionary, Izaak Samuel Keijne, established his first school before the Pacific War and where Werror was a student in 1948. Keijne was the composer of what was to become the Papuan national anthem, 'Hai Tanahku Papua'. According to Werror, Keijne inspired his students with the ideals of Papuan nationalism. Email, Moses Werror, 17 June 2001, KABAR-IRIAN: [ID] Situasi di Wasior, [www.kabar-irian.com](http://www.kabar-irian.com)

has been the source of disputes between local people and the logging companies in the area' (Amnesty International 2002a). The International Crisis Group has argued that the struggle over land and natural resources is a key aspect of the conflict in Papua. The Wasior conflict is an example of the ICG's contention that the security forces have a financial interest in resource exploitation, both through direct involvement in logging and through receipt of protection money paid by resource companies (International Crisis Group 2002: i).

The company reported that the attack on 30 March was the work of the National Liberation Army (Tentara Pembebasan Nasional, TPN). In the Brimob (Police Mobile Brigade) operations that followed four people were killed and several others wounded (Amnesty International 2001). ELSHAM, the Papuan human rights organization, described the Brimob operations as 'arbitrary action against the civilian population', including arrests, torture and the killing of civilians (ELSHAM 2001).

Reflecting the cycle of violence—Papuan resistance, Indonesian repression, followed by further resistance and more repression—on 13 June 2001, an armed group killed five Brimob and a civilian (*ibid.*). The five members of Brimob were part of the security guard for the CV Vatika Papuana Perkasa, another logging company in the area (Amnesty International 2002b). In June and July the security forces conducted 'Sweeping and Clampdown' operations. It was these operations that resulted in large scale displacement, disruption of economic activities and abuse of human rights of many in the local communities not associated with the two violent attacks. According to ELSHAM, a local official of the GKI church in Wondama, Wasior reported that Brimob forces torched the houses of inhabitants of the villages of Senderawoi, Isui and Wondoboy. While six families still remain in Wondoboy, all the inhabitants of the other two villages have fled to the forests. It is estimated that about 5,000 civilians have fled their homes in Wasior. Witnesses and church officials have also reported that local residents were daily compelled by Brimob to collect food for them. Social and economic activities (tending their gardens, hunting, fishing, going to school) are completely paralysed and everyone lives in a state of fear.<sup>28</sup> The military operations appear to have continued for some months. Anthropologist Chris Ballard reported the discovery in September 2001 of Wellem Korwam's dismembered body floating in a river in the Wasior area.<sup>29</sup>

Although the security forces were not able to prevent some of the local community from fleeing into the jungle, they were able to control access to the community from church groups from Jayapura. The Church (GKI) attempted to establish a pastoral team to look after its congregations in the area, but was prevented from doing so by the local police.<sup>30</sup> Komnasham, the Indonesian national commission for human rights, found that in the Brimob operations that followed the 13 June attack four people died, six were tortured, one was raped and five other people disappeared. 'Those responsible for the crimes are fourteen members of

---

<sup>28</sup> ELSHAM, the Institute for Human Rights Study and Advocacy, Jayapura, issued the following Urgent Action on Monday, 16 July 2001: 'Impact of Sweepings and Clampdown in Wasior, Manokwari, West Papua'. See also the interviews conducted by Amnesty International of some of the victims caught up in the 'Sweeping and Clampdown' operations (2002b).

<sup>29</sup> Ballard (2002). Ballard argues the murder was part of a series of vicious conflicts in the Wasior area, where timber companies, hiring elite police paramilitary troops for security, have been operating with little or no compensation paid to local communities.

<sup>30</sup> 'West Papua: Brimob violence engulfs Manokwari', Tapol, the Indonesia Human Rights Campaign Bulletin Online 162 - August 2001.

the Papua Police. Four of their superiors from the Papua provincial police were also responsible for not preventing or halting the crimes by their subordinates or having them prosecuted' (Saraswati 2004).

As was the case with those who had sought refuge in PNG, internal displacement caused by the conflict in Wasior persisted long after the conflict ended. A year and a half after the killing of the five Brimob and one civilian in June 2001, the *Cendrawasih Pos* reported that the residents of four villages in Wasior who had fled the conflict still had not returned. They had fled to Serui, Manokwari, Nabiri, Sorong and Jayapura.<sup>31</sup>

## The Central Highlands

In the post-Soeharto era the central highlands of Papua have been a focus of conflict between the security forces and Papuans. Highlanders, particularly those from around Wamena, made a strong impression at the *Kongres Papua* of mid-2000, which, in retrospect, was the high point of the mobilization of mass support for independence during the 'Papuan Spring'. Delegates from Wamena had made a mark with their traditional attire and by the fact that many of them had walked the 300 kilometres to Jayapura for the occasion. One of them told the *Kongres* 'I was born naked and brought up naked. I walked here from the highlands to the coast. Some of you came by planes and boats. I walked on my own two feet. I just want independence' (Worth 2004). Propagation of the idea of independence following the *Kongres* seemed to have been most effective in the Baliem Valley, of which Wamena is the administrative centre. Some months after the *Kongres*, a team of church and human rights leaders observed: 'The element that most of all found a place in the hearts of people of the Baliem [Valley] and Papua in general was that the demand for independence was non-negotiable.'<sup>32</sup> In October 2000 Wamena was the site of the greatest bloodshed and political conflict that surrounded the Indonesian government's determination to eliminate public display of the symbols of Papuan nationalism, particularly the 'Morning Star' flag. The identification of highlanders as pro-independence hardliners, at least in the eyes of the security forces, was intensified with the attack on the police station at Abepura on 7 December 2000.

In April 2003 Wamena again became the focus of conflict when the arsenal of the military post was raided by people thought to be members of the OPM. Some 29 rifles and 3,500 rounds of ammunition were taken away. In what appeared to be well-prepared military operations against the OPM, the Indonesian Human Rights Commission found that that nine people died during the operations in the villages around Wamena, 38 people were tortured while 15 others were arbitrarily arrested during the raids. More pertinent to this study, thousands of residents were displaced from 25 villages near Wamena, resulting in the deaths of 42 people in refugee camps (Saraswati 2004). The Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace likened the sweeping operations conducted around Wamena to those seen after the Abepura attack in December 2000 and Wasior in 2001 (van den Broek 2003). The sweeping operations tend not to discriminate between those thought to be involved in Papuan resistance and the local communities.

---

<sup>31</sup> 'Warga 4 Desa di Wasior Belum Kembali', *Cendrawasih Pos*, 24 January 2003.

<sup>32</sup> Tim Kemanusiaan 2001 - Wamena Bagian Investigasi, 'Peristiwa Tragedi Kemanusiaan Wamena, 6 Oktober 2000, Sebelum Dan Sesudahnya: Sebuah Laporan Investigasi', Jayapura, Januari 2001.

## Mulia and the Puncak Jaya

The town of Mulia is the administrative centre of the district of Puncak Jaya. It is more remote, located further to the west from Wamena in the central highlands and to the north of the Freeport mine at Tembagapura. This next section of the paper will explore a pattern of conflict involving groups of associated with the OPM, armed with traditional weapons and what they can capture from the TNI, and military operations that have led to the displacement of significant numbers and the disruption of economic and social life in the local community. The displacements of the local communities occurred in the last months of 2004 and again in early 2007. The OPM resistance has been capable of killing and wounding small numbers of security force personnel and killing of small groups of civilians, mostly non-Papuans. Although the OPM operations have been small scale and sporadic, they have persisted. The security forces have been incapable of capturing those who they identify as being responsible for the resistance. The security forces recognized that they did not control some areas near Mulia.

The conflict was sparked off with the visit of a known OPM leader, Guliat Tabuni, to Mulia on 17 August 2004, Indonesian Independence Day. The security authorities understood that it was Guliat Tabuni's intention to create disturbances and ruin the celebrations. The Baptist Church leader, Socratez Sofyan Yoman, offered another interpretation: that Guliat Tabuni had returned to the area to visit family graves and to settle a dispute about the use of his family's land. The head of the Puncak Jaya District Government, Elieser Renmaur, attempted to contact Guliat Tabuni. Later there was an armed clash between Kopassus soldiers and Guliat Tabuni's group, in which two of the latter were killed and one of the soldiers was lightly wounded. Nothing further happened for nearly another month, when, on 14 September, a church minister, Elisa Tabuni, was killed. The military assert that Elisa Tabuni was killed in a shoot out between soldiers and the OPM, after the minister had been detained by the soldiers on suspicion that he was associated with the OPM. Elisa Tabuni was detained along with a younger man, who the military assert was carrying pro-independence material.<sup>33</sup> The military's version of these events is contested by Yoman, based on the eye witness account of Elisa Tabuni's son, presumably the younger man of the military's account, who subsequently escaped. According to this account, Tabuni and his son, Weties Tabuni, were detained by soldiers and were asked about the whereabouts of Guliat Tabuni. They denied any knowledge of the OPM leader and after further questioning an angered soldier shot the minister.<sup>34</sup>

A further month later, on 12 October, six non-Papuans were killed. They were transport drivers on the road between Wamena and Mulia, employed by PT Modern. The Indonesian authorities asserted that Guliat Tabuni was responsible<sup>35</sup>. However, according to

---

<sup>33</sup> 'Team formed to investigate West Papua shootings in Indonesia', *Cendrawasih Pos*, 29 October 2004, BBC Monitoring Service (via Joyo Indonesia News).

<sup>34</sup> 'Pdt. Socrates Sofyan Yoman, MA: Kasus Puncak Jaya Murni Rekayasa Militer', *ELSHAM News Service*, 3 November, 2004.

<sup>35</sup> Letter, Ramli Sa'ud, Minister Counsellor, Embassy Of The Republic Of Indonesia, London, to The Rt Revd. R.D. Harries, Bishop of Oxford, No. 47 / IV / 07 / LON / 05, 30 June 2005. Socratez Sofyan Yoman disputed this claim, arguing that Guliat Tabuni had not been able to operate in the area of the attack, as it has been occupied by the TNI. Yoman asserted that the TNI itself was responsible for the attack. Letter, Socratez Sofyan Yoman to Minister Counsellor, Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia, London, 22 July 2005 ([www.kabar-irian.com](http://www.kabar-irian.com)).

Yoman, who visited Mulia ten days after the murders, there was some doubt as there were two other groups that claimed to be OPM. Both of these groups seemed to have much greater freedom of movement than the Guliat Tabuni 'OPM' and were able to move in and out of the town of Mulia at will. According to Yoman, five days after the murder the military launched operations against the civilian population. The military operations involved both troops and bombing from helicopters, which caused the members of 27 church congregations to flee into the jungle.<sup>36</sup> The Indonesian version depicted fighting between the OPM and the TNI as well as OPM attacks on and occupation of villages.<sup>37</sup> Writing in July 2005, Yoman found that 6,393 people had been displaced as a result of the military operations launched in October 2004. These people remained in the jungle. He claimed that 78 Papuans had died in the jungle because of starvation and illness. In addition, he asserted that 371 houses (honai) as well as gardens had been destroyed in the villages deserted by the villagers who had fled the military operations.<sup>38</sup>

When Yoman visited Mulia on 21 October 2004, he later told the Jayapura press:

The first thing I witnessed that the town was dead, social activity had completely stopped; government officials from the lowest to the most senior had fled the Puncak Jaya district. The local population also had fled into the jungle and the mountains as well as to the villages where they felt secure.<sup>39</sup>

Conflicts between the Indonesian security forces and the sections of Papuan society around Mulia resumed in the last months of 2006 and have persisted into the early months of 2007. The pattern of conflict became more complicated with the involvement of local political leaders, the first direct election (Pilkada) for head of the Puncak Jaya District government (Bupati) and the establishment of 'alliances' between OPM leaders and candidates in the election. Early manoeuvring for the elections together with the distribution of compensation funds resulting from the government's abolition of subsidies for petroleum products appear to have been the trigger for the renewed violence. The election for heads of the District governments as the focus for political conflict had become common throughout Papua. Mulia and the District of Puncak Jaya were not exceptions. What was more unusual was the involvement of OPM leaders and the security forces.

One of the candidates for head of the District government was the former head, Elieser Renmaur, a Keiese. As a non-Papuan, Elieser Renmaur, faced the prospect of being disbarred from the election by the council (DPRD) of Puncak Jaya. According to a political report of the Kopassus unit based in Mulia, Elieser Renmaur attempted to mobilize support from a seemingly unlikely source: Guliat Tabuni, the OPM leader whose role in the earlier conflict in Mulia has been discussed above. The Kopassus report asserts that Elieser Renmaur held meetings in early October with OPM members, who pledged their support for his candidature

---

<sup>36</sup> 'Pdt. Socrates Sofyan Yoman, MA: Kasus Puncak Jaya Murni Rekayasa Militer', ELSHAM News Service, 3 November, 2004.

<sup>37</sup> Letter, Ramli Sa'ud, Minister Counsellor, Embassy Of The Republic Of Indonesia, London, to The Rt Revd. R.D. Harries, Bishop of Oxford, No. 47 / IV / 07 / LON / 05, 30 June 2005. ([www.kabar-irian.com](http://www.kabar-irian.com)).

<sup>38</sup> Letter, Socrates Sofyan Yoman to Minister Counsellor, Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia, London, 22 July 2005, ([www.kabar-irian.com](http://www.kabar-irian.com)).

<sup>39</sup> 'Pdt. Socrates Sofyan Yoman, MA: Kasus Puncak Jaya Murni Rekayasa Militer', ELSHAM News Service, 3 November, 2004.

(Mahyudi 2006: 4). In June 2006 Guliat Tabuni had sent a letter to the Chair of the MRP in Jayapura requesting that Elieser Renmaur should be reappointed as District Head. The letter, written in formal bureaucratic Indonesian, using what purported to be OPM letterhead with the insignia of the 'Revolutionary Provisional Government of the Republik (sic) of West Papua', argued, inter alia, that the OPM supported Elieser Renmaur because Papuan leaders in Puncak Jaya were not committed to serve the people. They were corrupt. 'They eat in Mulia, take their afternoon nap in Jayapura and sleep in Jakarta.'<sup>40</sup>

Elieser Renmaur's campaign coincided with the distribution of the compensation funds. The Kopassus report acknowledges the difficulties involved in the distributing the funds, as some of the regions in Puncak Jaya were under OPM control, which meant that the monies for the poor in these regions had to be given out in Mulia itself (Mahyudi 2006: 1). The distribution of the funds was followed by large scale consumption of alcohol, riots and the destruction of many government offices, houses and other infrastructure in Mulia on 13 October. The Kopassus report asserts that the riots and destruction were provoked by Elieser Renmaur and his supporters, including the OPM (*ibid.*: 10).

The violence continued, when, on 8 December Joko Susanto, a Kopassus soldier, and Tabias Sirgen, a retired military officer, were killed in Mulia. The security forces thought the Guliat Tabuni OPM was responsible. On a hill within sight of the town, the Papuan Morning Star flag was raised. By coincidence or otherwise, on the same day, Lukas Enembe, a highlander and former deputy head of the Puncak Jaya District and a candidate narrowly defeated in the 2006 election for Governor of Papua, announced his candidature for the election in Puncak Jaya. In response to these developments some of the residents of Mulia, especially the government officials, left by plane. Other residents were prevented from leaving by military road blocks. On Christmas Eve, the Morning Star flag flying just outside Mulia was replaced by one of larger dimensions. According to a report of a Church delegation, slogans attacking Lukas Enembe were shouted by OPM supporters in the vicinity of where the flag was flying (Ecumenical Council 2007: 3).

In early January 2007 military (Brimob) operations commenced with removal of the Morning Star flag. Gumi Morib was killed in these operations and the traditional house of Laringgen Morib, a Church leader, was burnt. In response to the operations, large numbers of people fled into the jungle. The Indonesian Evangelical Church (GIDI, Gereja Injili di Indonesia) reported that 5,361 people had fled from its congregations (*ibid.*: 5). It is worth noting that many of these people had fled from regions near Mulia that the Kopassus document, cited above, described as being controlled by the OPM. A delegation of church leaders from Jayapura was told by local church leaders that the members of their congregations who had fled needed food supplies and medicines. The displaced people were living in fear from both the OPM and the Indonesian security forces (*ibid.*).

Something of the dynamic of the military operations conducted in response to attacks on security forces like the murder of the Kopassus soldier and retired officer was captured by Sepnat Manufandu, one of the leaders of the Jayapura-based NGO Foker, when he appealed to the OPM to acknowledge whether it was responsible for the murders. Manufandu did not want civilians to become victims of sweeping operations and indiscriminate detentions. He

---

<sup>40</sup> Letter, Gen. Goliath Tabuni and Gen. Negoobet Tabinu to the Chair of the MRP, 9 June 2006, 201/TPN-OPM/PB/III/2006.

pointed out that highlanders have very similar physical features and it was difficult for the military to distinguish between civilians and separatists.<sup>41</sup>

The delegation of Jayapura-based church leaders, who visited Mulia in mid January 2007, found that the conflict between the Indonesian security forces and the OPM had created a humanitarian emergency. The district administration in Puncak Jaya, preoccupied with the forthcoming election, needed the support of the provincial government to provide the necessary food and medical assistance. The church leaders appealed to the security forces and the OPM to ensure the safe provision of food supplies and medical assistance to the displaced populations. They recommended that the numbers of security forces deployed in Puncak Jaya should be decreased so as to reduce the fear and traumas experienced by local communities as well as the potential for further conflict (Ecumenical Council 2007: 2, 6).

Perhaps reflective of the tensions in Mulia, on 13 February there was a shoot out between Brimob and TNI units in front of the local government office that left one member of Brimob dead. After queueing a long time for kerosene, with both soldiers and Brimob in the queue, a member of Brimob was not served before the supply ran out. A verbal argument became an exchange of fire lasting 90 minutes. Government officials fled their offices in terror. The *Papua Pos* reported that a similar incident between Brimob and the TNI had happened in 2006 in Puncak Jaya.<sup>42</sup> The role of the security forces is central to some Papuan accounts of the conflict in Puncak Jaya. For example, Yoman, who has closely chronicled the conflict in Mulia since 2004, argues that the military has fostered conflict in order to justify an increased presence in the highlands. He claims the military has fostered 'fake' OPM, who, for instance, was responsible for the flag raising just outside Mulia. He cites a meeting on 22 February 2007 of the Puncak Jaya District government and council with the police and military which agreed that eight new military posts would be established in Puncak Jaya.<sup>43</sup>

At the time of writing the humanitarian crisis created by the military operations and subsequent displacement of thousands of civilians had not been resolved. However, despite the conflict and displacement, the election for head of the Puncak Jaya District government was held on 21 March. The provisional results were that Lukas Enembe had won with a substantial majority of 74.9% of the vote.<sup>44</sup>

### **Ad hoc conflict, mass displacement**

The conflicts in Wasior and in the central highlands since 2001 have displaced about 20,000 people. The scale of the displacement is substantial in relation to the size of the local

---

<sup>41</sup> 'Pelakukanya Belum Tentu TPN/OPM', *Papua Pos*, 28 December 2006. <http://www.papuapos.com/index.php?main=fullberita&id=1240>.

<sup>42</sup> 'Tim Terpadu ke Mulia', *Papua Pos*, 15 Februari. 2007 <http://www.papuapos.com/new/index.php?main=fullberita&id=2113>.

<sup>43</sup> Email, Socratez Sofyan Yoman, 'Laporan Khusus: Peristiwa 8 Desember 2006 Di Puncak Kumipaga, Puncak Jaya Murni Rekayasa Militer Bekerjasama Dengan Opm Binaan Militer', 4 January 2007; 'Genocide, Military Operations & Islamization under Special Autonomy in West Papua', 1 March 2007.

<sup>44</sup> 'Enembe-Ibo Unggul dalam Pemilihan Bupati Puncak Jaya', *Tempointeraktif*, 22 March 2007. <http://www.tempointeraktif.com/hg/nusa/papua/2007/03/22/brk,20070322-96091,id.html> The losing candidates had challenged the results. See 'Saksi Nomor Urut 2 dan 3 Terus Datangi Panwas', *Papua Pos*, 29 March 2007 <http://www.papuapos.com/new/index.php?main=fullberita&id=2686>.

populations. It is also substantial relative to the scale and intensity of the conflict that generated the displacement. If the intensity of the conflict is measured in terms of numbers of people killed, the conflict has been low level and intermittent. The numbers of people killed in OPM attacks and in shoot outs between the security forces and the OPM in Wasior and the central highlands were in single figures, in marked contrast to the numbers of people displaced. However limited the capacity of the OPM appears to be, the Indonesian security forces have not been able to eliminate it. In Puncak Jaya the military has been able to identify the leaders of the OPM and recognize that some regions were controlled by the OPM.

The apparent disparity between the scale of displacement and the intensity of the conflict would seem to be related to the nature of the Indonesian military response. The immediate cause of displacement in Wasior and the central highlands has been sweeping operations through local communities that have not distinguished between ordinary villagers and OPM activists and supporters. When villagers have fled from sweeping operations the security forces have endeavoured to restrict further population movements in the areas they controlled. The security forces have sought to limit the access of the churches and human rights organizations to the displaced populations as well as to thwart efforts to provide humanitarian assistance.

Most of the displaced people were Papuans who lived in subsistence agricultural communities in remote regions of Papua, enjoyed few education opportunities and had negligible access to any government services. They were not the educated political leaders who escaped across the border into PNG and beyond with the objective of furthering the struggle for independence. They represent another dimension of Papuan resistance to Indonesian rule. Their communities have supported the OPM. It was the OPM that created and sustained the resistance to Indonesian rule from the mid 1960s to the fall of President Soeharto in 1998. Ironically, the OPM has continued the sporadic and localized resistance in the remote areas of Papua, after the Indonesian government has shut down nationalist politics in the urban areas of Papua.

The urban, Indonesian educated elite that supplanted the OPM as leaders of the nationalist movement from 1998 has been represented in these remote regions of conflict and displacement by the Jayapura-based Church leaders. The Churches have congregations in the most isolated regions of Papua, including those controlled by the OPM in Puncak Jaya. Most of the Papuan accounts used in this discussion were from the Churches and Church-linked human rights organizations. The Churches have been nearly the sole channel of communication through which news of these conflicts and displacements have reached Jayapura and the world outside Papua. In these circumstances it is not surprising that in the mind of some Indonesian government officials the Churches and the OPM have been linked.<sup>45</sup>

The loss of life in the conflicts in Wasior and the Central Highlands has been modest. Wasior and the central highlands are regions of Papua where ethnic Papuans still form the majority of the population. However, in both regions civilian Indonesian settlers have constituted a significant proportion of the victims of OPM attacks. Another sign of the tensions generated by Papua's demographic transformation was the terms in which the

---

<sup>45</sup> Letter, Ramli Sa'ud, Minister Counsellor, Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia, London, to The Rt Revd. R.D. Harries, Lord Bishop of Oxford, No. 47 / IV / 07 / LON / 05, 30 June 2005. ([www.kabar-irian.com](http://www.kabar-irian.com)).

election campaign for head of the Puncak Jaya district government was waged. The ethnic background of the candidates was an issue in the election.

### **Indonesian pressure**

This paper has attempted to relate displacement to some disparate patterns of conflict in Papua. A focus on displacement is useful for the way it illuminates those diverse patterns of conflict. The paper has argued that displacement both fuels the conflict and is a consequence of conflict. The radical demographic transformation that has taken place under Indonesian rule has displaced Papuan communities in areas occupied by transmigration projects, but for most of Papuan society there is a feeling of displacement that is perhaps better expressed as dispossession. Displacement touches many sections of Papuan society from well-educated political leaders, who have sought to further their political campaigns outside Indonesia, to impoverished subsistence farmers in the most remote regions of Papua, who have fled from military operations. To paraphrase Socratez Sofyan Yoman, Papuans live under strong pressure from Jakarta. It is pressure that provides the link between the various types of displacement discussed in the paper. Papuans' relations with Indonesians are often asymmetrical. The OPM is no match for the Indonesian military and police. Papuan subsistence farmers and petty traders operate in a different sector of the economy from the Indonesian settlers. Except for the short lived Papuan Spring the Indonesian government has established and enforced the constraints on political activity. Displacement in its many forms is a response to this pressure.

### **References**

- Amnesty International. 2002a. 'Indonesia: Grave human rights violations in Wasior, Papua.' September 30. <http://web.amnesty.org/ai.nsf/Index/ASA210322002?OpenDocument&of=COUNTRIES\INDONESIA>.
- Amnesty International. 2002b. 'Impunity and human rights violations in Papua', April 2002, AI Index: ASA 21/010/2002.
- Amnesty International. 2001. 'Indonesia: Fear for safety/Fear of torture or ill treatment.' 8 June. PUBLIC AI Index: ASA 21/017/2001.
- Ballard, Chris. 2002. 'The Denial of Traditional Land Rights in West Papua,' *Cultural Survival Quarterly* 26(3) (Fall): 39-43.
- Boeke, J.H. 1934. 'The Effects of the Economic Crisis in Netherlands-India', *Pacific Affairs*, 7(1): 33-34.
- Boney, E.J. 1984. 'Sejarah Kebangkitan Nasionalisme Papua', unpublished manuscript, request number D Or. 630, KITLV Library, Wijk, The Netherlands.
- Bonner, Raymond. 2006. 'Long Trip by Sea and Into a Political Maze for Papuans Seeking Independence,' *New York Times*, 15 April.
- Chesterfield, Nick. 2006. Public: Security Assessment & Intelligence Profile Mission: Sister Muruk 06: West Papua Border Mission, May/June. <http://www.freewestpapua.com>, p. 14.
- Ecumenical Council Of Papuan Churches (Persekutuan Gereja gereja di Papua). 2007. Report on the situation in Mulia. No: 005/PGGP/07/2.7, Jayapura, 29 January.
- ELSHAM. 2001. Urgent Action No:46/ELSHAM Papua/VI/2001, Jayapura, 19 June.
- ELSHAM. 2000. 'Insiden di Pasar Abepura', 11 & 12 November 2000. ELSHAM, Jayapura.

- Fitzpatrick, Stephen. 2006. 'Papuan refugees were hand picked,' *The Australian*, 25 September. [www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,20867,20470462\\_2702,00.html](http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,20867,20470462_2702,00.html).
- Furnival, J.S. 1976. *Netherlands India: A Study of a Plural Economy*, B.M. Israel BV, Amsterdam, 1976.
- Giay, Benny. 2000. Menuku Papua Baru: Berapa polok pemikiran sekitar Emanisipasi Orang Papua, Deiyai/ELSHAM Papua, Jayapura.
- Glazebrook, Diana. 2004. "'If I stay here there is nothing yet if I return I do not know whether I will be safe": West Papuan refugee responses to Papua New Guinea Asylum Policy 1998-2003,' *Journal of Refugee Studies* 17(2): 205-221.
- Government of the Netherlands. 1960. Netherlands Government Annual Report to the United Nations on Netherlands New Guinea. The Hague, Government of the Netherlands.
- International Crisis Group. 2002. *Resources and Conflict in Papua. ICG Asia Report No. 39*, Jakarta/Brussels, 13 September.
- MacLellan, Nic. 2006. 'Refugees: West Papua's forgotten asylum seekers,' 13 April. <http://www.apo.org.au>.
- McGibbon, Rodd. 2004. *Plural Society in Peril: Migration, Economic Change and the Papua Conflict*. East-West Center Washington, Policy Studies 13.
- Mahyudi, Henri. 2006. 'Kronologis aksi Anarkhis Massa Penerima Bantuan Dana Kompensasi BBM atau BLT di Distrik Mulia Kabupaten Puncak Jaya', Henri Mahyudi, Kapten Inf, Satgasban-4 Kopassus Pos-7 Mulia, Laporan Khusus, R/01/LAPSUS/X/2006, 15 October.
- Neumann, Klaus. 2004. *Refuge Australia: Australia's Humanitarian Record*. Sydney, UNSW Press.
- Powell, Sian. 2006. 'Papuan upbeat on bid to gain asylum,' *The Australian*, 20 March.
- Rumbiak, M.C. 2000. 'Migrasi Spontan dan Transmigrasi', unpublished paper, Fakultas Ekonomi, Universitas Cendrawasih, Jayapura.
- Saraswati, Muninggar Sri. 2004. 'Human rights commission reveals abuses in Papua', *Jakarta Post*, September 03.
- Saud, Herman and Socratez Sofyan Yoman. 2005. 'Joint Statement on Regional Elections, Special Autonomy and the MRP (Papua People's Assembly)', DPRD (Papuan Regional Parliament House). Jayapura, 9th June 2005.
- UNHCR. 2007. 2005 UNCHR Statistical Year Country Data Sheet – Papua New Guinea, <http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/country?iso=png&expand=statistics>.
- van den Broek, Theo. 2003. 'Situasi Akhir Tahun 2003 Di Papua: Refleksi', Sekretariat Keadilan & Perdamaian (Skp), Keuskupan Jayapura. November 28. <http://www.kabar-irian.com>.
- Worth, Mark. 2004. *The Land of the Morning Star*. Film Australia / Australian Broadcasting Corporation (production, 2003, broadcast, ABC TV, February 2, 2004).

## **Representations of violence, conflict, and displacement in West Papua**

*Stuart Kirsch, Assistant Professor of Anthropology, University of Michigan*

Now that the statute of limitations has passed, I have a confession to make: I have only visited Indonesia as an illegal border crosser. During the late 1980s, I conducted ethnographic research in Papua New Guinea with the Yonggom people, who are divided by the border with West Papua, where they are known as the Muyu. When some friends invited me to accompany them on a hunting and camping trip to their land across the border, I agreed to join them.

The land rises slowly as one approaches the border, where a low range of hills divides the watersheds of two of the island's largest river systems, the Digul and the Fly. A rusting sign from the 1950s and a concrete pylon with notices in both English and Bahasa Indonesia were the only indications that we had left one country and were entering another. However, the path was well-travelled, and later in the journey I found myself walking ahead of my companions. Turning a corner, I came upon two men resting beside a fire, bow and arrows by their side. They were members of the Organisasi Papua Merdeka (OPM), or Free Papua Movement, the primary vehicle of West Papuan resistance to the Indonesian state. We exchanged greetings and I was relieved to learn that they had heard about the anthropologist living on the Ok Tedi River. When my friends subsequently encountered the two OPM members, they hurried to catch up with me and kept me in their sight for the remainder of our visit to West Papua.

There are several reasons why I begin this essay on representations of violence, conflict, and displacement in West Papua by reminiscing about my experiences as a renegade anthropologist traversing national boundaries. First of all, it is important to think about how we come to know places. As Danilyn Rutherford (2004: 186) recently observed, popular understandings of West Papua have been influenced by 'lurid accounts of backcountry travel found in advocacy classics like George Monbiot's [1989] *Poisoned Arrows*'. A defining feature of the genre is a European narrator 'who is utterly dependent on his Papuan nationalist hosts, frustrated by their seeming failure to cooperate on his mission, yet seduced by the experience into embracing their cause' (Rutherford 2004: 186-187). In addition to these first-person accounts of journalists and travel writers, the advocacy literature includes contributions from ordinarily conservative fields such as history (Elmslie 2002) and political science (King 2004), as well as a number of influential human rights reports (e.g., Budiardjo and Liong, 1988; Anti-Slavery Society 1990; Brundige *et al.* 2004).<sup>1</sup>

In these accounts, it makes a difference how one has entered the scene.<sup>2</sup> Arriving by plane from Jakarta to Biak, or by ferry from the Moluccas, West Papua is the tail end of a long archipelago of gradual differences. Indonesian nationalists emphasize continuities across the islands and the shared historical experiences that produced them. West Papua may be the outlier, but it is still imagined as part of the nation. Therefore Benedict Anderson argues that provisions for regional autonomy will allow Indonesians to welcome West Papuans 'back to the common project and deep horizontal comradeship from which they should never have been excluded' (Anderson 1999: 5 cited in King 2004: 32). Similarly, when I asked the late

---

<sup>1</sup> Australian political scientist Peter King (2004: 7) similarly refers to his experience 'tiptoeing across the Papua New Guinea-Indonesian border at Wutung, on Papua New Guinea's north coast'.

<sup>2</sup> See also Elmslie (2002:132, cited in Rutherford 2004:185).

Indonesian novelist Pramoedya Ananta Toer what he would like to say to the West Papuan refugees with whom I work, he answered that he would like them to know he was sorry that they also suffered under Suharto (personal communication 1999). In other words, the hardships experienced by the West Papuans were by no means unique, and consequently should not be regarded as a barrier to their reincorporation within the nation.

However, West Papua looks very different from the border with Papua New Guinea. Being Papuan or Melanesian rather than Indonesian is a central political claim and a key feature of identity politics for many West Papuans, whose attitudes towards Indonesians have been shaped by the same kinds of racialized discourse used against them.<sup>3</sup> West Papuan identification with Christianity is also a means of reinscribing their differences from Indonesians, even though this essentializes Indonesia as a Muslim nation and ignores the extent to which religious difference is associated with tension or conflict elsewhere in the country (see King 2004: 34). Even claims about language differ along the border. Although Anderson (1991: 177, cited in King 2004: 32) argues that many Indonesians see West Papuans as fellow citizens because they speak the national language, the Muyu people with whom I work deny sharing a common tongue with Indonesians by referring to Bahasa Indonesia by its Dutch colonial name, Malayu or Bahasa Malayu.<sup>4</sup>

Thus one acquires a radically different impression of West Papua depending on whether it is approached from an Indonesian perspective, emphasizing integration and reincorporation, or from the perspective of West Papuans, who stress separation and difference. The advocacy literature sides with the West Papuans against the Indonesian state and its brutal history of occupation. The competing perspectives also tend to be reproduced in the anthropological literature on New Guinea, which is similarly divided between scholars who identify with one or the other of the two very different regional traditions of scholarship on insular Southeast Asia and Melanesia (Kirsch 2002: 54).<sup>5</sup>

Representations of New Guinea are more thoroughly dominated by anthropology than perhaps any other area of the world.<sup>6</sup> Historically, anthropologists viewed the island as a natural laboratory for the study of human society, and its resident peoples were seen to represent the primitive or savage stages of human evolution. Despite profound changes in anthropological paradigms, including the rejection of social evolution as a criterion for classifying contemporary societies, the recognition that all societies have histories, and the resulting critique of studies set in a timeless and ahistorical 'ethnographic present' (Fabian 1983; Clifford and Marcus 1986), these anachronistic images continue to shape popular representations of West Papua (see Lederman 1998). Moreover, because the Indonesian government restricts the access of journalists and scholars to West Papua, alternative perspectives and accounts are sharply limited.

The purpose of this essay is to examine how contemporary understandings of West Papua have been shaped by popular representations of violence, conflict, and displacement. I

---

<sup>3</sup> King (2004: 34) argues that 'for many Papuans "Indonesia" tends to symbolize anti-Melanesian racism, Islamic intolerance and an Asian superiority complex'.

<sup>4</sup> This is a political rather than a linguistic distinction (Diana Glazebrook, personal communication 2000).

<sup>5</sup> Although Rutherford (2004: 187) argues that 'it is only by moving beyond these ethnological categories [of South-East Asia and Melanesia] that one can come to understand' Papuan nationalism.

<sup>6</sup> With the possible exception of Amazonia, although see Hugh Raffles (2002).

begin by describing how anthropological representations of perpetual warfare in the highlands of West Papua have been used to legitimate state interventions. Next, I show how recent examples of extreme tourism offer brief but terrifying encounters with putative ‘lost tribes’ whose presence undermines the credibility of West Papuan sovereignty claims. Finally, I examine how popular representations of Freeport-McMoRan’s controversial copper and gold mine invoke stereotypes of ‘Stone Age’ Papuans even as international discourses of transparency and accountability reveals the ‘smoking gun’ of Freeport’s financial relationship to the Indonesian military. A violent shoot-out along the road to the mine is also where the discourse of human rights intersects with the US ‘war on terror’ (RFK Memorial Center for Human Rights 2004).

Elsewhere I have considered the responsibilities of anthropologists to bear witness to political violence and the power of ethnography to amplify indigenous forms of expression (Kirsch 2006).<sup>7</sup> In this earlier work, I examined West Papuan efforts to draw on the ‘politics of sympathy’ (Keck and Sikkink 1988) in the 1984 refugee movement during which 11,000 West Papuans crossed the border into Papua New Guinea.<sup>8</sup> Their exodus was triggered by Indonesian military reprisals that followed a political rally and flag-raising in Jayapura, although the intention of the OPM was that the large-scale population movement would draw international attention to the problems in West Papua. They hoped that the resulting pressure from the international community would convince the United Nations to overturn the 1969 UN-sponsored ‘Act of Free Choice’ by which Indonesia consolidated its control over the territory. However, the 1984 refugee movement was treated as a humanitarian crisis that jeopardized diplomatic relations between Papua New Guinea and Indonesia rather than an opportunity to address the underlying problems in West Papua (Kirsch 1996). Despite their failure to change the status quo, the majority of the West Papuan refugees continue to reside in Papua New Guinea more than two decades later.

In this paper, I seek to extend the project of using ethnography to address structural violence by examining how popular representations of West Papua have influenced interpretations of political events, impeding the efforts of activists to attract international support. In contrast, I wish to call attention to the agency of West Papuan activists in their formulation of new ways to challenge and potentially transform their politically-fraught relationship with the Indonesian State. Longstanding problems of militarism, political terror, invasive patterns of settlement, exploitative regimes of resource extraction, and racist discrimination against West Papuans have not disappeared with the collapse of Suharto’s New Order Indonesia (see Rutherford 1999). However, political changes in the state have led to unprecedented opportunities for West Papuan activists to pursue tactics and strategies that are more in keeping with larger trends in indigenous activism and the mobilization of the discourse of human rights, and may translate into greater international attention and support. In particular, I examine recent efforts by West Papuans to interpret *merdeka* (freedom, independence) in terms of social justice, and consider the significance of this change for their relationship to the state. Success in these endeavours depends in part on displacing the

---

<sup>7</sup> Similarly, Paul Farmer’s (2004: 305) calls for anthropologists to address structural violence, which may be overlooked when they remained focused on the ‘ethnographically visible’ rather than the histories that have produced those conditions. Farmer describes how the historical legacy of slavery and racism are responsible for the terrible poverty and human rights violations that are common in Haiti.

<sup>8</sup> By far the largest contingent of refugees in Papua New Guinea from any single ethnic or linguistic group is the 6,000 Muyu who relocated from the political districts adjacent to the border (Kirsch 2006).

politically disempowering images that continue to shape popular understandings of West Papua.

### **Perpetual war**

Perhaps the most influential images of West Papua come from the 1963 film *Dead Birds* by the American filmmaker Robert Gardner.<sup>9</sup> Dani warfare is the focus of the film and the subject of some of its most powerful scenes and lasting impressions as scores of men from opposing factions gather on the battlefield at regular intervals to carry out a ritualized form of combat.<sup>10</sup> The title of the film is taken from the Dani term that refers to trophies of war, especially weapons or ornaments taken from the body of a person killed in battle.

Gardner was invited to make the film by Victor DeBruyn, head of the Bureau of Native Affairs of Netherlands New Guinea. DeBruyn visited the United States in 1960 to seek political support for the Dutch territory (Heider 2001-2002: 62). Ethnographic research and filmmaking was part of the colonial strategy of emphasizing differences between West Papua and the rest of the Indonesian archipelago to justify the continued Dutch presence in the region. DeBruyn invited Gardner to make a record of tribal life before ‘development and pacification programs had irretrievably altered traditional culture in the remote and still uncontacted areas’ (Gardner 1972: 31).

Three aspects of the film *Dead Birds* are relevant to this discussion of the negative consequences of representations of West Papua. The first example concerns the film’s naturalization of the Dani. *Dead Birds* alternates between scenes of human activity and animal behaviour, implying that the Dani live in a state of nature. The film includes images of a grey heron among the sweet potato vines, a hawk perching in a tree, a cormorant on the river, ducks taking flight, swallows flitting through the twilight, and a dove in the forest, all of which are meant to echo or foreshadow human activity depicted in the film (Heider 1972). By relating a Dani myth that contrasts the mortality of birds and men to the immortality of the snake, which can shed its skin and live again, Gardner (1972: 35) hoped that his film, by depicting a society living close to nature, would reveal something fundamental about how ‘we all, as humans meet our animal fate’.<sup>11</sup>

Another important dimension of the film’s representation of the Dani is conveyed by its omniscient narrative voice. Gardner followed the conventions of ethnographic filmmaking

---

<sup>9</sup> Other genealogies could also be proposed for the representation of violence in West Papua, as Marina Welker (2000) suggests in her analysis of Anthony van Kampen’s popular accounts of the time he spent in Dutch New Guinea during World War II, the *Jungle Pimpernel* trilogy. These books helped to establish Dutch New Guinea’s reputation as a place that defied expectations, as indicated by the following warning issued by the fictional journalist who narrates the trilogy: ‘Things happen here, so fantastic, so unreal, so dreadful too, that no one in the West would believe you’ (van Kampen 1952: 68, cited in Welker 2000). Van Kampen also depicted West Papua as a violent place; following an encounter with headhunters and the trophy skulls they had assembled, the narrator confesses that he was ‘overcome with horror and dizziness’, and describes his experience as ‘so unreal, so fantastic in its primitiveness that I can’t assimilate it’ (van Kampen 1952:88, cited in Welker 2000).

<sup>10</sup> Heider (2001-2002: 67) attributes Gardner’s choice of the film’s subject matter to the fact that ‘male participation in warfare was the most powerfully visual of Dani activities’.

<sup>11</sup> Gardner (1972: 31) describes his intentions in making *Dead Birds* in following terms: ‘I seized the opportunity of speaking to certain fundamental issues in human life. The Dani were then less important to me than those issues’.

of his time by focusing on the struggle of ‘a few very individualized people facing a strong natural or cultural problem and surmounting it’ (Heider 2001-2002: 62).<sup>12</sup> He identified two main characters, an adult man named Weyak and a young boy called Pua. Not only do Gardner’s voice-overs explain the meaning of the events depicted in the film, but he also claims to have intimate knowledge of what the Dani think and feel. For example, after presenting an image of the men fighting, the film shifts its attention to the boy Pua, and the narrator purports to know what he is thinking, ‘Pua wonders, in the dry safety of his house, if any man from Wupakainma has been killed’ (Heider 1972: 47). In another scene, Pua watches men turning the soil for a new garden, and Gardner suggests that he is ‘thinking of the day when he himself will be a farmer’ (Heider 1972: 44). Later in the film the narrator intones, ‘Weyak relaxes, glad to have a day not spent watching for the enemy’ (Heider 1972: 63). The Dani do not speak for themselves in *Dead Birds*; they are effectively silenced by these representations. (The assumption that the thoughts and emotions of West Papuans can be readily understood through observation and do not require their interlocutor to speak to them is a theme to which I return below.)<sup>13</sup> Although the film crew had access to a Dutch patrol officer who spoke both Malayu and a pidginized version of Dani language known as ‘police talk’ (Heider 2001-2002: 66), the filmmakers did not want the Dani to know that their images were being captured on film (Heider 2001-2002: 68). Consequently the film was made without either the voices or the consent of the Dani.<sup>14</sup>

Most significantly, the film depicts the Dani as though they were engaged in a state of perpetual war. Karl G. Heider (1972), the anthropologist accompanying Gardner on the Harvard film project, argued that Dani warfare was ritually domesticated, limiting the number of people wounded or killed in battle. This was in keeping with the functionalist view of warfare in New Guinea prevalent at the time (see Rappaport 1968). Heider (1972: 34) hypothesized that ‘Dani society is ultimately based on this ritual war, and that without it there would be no Dani; if war were suddenly stopped the society would collapse’. The end of warfare would turn the aggressive impulses of the Dani destructively inward against themselves. Not only did the Dani continuously wage war, but warfare made the Dani who they are. This image of a society engaged in perpetual war was also conveyed by the film, as indicated by Gardner’s concluding words of narration: ‘They kill to save their souls and, perhaps, to ease the burden of knowing . . . what they as men who have forever killed each other, cannot forget’ (Heider 1972: 75).<sup>15</sup>

Subsequent research revealed several problems with Heider’s initial analysis of Dani warfare. First, the Dani also practice another form of combat that is far more lethal than the balanced form of negative reciprocity depicted in *Dead Birds*. It involves a large-scale assault

---

<sup>12</sup> Heider (2001-2002: 67) suggests that this technique allows the filmmaker to ‘humanize, rather than emphasize the otherness of subjects’.

<sup>13</sup> Although the technology of synchronic sound recording had not yet been invented, other filmmakers were already addressing this problem through voice-overs and subtitles based on interviews recorded after the fact (Loizos 1993).

<sup>14</sup> Although Heider claims that Gardner must have known ‘what they were thinking because he asked them in his many interviews’ (Heider 2001-2002: 67), Loizos (1993: 151) suggests that ‘it seems more probable that he [Gardner] imaginatively projected himself into their thoughts and motives, not as they were known to be for the real people in the real world, but as they were for his characters in the conceptual space of the film-story’.

<sup>15</sup> According to Heider, the screening of the film *Dead Birds* at the Governor’s Palace in Hollandia (Jakarta) elicited a mixed response from the Dutch audience, who ‘appreciated its power, but were perhaps unhappy that it showed warfare in an area that had just been pacified’ (2001-2002: 62).

that is intended to rout one's opponents, driving them from their land, which the attackers subsequently occupy themselves (Heider 1972: 4). Heider (1972: 24) later described Dani warfare as a system composed of 'a long phase of ritual war, interrupted by a secular attack which rearranges alliances, and is followed by another phase of ritual war fought along the new frontiers'. When Dutch intervention brought about the end of Dani warfare several years later, Heider's prediction that Dani aggression would destroy their society was proven false. Other scholars working in the highlands of West Papua found that people were often relieved by the end of warfare, which they were unable to resolve themselves because they lacked the political structures necessary to negotiate a truce between the warring parties (Koch 1974). Although the Dani may have been caught in the middle of a cycle of reciprocal violence and competition over land and resources when the Harvard film crew arrived, warfare can no more be seen as the defining feature of their society than it is of our own.<sup>16</sup>

It is useful to think about the film *Dead Birds* in terms of the 'politics of time' (Rutz 1992), which recognizes that the ability to define or manage the time of others is a fundamental form of political power. From this perspective, the state gains authority by treating people in West Papua as though they belong to the past rather than the present. This is based on the inappropriate application of evolutionary theory to explain the differences between contemporary societies (Fabian 1983). Viewing West Papuans as though they live in the 'Stone Age' and consequently belong to another era allows the state to define them as insufficiently modern and therefore in need of state intervention. That none of the film crew was able to interview the Dani in their own language, and consequently were unable to ask the Dani to describe their thoughts on warfare, contributes to the perception of difference that is reified through the politics of time. The ability of the Dutch state to control the politics of time in this fashion supported their claim to have a special responsibility to administer 'Stone Age' West Papuans, and consequently to rebuff Indonesian claims to the territory.

The film *Dead Birds* sets the scene for future representations of West Papua and West Papuans. It depicts West Papuans as though they live in a state of nature and treats them as representatives of our collective human past. As a 'Stone Age' society, they are not recognized as our coevals, but instead are treated as holdovers from another era who must be brought into the present, legitimating a variety of state interventions. The film also establishes perpetual violence as the norm for West Papua. By filming in a location considered 'remote and still uncontacted', or only recently contacted, the pursuit of 'lost tribes' or other 'uncontacted' peoples has also become associated with West Papua regardless of how much time has passed and circumstances have changed. Because ethnographic film is often treated as though it depicts an 'ethnographic present' that does not change rather than a historical artefact, the film *Dead Birds* continues to reinforce assumptions about the Dani living 'out of time', in nature rather than history. Indeed, the Dutch colonial presence is completely edited out of this film. Finally, the narrative voice-over that silences the Dani instead of allowing them to speak for themselves has also become a paradigm for West Papua rather than an exception. The images in *Dead Birds* have become iconic for West Papua, giving license to subsequent interventions of the missionaries, development agencies, and the state, including the Indonesian military.

---

<sup>16</sup> The image of perpetual war among the Dani as a characteristic of primitive society is particularly ironic today given that the contemporary war on terror is projected to continue indefinitely.

## Terror in out-of-the-way places

Evidence of the staying power of the images of West Papuans depicted in the film *Dead Birds* can be found in contemporary forms of extreme tourism in which Euro-Americans pay thousands of dollars to participate in staged encounters with so-called lost tribes. ‘Exclusive: First Contact!’ screams the headline on the cover of *Outside Magazine*. Michael Behar’s (2005) essay ‘The Selling of the Last Savage’ describes his travels through West Papua with an American tour operator who has advertised the opportunity to meet ‘uncontacted native tribes who have never seen outsiders’. Inherent in these encounters is the notion of the lost tribe, the special status of which only exists by virtue of its lack of contact with the outside world, and consequently is eliminated by the encounter (Kirsch 1997a: 65-66n.11). These travellers seek to acquire social distinction by visiting a place which they believe to be on the verge of significant change (Errington and Gewertz 1989: 45). Behar’s account in *Outside Magazine* also perpetuates the assumption that West Papuans are fierce, innately violent, and prefer to live in isolation from the rest of the world.<sup>17</sup>

Behar dutifully reports the sceptical responses of the anthropologists he interviewed on the possibility of encountering people who remain unaware of the outside world, in contrast to Western myths about such interactions.<sup>18</sup> However, the tour operator dismisses this perspective by pointing out that ‘some of these [anthropologists] are just lecturers at nice universities who have tenure and cushy jobs . . . If they think I’ve staged this . . . I give them an open invitation to see for themselves’ (quoted in Behar 2005: 112-113). Behar’s expedition took video footage of these rain forest encounters using a night vision camera that rendered everything in shades of green. In the film, five or six West Papuan men suddenly appear out of nowhere and rush the tour members with their bows raised, only to return a few minutes later to shyly pose for photographs, albeit with their backs to the camera. They were extravagantly dressed for the encounter, wearing feather headdresses and palm frond decorations more appropriate for a ritual or ceremony than a day in the forest. The shelter in which they were allegedly camping when the tourist party walked by had only just been constructed; it was made from fresh palm fronds and leaves rather than dried thatch. I told Behar that the video footage reminded me of the teenage cult horror film *The Blair Witch Project* because of the shaky camera work, the confusion and panic of the participants, and the disoriented moments of recollection during which the participants tried to figure out what they had witnessed.

A similar expedition through the forests of West Papua, run by the same American tour operator, was subsequently featured in *The New Yorker* by journalist Lawrence Osbourne (2005). Osbourne interpreted the distressed emotional response of the Kombai people whom he met during his visit as evidence that they had never encountered outsiders before. In

---

<sup>17</sup> The representation of a society as though it was organized around war might be contrasted with how the Tasaday, first publicized in 1971, were depicted as a gentle, Stone Age people living in caves in rural Mindanao in the Philippines (Nance 1975). The Tasaday rapidly became modern celebrities, their non-violence a powerful symbol of peace during the Vietnam war (Kirsch 1997: 60). The opposing images of the Dani and the Tasaday recall Trouillot’s (1991) description of the Janus-faced representation of indigenous peoples.

<sup>18</sup> Behar approached the story with unusual ideas about anthropology. He wrote to me in an email message how he had learned that the ‘anthropological community today is philosophically moving away from the notion of first contact—which was all the rage in the late 1960s and early 70s—particularly because of the potential to introduce disease. So my question is this: When trying to learn more about uncontacted or little-known tribes, what are the current trends/approaches being used in place of just marching into the jungle and attempting to make face-to-face contact?’ (Michael Behar, personal communication, 2005).

contrast, anthropologist Rupert Stasch (2005), who has conducted extensive research with the neighbouring Korowai people, suggests that the strong emotional response of the Kombai indicates that the tourists were either being intrusive and unpredictable, or were simply unwelcome, not that this was a 'first contact' event. As before, the visitors readily assumed that they could discern the thoughts and emotions of West Papuans simply by observing them and without speaking to them (see Stasch 2005).<sup>19</sup> Osbourne also found the encounter terrifying, and in response to my comments to Behar, which were sent to him by another anthropologist, he wrote that 'I went on the trip and it sure as hell wasn't *The Blair Witch Project*. I thought that I was going to die!' (Deborah Gewertz, personal communication, 2005). I am not surprised that Behar and Osborne were frightened; these expeditions are intended to be scary, so much so that the participants are unable to take stock of the facts.<sup>20</sup>

The stereotypes of primitive violence re-enacted in these faux encounters also work to obscure the violence of the state. It is telling that the first Korowai man whom Osbourne meets has the nickname Brimob, the acronym for the Indonesian mobile defence forces, acquired because he allegedly shot a soldier in the eye with an arrow. Yet it is the journalists who participate in these encounters who remain blind to the political implications of their work. These tales of terror in out-of-the-way places perpetuate rumours about the presence of uncontacted peoples (or 'lost tribes') who are inherently violent, providing the Indonesian state with the rationale for appropriating their land and resources in the name of development and modernization (Kirsch 2002: 65-66). By keeping West Papuans in the 'savage slot' (Trouillot 1991), these narratives also legitimate the continued militarization of the Indonesian province.

## Smoking guns

The media continue to exploit stereotypes of West Papuans in their coverage of political and economic struggles over resource extraction. Consider the following vignette on globalization published by the *National Geographic*, influential arbiter of American perspectives on the world and avid promoter of US business interests abroad (Lutz and Collins 1993), which purports to describe the West Papuan response to the controversial Freeport mine in West Papua:

At Freeport-McMoRan Copper and Gold Inc.'s 24,7000 acres of mines in Irian Jaya, some 14,000 people use huge trucks and excavating machines to hollow out mountains. But what impressed me most when I visited several years ago was fleeting glimpses of local Amungme people who had little contact with the outside world until Freeport-McMoRan arrived in the early 1960s. Some Amungme became miners, mastering new equipment. Others resisted intrusion, using bows and bone-tipped arrows to attack mine workers and buildings. A few sometimes took things from Freeport employees. Why take boots that are of no use unless you work in a mine? To get manufactured goods. These Amungme saw that outsiders had many novel possessions and wanted their share (Swerdlow 1999: 3).

---

<sup>19</sup> Many of the Korowai and the neighbouring Kombai are familiar with tourism and tourists, although there is no general agreement on whether or not tourism is desirable (Stasch 2005).

<sup>20</sup> Behar's delay in contacting these anthropologists until after he returned from West Papua is perhaps the primary conceit in his account. His desire for an encounter with an 'uncontacted group of people' kept him from learning anything that might have jeopardized the experience. He assiduously kept himself in the dark about West Papua in order to protect his fantasy and the resulting story.

The encounter between the high-tech miner and the low-tech native is reduced to a caricature in the farcical effort to resist the mine with bow and arrows. The stereotypes effect a virtual eclipse of the truth, with barefoot natives mystified by commodity production and seduced by the fetishistic prospect of shoes, leading them to become thieves. However, the account avoids asking who the real criminal is: the apocryphal native in the miner's boots, or the corporation filling its coffers with plundered gold from the disputed territory of West Papua while polluting the Ajka River, collaborating with Indonesia's notoriously brutal Kopassus forces, and persuading *National Geographic* to represent its sins as a slapstick tale of cross-cultural comedy?<sup>21</sup>

Contrast *National Geographic's* assessment of globalization in West Papua with recent events at the Freeport-McMoRan mine. On 29 April 1996, a \$6 billion class action lawsuit was filed against Freeport in Louisiana, where the parent company of the mine is incorporated. Amungme leader Tom Beanal alleged that 'the mine's operations had led to the violation of human rights, environmental destruction and cultural genocide' (Leith 2003: 112). However, the suit was dismissed after two years of hearings when the Court ruled that Beanal and his lawyers failed to prove their case. At issue was their inability to demonstrate that corporate and state interests were physically and financially intertwined. The Court concluded that there were 'too few facts alleged upon which to base a symbiotic relationship analysis for the purposes of determining whether state action is alleged' (Duval 1997: 32). In other words, there was insufficient evidence to establish a financial link between Freeport and the Indonesian military.

However, critical new information became available several years later when changes to the rules of the US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) forced Freeport, which trades shares on the New York Stock Exchange, to reveal the details of its financial relationship with the Indonesian military. The new rules at the SEC were the result of lobbying by NGOs like Amnesty International and Global Witness (2005) for greater corporate accountability and transparency, including the influential international campaign to 'Publish What You Pay'. In August 2004, Freeport acknowledged that the company paid the Indonesian military \$11.4 million during the previous two years for security in and around the mine (Bryce 2003).<sup>22</sup> Documentation of these payments may well be the 'smoking gun' that was missing from the earlier claims filed against the mining company in the US District Court in Louisiana, and consequently legal claims against Freeport might be revisited with a greater likelihood of success.

Rumours that Freeport might stop making payments to the Indonesian military began to circulate even before they were publicly disclosed in 2004.<sup>23</sup> Critics of the mine have long

---

<sup>21</sup> Like many mining companies, Freeport-McMoRan tightly controls access to its operations, excluding journalists who may be critical of their activities (see Perlez and Bonner 2005).

<sup>22</sup> These funds support an estimated 550 armed forces personnel stationed in the vicinity of the mine (RFK Memorial Center for Human Rights 2004).

<sup>23</sup> The Indonesian military is responsible for raising a substantial portion of its operating budget by exploiting local economic opportunities. Military postings to West Papua are regarded as desirable because of the economic opportunities that the resource rich province affords. The military has a substantial financial interest in keeping rural areas of the province destabilized because the majority of their income is derived from illegal activities in these zones of conflict, including logging, mining, and the smuggling of narcotics and protected natural species (Golden 2003: 5; see also Frynas 1998 on political instability and profit). The military has also become involved in the lucrative market for *gaharu*, a resinous aromatic wood, also known as eaglewood or agarwood (*Aquilaria* and *Gyrinops* spp.), with annual global sales estimated at \$1 billion (Moore and Rompies 2005).

argued that these payments effectively subsidize the Indonesian military's violent repression of the people of West Papua (Leith 2003: 232). It has also been suggested that the threat to Freeport's annual military subsidy may have been the trigger for a violent attack on a company convoy on 31 August 2003. Several vehicles transporting staff members from the international school in the mining township of Timika were ambushed by armed gunmen who killed three people, two American teachers and an Indonesian employee of the mining company, and wounded a dozen others (Bryce 2003). Freeport and the Indonesian government initially blamed the killings on the OPM. However, subsequent investigations of the shootings pointed out that Papuan independence groups do not have access to the automatic weapons and ammunition used in the attack. The site of the assault is also tightly secured by the armed forces, making it unlikely that the perpetrators could have entered and exited the area without being detected (RFK Memorial Center for Human Rights 2004).

In spite of the demilitarization of the OPM after the fall of Suharto in 1998, the Indonesian military has increased its presence and activities in West Papua. This includes both the funding of and subsequent crackdown against opposition groups in order to demonstrate that military interventions are required to safeguard state interests, a strategy familiar from their activities in East Timor (Rumbiak *et al.* 2005; RFK Memorial Center for Human Rights 2004). It is widely believed that the 'smoking guns' on the road to Timika were meant to warn Freeport against stopping its payments to the Indonesian military (RFK Memorial Center for Human Rights 2004).

The road to Timika is also where the discourse of human rights intersects with the US war on terror, as allegations of Indonesian military involvement in the shootings delayed American plans to collaborate with the Indonesian military (Rumbiak *et al.* 2005). Rather than recycle the deceptive image of the West Papuan futilely brandishing his bow and arrows against the Freeport mine, the *National Geographic* might have reported on the eloquent testimony of the Amungme plaintiffs in the US District Court in Louisiana. The smoking guns on the road to Timika confirm the occurrence of terror in out-of-the-way places, but suggest that the violence is better explained with reference to the militarized Indonesian presence in West Papua than by the novelty of encounters with outsiders.

### **Beyond stereotypes and misrepresentation**

During Suharto's New Order Indonesia, dissent in West Papua was violently suppressed. In the absence of civil liberties, there were few channels for the expression of political opinion. A movement based on cultural activism led by West Papuan ethnologist Arnold Ap during the late 1970s and the early 1980s ended after his violent death at the hands of the state (Zubrinich 1998). For the better part of three decades, the *Organisasi Papua Merdeka*, or Free Papua Movement, was the primary political voice of West Papuan resistance. Its paramilitary organization replicated the militarization of the state, and violence was central to its political tactics within West Papua, although outside its borders, political leaders living in exile also attempted to establish a diplomatic profile, albeit with limited success. The OPM was instrumental in organizing political rallies and symbolic flag-raising in urban areas and coordinated the 1984 movement of West Papuans to Papua New Guinea. A faction of the OPM was also responsible for the 1995 kidnapping of several European students in the highlands (Start 1997), which backfired by alienating foreign supporters of the West Papuan independence movement. Despite a history of political infighting among its leaders, the OPM has maintained broad popular support throughout West Papua, which the

refugees living in the border camps expressed rhetorically in the emphatic claim that ‘we are all OPM!’

For a short time after the fall of Suharto in 1998, however, the opportunities for political debate opened up dramatically (Rumbiak 2003; King 2004; Chauvel 2005: 79-80). During this period, political dissent was channelled into a variety of NGO efforts to document human rights abuses and environmental problems, and to bring them to public attention through legal action. Formal political participation also increased, although the pro-independence resolutions of the Papuan Congress provoked a harsh response from the state, including the assassination of the popular West Papuan politician Theys Eluay by the Indonesian Special Forces (*Kopassus*) and violent reprisals against public demonstrations calling for reform (Chauvel 2005: 106; Rutherford 2005). However, international efforts to enlist support for the West Papuan cause have simultaneously accelerated in various national, multinational, and multilateral forums: the West Papuan situation has been debated at the European Union (Rumbiak 2003); the United States Congress has been asked to revisit the 1962 New York Agreement and the contested 1969 Act of Free Choice, which awarded control over West New Guinea to Indonesia after a brief transitional period; the United Nations has been asked to include West Papua on the list of decolonizing nations; and the recently-established UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues adopted a resolution expressing support for the West Papuan political struggle. Despite objections from Australia, Pacific political forums increasingly include delegates from West Papua. ELSHAM, the West Papuan-based Institute for Human Rights Study and Advocacy, has been especially effective in its promotion of human rights as a means of transforming political possibilities in West Papua, including the provision of human rights training to rank-and-file Indonesian soldiers stationed in West Papua (John Rumbiak, personal communication 1999), and visits to OPM camps in West Papua (Rutherford 2005: 163 n.40). ELSHAM has also directed efforts to transform West Papua into a demilitarized ‘zone of peace’, although thus far the Indonesian military has refused to participate in this initiative.

As I have argued, the militarism of West Papuan resistance to Indonesia during the 1970s and 1980s can be explained in part by the repressive character of the Indonesian occupation. This is evident in several documentary films produced about West Papua at the time, which were intended to publicize their plight. The film *One People, One Soul* (Burns 1987) is described as ‘an account of a little-known struggle by the people of Irian Jaya, west of Papua New Guinea, to retain their country and their identity in the face of Indonesian aggression’. The filmmaker interviews West Papuans who provide testimony about the atrocities committed by the Indonesian military. The film also depicts the militarized response of West Papuans to Indonesian violence, exemplified by the lyrics of a string band song performed during the movie: ‘Commandos form a fighting unit / take their weapons to the battlefield / Oh, dear, what a pity / the wives are left widows / their children are left fatherless’. The next verse continues: ‘Oh, the brave commandos / are willing to die / from a bullet on the battlefield / as a sign of loyalty to the flag of the morning star’.

In another documentary film from this era, the title *Arrows against the Wind* also signals the violent contestation of Indonesian state power by West Papuans (Groome 1982). However, the filmmakers seek to offset the stereotype of West Papuans as warriors by representing them as the natural guardians of the rainforest. (Here they borrow the potent image of West Papuans living close to nature). The film also addresses the environmental problems caused by large-scale resource extraction by transnational corporations like Freeport-McMoRan. The West Papuan narrator of the film explains that ‘for over 23,000

years our people have understood that nature is the source of life and they have respected it accordingly'. In contrast, 'the First World has disastrously mismanaged the environment'. Criticizing the 'arrogant attitude that there is little to learn from our tribal culture', the narrator argues that 'the information we have to share is [vital to] the future survival of the world'. The representation of West Papuans as the stewards of valuable environmental knowledge is intended to mobilize international support for their cause (see Conklin 2002).

The gradual shift from militarism to campaigning for human rights and aligning themselves with environmentalists also brings West Papuan activism into synch with international political trends. Indigenous political movements increasingly stop short of making claims about self-determination and independence in favour of more limited claims regarding sovereignty or autonomy within the boundaries of existing nations, along with claims for reparations for past injustices (Neizen 2003).<sup>24</sup> The turn away from violence and militarism is especially pragmatic in the context of the post 9-11 war on terror given that West Papuan activists hope to enlist support from rather than alienate the United States. The earlier militarism of West Papuan resistance would be anathema in today's global political climate.

In keeping with the shift towards campaigning for human rights and increased international support, West Papuans have formulated new interpretations of the concept of *merdeka*, which is ordinarily translated as freedom or liberation. In West Papua, the term *merdeka* has typically had millenarian overtones associated with both Christian theology and autochthonous religious movements, which anthropologists sometimes referred to as 'cargo cults' (Rutherford 2005).<sup>25</sup> The association of *merdeka* with independence draws in part on the popular assumption that self-determination and territorialized nations are manifestations of divine will. Consequently the absence of sovereignty in West Papua is regarded as both a political and a religious problem (Glazebrook 2005: 101; see Kirsch 2006: 186). In this context, *merdeka* refers to the desire for independence.

More recently, however, *merdeka* has also been invoked to convey a broader sense of social justice, implying a gradualist rather than a millenarian approach to change (Golden 2003; Glazebrook 2005). Anthropologist Brigham Golden (2003) argues that the new interpretation of *merdeka* is based on a 'moral crusade for peace and social justice' comparable to liberation theology. It focuses on the quality or character of social relations rather than the establishment of a new state. It also offers an alternative to the New Order ideology of *pancasila* or 'unity in diversity', which concealed 'assimilationist policies that promote the interests of national elites . . . at the expense of politically weak sections of the citizenry' (Rosengren 2002: 25), including West Papuans. Like Suzana Sawyer's (2004) study of indigenous movements in Ecuador and their struggle for plurinationalism, which she defines in terms of state recognition of multiple peoples and interests, the new interpretation of *merdeka* asserts that social justice should be the basis for incorporating difference within the state.

---

<sup>24</sup> Although nations tend to interpret indigenous demands for sovereignty as threats to national security and territorial integrity, as indicated by the recent vote against the proposed UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

<sup>25</sup> Rutherford (2005: 153-54) argues that 'when Papuan nationalists tap the power of the province's Christian institutions, they are doing so in a different fashion than their millennial predecessors and competitors', but 'they all, in some fashion, have sought to tap this official category [of religion] as a source of legitimacy'.

The shift from millenarianism to a gradualist approach to change is also endorsed by their neighbours in Papua New Guinea. Indonesia and Papua New Guinea have recently agreed to construct a road that will connect Papua New Guinea to the extensive network of roads in West Papua and the large urban seaport in Merauke. The road is intended to facilitate new forms of economic integration across the international border. During interviews with the Muyu refugees in the late 1980s, they explained their rationale for leaving West Papua by arguing that only independence from Indonesia can ensure their political freedom, human rights, and the economic opportunities they desire. Their political philosophy is reminiscent of Michael Dove's (1994: 2) argument about development in rural Southeast Asia. He cites a traditional parable about a peasant who finds a diamond but is obliged to sell the gem to his local patron, who pays him only a fraction of the stone's value and profits greatly when the stone is later sold. The moral of the story is that people living in rural areas lack the knowledge, political resources, and social networks needed to take advantage of economic opportunities. Development at the local level depends on reforming the political system and overturning the structural causes of inequality. However, the Papua New Guineans with whom I discussed the road project expect that its construction will result in new economic opportunities for both themselves and the West Papuans living in refugee camps along the border. They suggested that peace and prosperity in West Papua are more likely to eventuate by means of small-scale changes like the economic connections that the road will make possible rather than waiting for revolutionary or millennial change. These ideas parallel the interpretive shift in the meaning of *merdeka* from independence to social justice.

Whether this means that the supporters of *merdeka* as social justice will accept a permanent solution to the problems in West Papua that is based on greater autonomy rather than eventual independence is far from clear. However, the interpretation of *merdeka* as social justice may be seen as compatible with nationalist ambitions given that greater equality and respect for human rights represent desirable advances. Nor are the two forms of *merdeka* necessarily exclusive; demonstrations against the state may simultaneously invoke both the nationalist and social justice versions of *merdeka*, although these protests have regularly been met with violent reprisals by the Indonesian military, which views any display of the West Papuan flag as a sign of separatist aspirations and a direct challenge to their authority (Rutherford 1999).

## **Conclusion**

This paper examines the circulation of certain influential images of West Papua: of Stone Age populations living in a state of nature, of perpetual warfare, and of lost tribes that resist their integration into the state. These representations have their origins in outdated anthropological paradigms, as exemplified by the film *Dead Birds*, but they are hard to shake off. Their continuing influence is evident in the assumption that West Papuans are inherently violent and that conflict is the norm for West Papua. Similarly, media accounts of West Papua are replete with claims about the discovery of remote and uncontacted tribes (Kirsch 1997b). These representations are used to justify a variety of state interventions ranging from development schemes which displace West Papuans and expropriate their resources, to human rights abuses and violence. With few exceptions, these representations also silence West Papuan voices. Their influence is exaggerated by state restrictions on access to West Papua by journalists and scholars, limiting the production of alternative narratives (Kirsch 2002).

However, these images are being challenged by West Papuans. The new political climate after the deposition of Suharto has allowed West Papuan activists to transform themselves from a paramilitary force to proponents of demilitarization. This confirms that their resistance movement was a historical reaction to Indonesian militarism rather than an expression of West Papuan character. The transformation may benefit West Papuans through the ‘politics of sympathy’ by yielding stronger political alliances. West Papuan activists have also established dialogues on human rights and promoted the rule of law through the courts in both post-New Order Indonesia and abroad, as exemplified by their lawsuit against Freeport-McMoRan in the United States. Whereas the *National Geographic* depicted globalization at the mine as a comedy of errors, the smoking guns on the road to Timika reveal the tragedy of continued violence in West Papua. Finally, new interpretations of *merdeka* as social justice do not forsake what might be accomplished through gradual political and economic change, instead of placing all their bets on a millenarian solution to their historically troubled relationship with Indonesia.

## References

- Anderson, Benedict. 1991. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso, rev. edn.
- Anderson, Benedict. 1999. ‘Indonesian Nationalism Today and in the Future,’ *Indonesia* 67 (April): 1-11.
- Anti-Slavery Society. 1990. *West Papua: Plunder in Paradise*. Indigenous Peoples and Development Series Report No. 6. London: Anti-Slavery Society.
- Behar, Michael. 2005. ‘The Selling of the Last Savage’, *Outside* 30 (February): 96-113.
- Brundige, Elizabeth, Winter King, Priyeha Vahali, Stephen Gladbeck, and Xiang Yuan. 2004. ‘Indonesian Human Rights Abuses in West Papua: Application of the Law of Genocide to the History of Indonesian Control’. New Haven: Allard K. Lowenstein International Human Rights Clinic, Yale Law School.
- Bryce, Robert. 2003. ‘Freeport’s Mercenary Murderers?’ *The Austin Chronicle*. 28 March 2003. <http://www.austinchronicle.com/gyrobase/Issue/story?oid=oid%3A151851>
- Budiardjo, Carmel and Liem Soei Liong. 1988. *West Papua: The Obliteration of a People*, 3rd edn. Surrey, UK: TAPOL.
- Burns, Bob. 1987. *One People, One Soul*. Video. Colour, 54 minutes. Darling, Australia: Australian Film Institute.
- Chauvel, Richard. 2005. *Constructing Papuan Nationalism: History, Ethnicity, and Adaption*. Policy Studies 14. Washington, D.C.: East-West Center.
- Clifford, James and George E. Marcus. 1986. *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*. Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research.
- Conklin, Beth. 2002. ‘Shamans versus Pirates in the Amazonian Treasure Chest’. *American Anthropologist* 104 (December): 1050-1061.
- Dove, Michael. 1996. ‘Center, Periphery, and Biodiversity: A Paradox of Governance and a Developmental Challenge’, in S.B. Brush and D. Stabinsky (eds.). *Valuing Local Knowledge: Indigenous People and Intellectual Property Rights*. Washington, DC: Island Press.

- Duval, J. 1997. Minute Entry. 9 April 1997. Tom Beanal Versus Freeport-McMoRan, Inc., and Freeport-McMoRan Copper and Gold, Inc. Civil Action NO. 96-1474. United States District Court, Eastern District of Louisiana.
- Elmslie, Jim. 2003. *Irian Jaya under the Gun: Indonesian Economic Development Versus West Papuan Nationalism*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- Errington, Frederick and Deborah Gewertz. 1989. 'Tourism and Anthropology in a Post-Modern World', *Oceania* 60 (September): 37-54.
- Fabian, Johannes. 1983. *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes its Object*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Farmer, Paul. 2004. 'An Anthropology of Structural Violence'. Sidney W. Mintz Lecture for 2001. *Current Anthropology* 45(3): 305-325.
- Frynas, Jędrzej George. 1998. 'Political Instability and Business: Focus on Shell in Nigeria'. *Third World Quarterly* 19(3): 457-78.
- Gardner, Robert. 1963. *Dead Birds*. Film. Colour, 83 minutes. Cambridge: Harvard University Film Study Center.
- Gardner, Robert. 1972. 'On the Making of Dead Birds,' in Karl G. Heider (ed.). *The Dani of West Irian: An Ethnographic Companion to the film Dead Birds*. Warner Modular Publications, Module 2.
- Glazebrook, Diana. 2005. 'Desecration in a Place of Refuge'. *Cultural Studies Review* 11 (March): 98-109.
- Global Witness. 2005. 'Paying for Protection: The Freeport Mine and the Indonesian Security Forces'. Washington, DC: Global Witness Publishing Inc., [www.globalwitness.org](http://www.globalwitness.org).
- Golden, Brigham. 2003. 'Political Millenarianism and the Economy of Conflict: Reflections on Papua by an Activist Anthropologist'. Asia Source. [http://www.asiasource.org/asip/papua\\_golden.cfm](http://www.asiasource.org/asip/papua_golden.cfm)
- Groome, Tracey. 1992. *Arrows against the Wind*. Video. Colour, 52 minutes. Oley, PA: Bullfrog Films.
- Heider, Karl G. 1972. *The Dani of West Irian: An Ethnographic Companion to the film Dead Birds*. Warner Modular Publications, Module 2.
- Heider, Karl G. 2001-2002. 'Robert Gardner: The Early Years', *Visual Anthropology Review* 17(2): 61-70.
- Keck, Margaret E., and Kathryn Sikkink. 1998. *Activists beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- King, Peter. 2004. *West Papua and Indonesia since Suharto: Independence, Autonomy or Chaos?* Sydney: University of New South Wales Press.
- Kirsch, Stuart. 1996. 'Refugees and Representation: Politics, Critical Discourse, and Ethnography along the New Guinea Border', in Michael Morgan and Susan Leggett (eds.) *Mainstream(s) and Margins: Cultural Politics in the 1990s*, 222-236. Contributions in Political Science, Number 367. Westport, Ct: Greenwood Press.
- Kirsch, Stuart. 1997a. 'Lost Tribes: Indigenous People and the Social Imaginary', *Anthropological Quarterly* 70 (April): 58-67.
- Kirsch, Stuart. 1997b. 'Cannibal Tales'. Film review essay of *Lords of the Garden*, pr. Judith Hallet for Hearst Entertainment (New York: Arts & Entertainment Television Networks and Paris: Tele-Image, 1994). *Pacific Studies* 20(2): 170-179. Also available online: <http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/cgi-bin/docviewer.exe?CISOROOT=/PacificStudies&CISOPTR=1244>.

- Kirsch, Stuart. 2002. 'Rumour and Other Narratives of Political Violence in West Papua', *Critique of Anthropology* 22(1): 53-79.
- Kirsch, Stuart. 2006. *Reverse Anthropology: Indigenous Analysis of Social and Environmental Relations in New Guinea*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Koch, Klaus-Friedrich. 1974. *War and Peace in Jalémó: The Management of Conflict in Highland New Guinea*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Lederman, Rena. 1998. 'Globalization and the Future of Culture Areas: Melanesianist Anthropology in Transition'. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 27: 427-449.
- Leith, Denise. 2003. *The Politics of Power: Freeport in Suharto's Indonesia*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- Loizos, Peter. 1993. *Innovation in Ethnographic Film: From Innocence to Self-Consciousness, 1955-1985*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Lutz, Catherine A. and Jane L. Collins, eds. 1993. *Reading National Geographic*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Monbiot, George. 1989. *Poisoned Arrows: An Investigative Journey through Indonesia*. London: Joseph.
- Moore, Matthew and Karuni Rompies 2005. 'The Money Trees'. *Sydney Morning Herald Weekend Magazine*. 9 January.
- Nance, John. 1975. *The Gentle Tasaday: A Stone Age People in the Philippine Rain Forest*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovitch.
- Neizen, Ronald. 2003. *The Origins of Indigenism: Human Rights and the Politics of Identity*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Osbourne, Lawrence. 2005. 'Strangers in the Forest: Contacting an Isolated People—on a Guided Tour', *The New Yorker* (18 April): 124-130.
- Perlez, Jane and Kirk Johnson. 2005. 'Beyond Gold's Glitter: Torn Lands and Pointed Questions'. *The New York Times*. 24 October 2005. www.nytimes.com
- Raffles, Hugh. 2002. *In Amazonia: A Natural History*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Rappaport, Roy A. 1968. *Pigs for the Ancestors: Ritual in the Ecology of a New Guinea People*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Center for Human Rights-Indonesia Support Group. 2004. 'The Papua Report', No. 6. Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Center for Human Rights, June/July.
- Rosengren, Dan. 2002. 'On "Indigenous" Identities: Reflections on a Debate', *Anthropology Today* 18 (June): 25.
- Rumbiak, John. 2003. 'Europe in the World: EU External Relations and Development'. Remarks on the Conference of EU Foreign Policy, Brussels. 19 May 2003.
- Rumbiak, John, Eben Kirksey, and Ed McWilliams. 2005. 'New Facts Link Indonesian Military to "Terror Attack" on US Citizens; Rice May Release IMET to Indonesia Before Investigation Concludes'. 17 February, 2005. Progressive Newswire. <http://www.commondreams.org/cgi-bin/newsprint.cgi?file=/news2005/0217-07.htm>
- Rutherford, Danilyn. 1999. 'Waiting for the End in Biak: Violence, Order, and a Flag-Raising'. *Indonesia* 67 (April): 39-59.
- Rutherford, Danilyn. 2004. 'Viewing Areas: A Review Essay', *Indonesia* 78 (October): 181-188.
- Rutherford, Danilyn. 2005. 'Nationalism and Millenarianism in West Papua: Institutional Power, Interpretive Practice, and the Pursuit of Christian Truth', in June Nash (ed.) *Social Movements: An Anthropological Reader*, 146-167. London: Blackwell.

- Rutz, Henry J. (ed.). 1992. *The Politics of Time*. Washington, DC: American Anthropological Association.
- Sawyer, Suzana. 2004. *Crude Chronicles: Indians, Multinational Oil, and Neoliberalism in Ecuador*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Start, Daniel. 1997. *The Open Cage: The Ordeal of the Irian Jaya Hostages*. New York: HarperCollins.
- Stasch, Rupert. 2005. 'Osborne/Kombai/New Yorker'. Post to ASAONET, Association for Social Anthropology in Oceania Bulletin Board (asaonet@listserv.uic.edu) 16 April 2005.
- Swerdlow, Joel L. 1999. 'Global Culture', *The National Geographic Magazine* 196 (August) 196: 2-5.
- Trouillot, Michel-Rolph. 1991. 'Anthropology and the Savage Slot: The Poetics and Politics of Otherness', in Richard Fox (ed.) *Recapturing Anthropology*, 17-44. Santa Fe: SAR Press.
- Van Kampen, Anthony. 1952. *Jungle Pimpernel: Controleur BB*. Amsterdam: Uitgeverij C. De Boer Jr.
- Welker, Marina. 2000. Unpublished paper, 41 pages.
- Zubrinich, Kerry. 1998. *Cosmology and Colonization: History and Culture of the Asmat of Irian Jaya*. Ph.D. diss., Charles Sturt Univ.

### **Acknowledgements**

The author thanks Eva-Lotta Hedman and the Refugee Studies Centre for sponsoring the workshop at St. Antony's College, Oxford, for which this paper was written. The Office of the Vice President for Research, the Dean of the College of Literature, Science and the Arts, and the Department of Anthropology at the University of Michigan provided research support in Papua New Guinea in 2005 and 2006. Rupert Stasch and Marina Welker generously allowed me to make reference to unpublished material. Deborah Gewertz, Fred Errington, and Eva-Lotta Hedman provided helpful comments on an earlier draft of the paper. The discussion of *merdeka* was originally presented in a paper on anthropology and political activism at the conference *Political Interactions: Research Advocacy and Action* organized by Kate Cooper and Nicola Frost at Goldsmiths' College, London. The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and not necessarily shared by these persons and organizations. This paper is dedicated to John Rumbiak's health.

## **West Papua: the flawed integration into Indonesia**

*Liem Soei Liong, TAPOL – The Indonesia Human Rights Campaign*

The resignation of Suharto in May 1998 opened the way for a series of important political demands. It became possible to hold an act of self-determination in East Timor which ultimately led to its political independence. The Acehnese demanded a referendum which paved the way for a peace process that concluded successfully in August 2005. All the signs are that a sustainable and lasting peace will prevail in Aceh. On 11 December 2006, local elections will be held with the participation of independent candidates. It could be argued that West Papua remains the last major conflict in the Indonesian archipelago yet to be resolved.

In West Papua, the fall of Suharto was also greeted with a feeling of optimism and a demand for political self-determination. Nine months later, a delegation of civil society representatives, known as the Team of 100, a cross-section of intellectuals, students, ex-political prisoners, Muslim leaders, women's organizations and members of the local assembly, met President B.J. Habibie to discuss development issues. This historic meeting took place on 26 February 1999 and a single political demand was put forward: the Papuans want independence from Indonesia. Predictably, Habibie was taken aback and said nothing. He asked the Team of 100 to reconsider their demand.

The next President, Abdurrachman Wahid, popularly known as Gus Dur, was better prepared to accommodate some of the political demands of the Papuans. From 23-26 February the National Consultation of Papuans took place (Musyawarah Besar Papua, Mubes Papua) when three main issues were addressed: Pelurusan Sejarah or the need to rectify history, the development of a coordinated political approach and the need to consolidate the upsurge of the developing movement.

Gus Dur tried to win the hearts and minds of the Papuans by promising far-reaching autonomy for West Papua (and Aceh); he spent New Year's Eve of 2000 in Jayapura, the capital, decided to rename the territory then known as Irian Jaya as Papua and agreed to finance the Second Papuan People's Congress. But things soon went sour as both the armed forces and important sections of the Indonesian establishment strongly disagreed with his accommodating policies towards dissent in Aceh and West Papua. Gus Dur lacked the necessary statesmanlike skills and his policies were increasingly sabotaged. By mid-2000 all of his policies and good intentions had collapsed and military operations were resumed in West Papua and Aceh. In June 2001 Gus Dur was impeached and replaced by Megawati. This brought an end to the brief Papuan Spring. A few months later, Theys Eluay, the PDP chair, was strangled and died and five other Papuan leaders were imprisoned.

A few lessons can be learned from this brief Papuan Spring. Firstly, Papuans were increasingly ready to engage in peaceful dialogue with Jakarta. The emergence of organizations like Presidium Dewan Papua and Dewan Adat Papua and the declaration of 'Papua, Land of Peace' became the expression of this new, coordinated political approach. The second lesson from the 1998-2000 period is that for the first time, Papuan nationalism was being taken seriously by the Jakarta authorities.

During the New Order period under Suharto, the sole doctrine applied to West Papua was the militaristic security approach, treating any dissent or form of Papuan nationalism as subversive. There was a clash between Indonesian nationalism and Papuan nationalism. In the Sukarno period (1949-1966) Indonesian nationalism had flourished and in the early sixties,

during the campaign for re-incorporation of West Irian, it became second nature for Indonesians to accept the paradigm: ‘Without Irian, Indonesia is not complete.’

I remember vividly when President Sukarno, in a historic speech in December 1961, proclaimed Trikora (Tri Komando Rakyat) for the liberation of West Irian. A few weeks later, the Mandala Command to liberate West Irian was set up with Major General Suharto as its commander. On a personal note, I belong to the first generation of post-independence Indonesians who enjoyed or endured intense ideological input on nation and character building. As a high school student it was an act of patriotism to become a volunteer for the struggle to liberate West Irian. My schoolmates and I had to sacrifice many weekends to have basic military training.

It was only years later, after I migrated to Europe, that I began to realize that something called Papuan nationalism was alive and well. I also began to understand the injustice that had been done to the Papuans with the Act of Free Choice in 1969. To this very day, a substantial part of Papuans regard this plebiscite as fundamentally flawed. Demands to re-examine the Act of Free Choice or rewrite Indonesian history regarding this event remain a legitimate and minimum political demand, not only for Papuans but also for Indonesians to understand their own history and the mistakes made by earlier generations.

There have been several waves of nationalism in Papua. The first wave was from 1944 to 1962 when West Papua was under a different administration and developed a political culture quite distinct from that in Indonesia. The second wave evolved under the authoritarian rule of Suharto when the resistance movement OPM, with its armed wing, became the main opposition against the heavy-handed oppression of the Papuans. It could be argued that the security approach adopted by the military was responsible for triggering a strong anti-Indonesian sentiment.

The wave of Papuan nationalism during the post-Suharto era is in a way a mixture of all these elements. Pockets of OPM groups still exist, strong anti-Indonesia sentiments persist while new pro-peace groupings have learnt from the experiences in East Timor and the peace process in Aceh.

Over the years, marginalization of the Papuans also triggered anti-Indonesia feelings. Papuan leaders often point to four basic problems. Firstly, the yawning gap between West Papua and Jakarta. All important decisions are made in Jakarta and, despite their abundant natural resources—oil, gas, copper, gold, marine and forest resources—West Papuans remain poor. Secondly, the traditional rights of Papuans have long been neglected and the massive influx of newcomers has only exacerbated this problem. Thirdly, the gross violation of human rights that have occurred since 1963 have not been addressed. The fourth problem was mentioned earlier: the flawed Act of Free Choice of 1969.

So far the central government has displayed its good intentions by introducing a Special Autonomy Law adopted by Parliament in October 2001. This law was supposed to deal with all the above problems but five years later, most problems remain. Initially many Papuan intellectuals enthusiastically helped to draft the law only to become disillusioned afterwards. Other issues were prioritized such as the division of Papua into three provinces. During the Megawati presidency, the implementation of the Special Autonomy Law was never prioritized and important issues such as the establishment of the MRP (Papuan People’s Council) were neglected. The MRP eventually came into being after long delays, under the

present SBY government. The Special Autonomy Law has many weaknesses not least the lack of capacity of the local government, and the overwhelming persistence of corruption. It would appear that the Special Autonomy Law should either be drastically overhauled or altogether buried.

The results of the Aceh Peace Process following Law no11/2006 on Aceh governance, could be seen as setting a precedent. This law was the result of eight months of peace talks in Helsinki between GAM, the Free Aceh Movement, and the Indonesian Government where all aspects of civil, political, social, cultural and economic rights were negotiated. It was another seven months before it was adopted by the national parliament in Jakarta. Something similar should be created to accommodate the basic problems of the Papuans. Dialogue between Papuans and decision-makers in Jakarta should be held at different levels on an informal or formal level.

Sensitive issues like the 1969 Act of Free Choice should not and cannot be avoided. Institutions like LIPI, the Indonesian National Academy of Sciences, have the difficult task of dealing with these issues.

I would like to end on a positive note. A few years ago, the Refugees Studies Centre organized a seminar on Aceh. It was a period when everything looked bleak, the peace process had collapsed and it seemed that there was no light at the end of the tunnel. As we all know, Aceh has arguably produced the most solid peace process in the world. Violence has ceased, the economy is booming and political freedoms have flourished. The present rulers in Jakarta have shown enough political will to find a solution to the war in Aceh. We should encourage them and provide them with ideas to do a similar thing for West Papua.





**Dynamics of Conflict and Displacement in Papua, Indonesia**

---

**A Day of Analysis**

**Programme**

*Thursday 26 October, 2006,*

*Dahrendorf Room, St Antony's College, Oxford*

- 9.30 – 9.45 Registration and Coffee  
9.45 – 10.15 Welcome Address by Roger Zetter  
(Director, Refugee Studies Centre)  
Workshop Introduction by Eva-Lotta Hedman  
(Senior Research Fellow, Refugee Studies Centre)

**Morning Session: Contested Nation, State, and Violence**

Chair: Peter Carey (Laithwaite Fellow and Lecturer in History, Trinity)

- 10.15-10.40 Papuan and Indonesian Nationalism: Can They Be Reconciled?  
*Jacques Bertrand (Associate Professor, University of Toronto)*  
10.45-11.10 West Papua: The Flawed Integration into Indonesia  
*Liem Soei Liong (Director, TAPOL)*  
11.15-11.40 Non-State Actors and the 'Cycle of Violence' in Papua  
*Muridan Widjojo (Researcher, LIPI)*  
11.45-12.30 Discussion (with Coffee & Tea)  
12.30-14.00 Lunch

**Afternoon Session: Dynamics of Conflict and Displacement**

Chair: Robert Barnes (Professor of Social Anthropology and Faculty Fellow)

- 14.00-14.25 Refuge, Displacement, and Dispossession: Responses to Indonesian Rule  
and Conflict in Papua  
*Richard Chauvel (Associate Professor, Victoria University)*  
14.30-14.55 Representations of Violence, Conflict and Displacement in West Papua  
*Stuart Kirsch (Associate Professor, University of Michigan)*  
15.00- 16.00 Discussion (with Coffee & Tea)  
16.00-16.15 Closing Remarks by Eva-Lotta Hedman (RSC)

*Support for this workshop was generously provided by*

*Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and*

*Asian Studies Centre at St Antony's College*



**Dynamics of Conflict and Displacement in Papua, Indonesia**

---

**A Day of Analysis**

**Invited Participants**

Simon Addison	RSC, University of Oxford
Jonathan Agranoff	International Relief and Development, Indonesia
Adrian Arbib	Photographic Journalist
Paul Barber	TAPOL – The Indonesia Human Rights Campaign
Robert H Barnes	St Antony’s College, University of Oxford
Andrew Beatty	Brunel University
Jacques Bertrand	University of Toronto
Anne Booth	School of African and Oriental Studies, University of London
Graham Brown,	CRISE, University of Oxford
Carmel Budiardjo	TAPOL – The Indonesia Human Rights Campaign
Peter Carey	Trinity College, University of Oxford
Richard Chauvel	Victoria University
Sara Gonzalez	Postgraduate Student, RSC, University of Oxford
Rachel Hastie	Oxfam
Eva-Lotta Hedman	RSC, University of Oxford
David Howett	Foreign and Commonwealth Office, UK
David Keen	London School of Economics
Stuart Kirsch	University of Michigan
Gil Loescher	Centre for International Studies, University of Oxford
Maryanne Loughry	Jesuit Refugee Services
Charmain Mohamed	Human Rights Watch
Robin Palmer	Oxfam
Mark Rebick	Asian Studies Centre, University of Oxford
Emma Riesz	Jesus College, University of Oxford
Andrew Robinson	University of Nottingham
Jennifer Robinson	Balliol College, University of Oxford
Graeme Rodgers	RSC, University of Oxford
Philip Rudge	International Consultant
Richard Samuelson	Free West Papua Campaign
Swagato Sarkar	St Antony’s College, University of Oxford
Liem Soei Liong	TAPOL – The Indonesia Human Rights Campaign
Jeremy Stickings	Department of International Development, UK
Susan Tamondong	Postgraduate Student, QEH, University of Oxford
Chanin na Thalang	Postgraduate Student, University of Bristol
Muridan Widjojo	Indonesian Institute of Sciences - LIPI
Roger Zetter	RSC, University of Oxford