

‘DE PAPOEA’ What’s in a name?’ⁱ

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INTRODUCTION

This paper deals with the shifting meaning of the term ‘Papoea’, especially in Dutch colonial discourses. Hence I have retained, in this paper, the Dutch spelling. The term is one of many taken up by new arrivals, in this case agents of the coming colonial order, who attempt to orient themselves in the world in which they have just arrived, naming the land, the fauna and flora, and the inhabitants. They did not necessarily record their reasons for adopting such terms, or the records may have been lost, in which case later researchers have to resort to a reconstruction. And in the course of time they may keep redefining the terms employed, if they do not drop them, adapting them to changing knowledge and insights and to changing programs of action. In the case of the term ‘Papoea’, which in one of its meanings refers to people, observers turned from noting external characteristics, such as skin colour, to aspects of material culture and technology, and later to other elements in their way or ways of life that were deemed characteristic, such as the absence of chiefly authority.

My primary interest in this paper is in the shifts in meaning as they occurred in anthropological discourses. Hence I do not focus on the origin or postulated origin of the term ‘Papoea’, and on what it may have meant initially. This represents one single phase in its existence, while the initial meaning, tentatively reconstructed by later researchers, does not determine later ones. Moreover, historians dispute the outcomes of their research into this origin. Such contestation is to be expected given the often slender evidence available about the era of early contact. The meaning of the term ‘Papoea’ seems particularly apposite for a historical analysis because of the long-term political turmoil around the inclusion into Indonesia of what the Indonesian government now, in early 2001, calls ‘Papua’. When, in this paper, I use the term ‘Indonesia’ I refer to people originating from areas in Indonesia, or the Netherlands East Indies, other than Papua.

There are several aspects of how terms such as ‘Papoea’ are used. The first one is to do with the entity, or the entities, to which they refer in the course of their existence. Second is to do with the perceived properties of the entity or

entities which differentiate it or them from other entities. A third concerns reasons people thought it relevant to conceptualise such entities. The term 'Papoea' or 'Papua' occurs in a number of scholarly disciplines. In Indology, the university discipline which future colonial administrators had to read, and in anthropology, it refers to a category of people. This usage has long been predominant. In geography it is used as a toponym as well as a category of people. In linguistics it refers to a group of languages. In ornithology it is used to refer to an area with distinctive bird species. And in politics it refers to a political entity. These usages do not necessarily run parallel. For instance, an early use of the term as a toponym concerned the islands off the west coast of New Guinea, but most of their inhabitants speak Austronesian, in other words 'non-Papuan' languages. In Australian usage, the term Papua was used early last century to distinguish their newly acquired territory from British, German and Netherlands New Guinea (H. Nelson, pers. comm.).ⁱⁱ

I have arranged my discussion historically. I start with the emergence of the term at the beginning of the colonial era. In the next section I discuss the extension of Dutch rule around the beginning of the twentieth century. This is followed by a section dealing with colonial policies in Netherlands New Guinea after reconquest in the course of World War II and in the years immediately afterwards. A fourth section discusses the dispute between Indonesia and the Netherlands over west New Guinea; a fifth the state of anthropological knowledge of west New Guinea in the late 1940s; the sixth section deals with the characterisation of 'de Papoea' by Held and van Baal; and I conclude with the views of Pouwer and van der Leeden.ⁱⁱⁱ

THE BEGINNING OF THE COLONIAL ERA

A term resembling the Dutch 'Papoea' came into use soon after the Portuguese, the first Europeans to do so, had reached the island of Banda in 1513 to trace the source of mace, nutmeg and cloves. Jack-Hinton writes in the *Encyclopedia of Papua New Guinea* (1972:246-57) that the term 'island of Papoia' was written on the map used during this first expedition.

Sollewijn Gelpke (1993:322) refers to the same map and says that the term is used as a toponym. He comments that since the early sixteenth century 'few writers on New Guinea have resisted the urge to volunteer in passing an etymological anecdote on the name Papua' (1993:319). He dismisses several of them, including the frequently used claim that the term was derived from the Malay word *papua* or *pua-pua*, meaning 'frizzly-haired' and hence referred to the frizzled hair of the inhabitants of these areas.

Instead, taking a lead from Kamma (1954:proposition 7),^{iv} he proposes that the term was adapted from the Biak expression *sup i papwa*. The seafaring and trading Biak people had their home base on the Schouten Islands north of Cenderawasih Bay, but for many generations a number of them had settled in several areas in the western Bird's Head and on the islands west of the Bird's Head. The expression *sup i papwa* means 'the land below [the sunset]' and refers to the islands west of the Bird's Head, as far as Halmahera. When Biak seafarers reached Halmahera, Sollewijn Gelpke argues, it is likely they used the same term for these islands. Subsequently it was taken over by people living there, and also by visiting Europeans. In contrast to Biak usage, they used the term to mean areas east of Ternate and Tidore. In the course of time, with exploration progressing, it came to be applied to New Guinea and its inhabitants (1993:328-30).

Sollewijn Gelpke's hypothesis seems plausible. It implies that the term 'Papua', or a similar earlier term, applied to New Guinea and possibly its inhabitants, that it was in use before the colonial era and that it was first used as a toponym. Furthermore, this usage deviated from an earlier use by the Biak people, while for other New Guineans the term was an exonym (Appell 1968:2).

THE EXTENSION OF DUTCH COLONIAL RULE

In the Moluccas, much of the sixteenth century and the beginning of the seventeenth century was marked by struggles for dominance between the European colonial powers, with the Dutch the ultimate victors. Exploration of nearby New Guinea, however, proceeded slowly. When in 1828 the Dutch claimed sovereignty over the western half of New Guinea, from 141° east longitude, even the coastline was in part unexplored (Schumacher 1954:26).

The term 'Papoea' acquired additional significance much later in the nineteenth century. Until the mid-nineteenth century the Dutch actually controlled only a small part of what was known as the Netherlands East Indies. Their rule extended to Java and the nearby islands, parts of Sumatra and parts of the Moluccas, and was the result of a deliberate policy of abstention which, in turn, was fed by a fear of imperial over-stretch (van Goor 1997:230ff.). Given the small population of the country, the Dutch government had reason to be apprehensive. In the course of the second half of the nineteenth century, their policy started putting the territorial integrity of the Indies at risk. The other colonial powers extended their empires, and at the 1885 Berlin conference — in which the Dutch did not take part — they decided that claims to colonial possession had to be confirmed by actual control. So the Dutch government abandoned the policy of abstention, late in the nineteenth century. It extended the reach of its administration over the so-called Buitengewesten, the Outer Domains,^v often by

means of military force and at the cost of many lives (Schulte Nordholt 2000). The conquest of the Outer Domains was more or less completed in the first decade of the last century (van Goor 1997:263). It presented the colonial administration with the huge tasks of setting up an administrative body, and an administrative program for these areas.

In 1898 the first permanent patrol posts were established in west New Guinea. That date is often seen as 'late', but in the context of the extension of Dutch rule it was by no means exceptional. And because of the proximity of longstanding administrative posts in the Moluccas, the New Guinea coast had been regularly patrolled in the previous decades. Since 1855, Protestant missionaries had worked in the Cenderawasih Bay area. These early colonial establishments were in the western tip of New Guinea, in accordance with the direction from which colonial rule advanced.

As did other colonial powers (Anderson 1991:Ch.10), the Dutch set their colony up as a plural society with the indigenous populations divided on the basis of ethnic criteria. For many authors ethnic differences were assumed to result in part from racial ones. The rapid extension of control over larger areas of the Netherlands East Indies meant more and more different ethnic groups came under the aegis of the colonial administration. In an address to his former colleagues in the colonial administration van Baal commented in retrospect in 1980:

[we] continued seeing them [the inhabitants of the Netherlands East Indies] as primarily Javanese, Sumatran, or whatever. Unfailingly, we first saw the differences. Let us admit that we had in fact fallen in love with these differences: the authentic Indonesian, the own culture of each of these peoples impressed us and with dedication did we try to respect all these differences, all these different authenticities and to let them come into their own (van Baal 1980:13).

Administrative recognition as a separate ethnic group meant that customary law, *adat*, had to be taken into account by the colonial administration. In the first quarter of the last century, the Dutch lawyer van Vollenhoven devised his concept of law areas. He divided the Netherlands East Indies into nineteen such areas, having come to the tentative conclusion that each possessed distinctive customary laws. West New Guinea became one such area, and in this case van Vollenhoven took into account the non-Austronesian languages spoken there (van Vollenhoven 1918:424ff.). The focus on language in the New Guinea case may well have resulted from the lack of information about other culture elements. Hence the pre-colonial ethnic differentiation may not have been accurately reflected in the classifications which the Dutch administrators devised.

This colonial 'ethnification' of the Netherlands East Indies also shows up in the use of names for collectivities such as Dayak, Toraja, Alfur and Papua.

These names referred to pagan peoples, often living inland, and consequently brought under colonial rule at a later stage than coastal peoples. The names came to refer to peoples living in specific areas: Dayak in Kalimantan, Toraja in Sulawesi, Alfur in the Moluccas and 'Papoea' in New Guinea and there was an assumption by colonial authorities that such names need not refer to ethnically homogeneous groups. However, different people included varying categories of people or peoples under these names. For example, Henley writes (1996:28) that for a period of time people in the interior of Sulawesi, including the Minahassa, were called 'Alfur'. De Clercq, a former resident commissioner of Ternate, wrote in the late 1880s that the 'Papoea' living in the interior of the island Waigeo, off the northwest coast of New Guinea were, 'as non-Muslim', called Alfoer (1893:179). Hence, the terms were not exclusive for the local population. But later, van Hille, at the time acting assistant resident commissioner of West-Nieuw-Guinea, the western part of Netherlands New Guinea, wrote in a paper published in 1905, that the 'beach people' of the Onin Peninsula, while of mixed descent due to immigration from Ceram, called themselves 'Papoea'. They were Muslim. They called 'inland people' Halifoeroe. These people were pagans. Here the terms were exclusive: when Halifoeroe converted to Islam they became 'Papoea' (1905:254). The term 'Alfur' was applied in the early 1930s to New Guineans, possibly also Muslim New Guineans. When, in 1931, the missionary Kamma left Ambon to start work in New Guinea, he was told that only Alfur people lived there (Kamma 198?:4,^{vi} Schoorl 1979:21). For some inhabitants of New Guinea yet another collective term was used, the 'Arfak', again a term referring to people living inland, namely in the Bird's Head, but also to people living on Biak island (Kamma 1954:9; 1972:7).

The Dutch tended to use terms with negative connotations to distinguish the inhabitants of New Guinea from other people in the Netherlands East Indies; they did not use metal, they did not grow rice, they did not practise weaving, they were not Muslims. Papuans who did not conform to these negative characterisations — those who did work metal, who were Muslims — had been influenced from elsewhere (Held 1951:2, 18). As the negations suggest, many authors saw these characteristics as emblems of isolation and backwardness (cf. Van Eechoud n.d.:33). One of the colonial authorities on New Guinea, Bijlmer, a physician and a physical anthropologist, wrote in the 1930s that 'de Papoea' belong to the 'most primitive human races' (1935:222). He distinguishes between 'pure Papuans', such as those living on the south coast from Mimika to Cape Possession, and Papua-Melanesians, such as the Massim, in eastern New Guinea, who in his view had a 'higher culture' due to the influence of Polynesian immigration. Furthermore, he writes that the inequality of the human races was

not at all proven, but 'if inequality — i.e. profound inequality, concerning ability, exists — then the dark skinned people are behind white and brown' (1935:252). The remark also puts Papuans behind the brown-skinned peoples, in other words, behind the other Indonesian populations.

As my quotations from Bijlmer's text show, he discussed the inhabitants of New Guinea in its entirety. This is in line with the other essays in the voluminous compilation of which it is part (Klein 1935-8). They focus on west New Guinea, but include data on east or Australian New Guinea. As appears below, this trend continues in later scholarly publications. Colonial administration had been slowly extending over west New Guinea so there was a growing need to know more about the ways of life of its inhabitants. Hence the quest for what the term 'Papoea' stood for turned to cultural and mental dispositions. Bijlmer discussed the 'Papoea's' ability to 'work', that is work in colonial context, foremost as a labourer on plantations or in mines (1935:256). Another section of his essay deals with whether or not the 'Papoea' poses physical danger especially to European explorers (1935:253).

When Bijlmer wrote his essay, the situation in west New Guinea amounted to what in Dutch writings has been called 'double colonisation'. The Dutch, the upper layer in the colonial hierarchy, ruled by using people from elsewhere in the Netherlands East Indies as intermediaries. Consequently the colonial administrative corps was stratified. At the top were the so-called 'Indologists', with their university degrees in colonial administration, which in quite a few cases included a doctorate. Indology had been a full-fledged university discipline since 1920. As was the case in other disciplines, it took five years to complete (Kuitenbrouwer 2001:131). Van Baal, who studied Indology around 1930, has written that he had to follow a 'strange set of courses'. Major topics were the regional languages and cultures, and 'relevant problems of economy and jurisprudence' (van Baal 1986:48-9). Students had to focus on one of them, with the proviso that those who proceeded to a *doctoraal* examination, for the compulsory second degree, with the focus on languages and cultures, had to do a *candidaats* examination, for the first degree, in the other speciality. The reverse was also the case. However, van Baal comments: 'It amounted to doing two "candidaats" examinations, the second of which was called a "doctoraal". Moreover, all these courses were not too difficult' (1986:49).

At the bottom of the administrative corps were the administrative assistants, subdivided over a number of ranks. They were mostly, if not exclusively, Indonesians. In between the Indologists and the administrative assistants were officials such as *gezaghebbbers*, literally 'authority holders' (possibly best translated as 'administrators'), and *posthouders*, literally 'post

holders', officials in charge of an administrative post. But in New Guinea, many posts were run by senior administrative assistants, hence by Indonesians. While the Indologists have been the object of scholarly scrutiny (for example Fasseur 1994), and while many have become known through their own writings, scholarly or otherwise (for example Jaarsma 1990; Schoorl 1996), it is difficult to find reliable information about the members of the other strata of the colonial administration.^{vii} What is clear, however, is that the Indonesian administrative assistants were recruited especially from the Moluccas, including the islands to the south of New Guinea, such as the Kei archipelago. Up to the beginning of World War II, Papuans themselves had hardly any role in colonial administration.

WORLD WAR II

This situation changed for the better during the later phase of the war as a result of the efforts of J. P. K. van Eechoud. Van Eechoud had a remarkable career. After an abortive start in Java in the 1930s, he trained to become a police officer, got his commission and was posted to west New Guinea (Derix 1987:Ch.3). From 1937 he made several successful patrols in the interior. In 1942, the Japanese cornered him while on patrol in the Lakes Plain, and he was flown out in a rescue operation. When the Allied Forces reconquered west New Guinea in the course of 1944 and 1945, van Eechoud became the commanding officer of NICA (the Netherlands Indies Civil Administration), the west New Guinea counterpart of ANGAU (Australian New Guinea Administrative Unit), developing a formidable program of activities. It is noteworthy that, except for a short period of time in the early 1930s, the late World War II phase was the first time that west New Guinea became a separate administrative unit and van Eechoud wanted to make the most of this opportunity. He became the first architect of Dutch late- and post-war colonial development work in New Guinea, and especially of programs to let 'de Papoea' take part in this work, in positions of responsibility (Lagerberg 1962:Ch.1). In this way he wanted to bring about a redefinition of the term 'Papuan', arguing that it referred to people capable of having a say in the management of the colonial state.

The peculiar circumstances of, first, early reconquest and, second, unclear command lines to the rump administration of exiled top administrators far away in Australia (de Jong 1986:Ch.6), facilitated the build-up of west New Guinea as a separate part of the Netherlands East Indies. Straightaway, van Eechoud set up several training institutions for Papuans, and apparently exclusively so, including one for the members of the Papuan Battalion, a police school, and one for administrative assistants (van Eechoud: 1957:174; Lagerberg 1962:24, 39; van Baal 1989:153). The Papuan Battalion, of which van Eechoud became the

commander (Lagerberg 1962:21), fought in the last phase of the war, and the idea was to employ its members in the police, once the war was over (Derix 1987:157).

To inform his policies, van Eechoud read a lot of anthropological and administrative works dealing with east New Guinea and tropical Africa (1957:267-77). He impressed the scholar-administrator van Baal, who at first was not prepared to work under him, but who later realised he had been wrong in this regard (1989:18, 184). While earlier Dutch colonial administrators had thought that Australian policies in east New Guinea provided the model to be followed in west New Guinea (for example Hovenkamp 1937:393, 400), van Eechoud came to the conclusion that colonial practices in tropical Africa were a better model. In contrast to the former Netherlands East Indies he perceived the colonial development of New Guinea to be more fragmented.

While we do not find parallels in former 'Indië' [the Netherlands East Indies], they are there in Australian New Guinea and in Africa. Foremost in Africa, where many colonies have the characteristics that we also find in New Guinea: vast and sparsely populated areas, still in the first phase of their development.^{viii} They experience the pressure of difficult communications and are populated by the most primitive peoples at present known to mankind, peoples living in the midst of the 'clash of cultures' [English in original] with all the labours entailed by a rebirth (1957:277).

The important point is that van Eechoud and his predecessors perceived such a difference between Papuans and other Indonesians that a system of colonial administration had to be set up for Papuans which was different from the rest of the Netherlands East Indies.

Van Eechoud wanted training institutions exclusively for Papuans, since otherwise, through interaction with trainees from elsewhere in the Netherlands East Indies, they 'would learn only contempt for their *adat* and their race. How can a people make good when it loses its self-esteem?' (n.d.:23). However, I have been unable to trace how he attempted to foster Papuan self-esteem and how the curricula were developed. It is noteworthy that these institutions were started before the Indonesian declaration of independence, so at the time the Dutch colonial authorities took it for granted that they would resume their rule in what would remain the Netherlands East Indies. Van Eechoud aimed to replace Indonesians by Papuans, while the Dutch would remain in command and he himself would remain at the top. Authors such as Lagerberg and van Baal argue that Papuans felt especially slighted by Indonesians from elsewhere in the archipelago and for that reason disliked them. Lagerberg writes that Papuans referred to them as 'Amberi' (1962:

24-5); according to van Baal that term was used on the north coast, while in the south Papuans used the term 'Pu-anim', a Marind term meaning 'shooting people' (1989:150). However, Visser (pers. comm.) reports that the Dutch-trained administrative assistants whom she recently interviewed told her that they felt especially slighted by the Indo-Europeans, people of mixed European, mostly Dutch, and Indonesian descent who had grown up in the Netherlands East Indies. Hence both Lagerberg's and van Baal's assessments may contain a European bias.

In his 1947 annual report van Eechoud opposed training or employment of Papuans outside New Guinea, arguing that this would lead to what he called 'detrribalisation' (a term then current) and hence disorientation (n.d.:23). Nevertheless he attempted training Papuans from all administered areas of west New Guinea in centralised institutions. Apparently, he either did not expect his trainees to become disoriented through contacts with trainees from elsewhere in west New Guinea, because they were, after all, Papuans, or he saw the possibility of such disorientation as an unavoidable risk of his administrative policies.

Van Eechoud trusted the capacities of Papuans to carry out tasks in the colonial administration, but at the same time he had a low opinion of their pre-colonial ways of life. He realised that their cultures were varied and he warned against using the term 'de Papoea', but for him these cultures appeared similar in that they comprised so much cruelty and fighting (1957:Ch.7). He, therefore, concluded: 'it will not be a loss when the Papuan [singular] gets rid of this culture which brought blood and tears, even if he will temporarily go through a cultureless phase' (1957:87). I cannot imagine humans without culture, so it is not clear to me what van Eechoud had in mind when he used the expression 'cultureless phase', but it might well harbour the disorientation he wanted to avoid. In view of van Eechoud's wish to bring about a radical reorientation of Papuan culture, or cultures, it is important to investigate the content of the training programs he instigated, because they were presumably instrumental in achieving his aim.

THE DUTCH-INDONESIAN DISPUTE OVER WEST NEW GUINEA

The separation of west New Guinea from the rest of the Netherlands East Indies was further emphasised during the negotiations between the Indonesian and Dutch governments over Indonesian independence, which lasted from 1945 to late in 1949. Van Baal claims that, already by 1945, the Dutch government wanted to give west New Guineas a *status aparte* within Indonesia (1989:153). Van Baal supposes that this happened since van Mook and van der Plas, then the two most powerful decision-makers in the colonial administration, had perceived the

difference between Papuans^{ix} and other Indonesians. One year later, in 1946, the Dutch negotiators had accepted Indonesian independence, but they wanted to create a federal republic, with the nationalists who had proclaimed independence in 1945 reduced to one of the constituent states. Another of these states was to be 'Eastern Indonesia' (van Doorn 1994:257). New Guinea was not included. Nor was the idea to make it into another state. However, at that time the reason not to include west New Guinea in 'Eastern Indonesia' had little to do with the ethnic identity of the Papuans and much more to do with the desire to set aside an area to which especially Indo-Europeans would be able to migrate, once Indonesia had become independent (van Baal 1989:156; de Geus 1984:34).

Van Eechoud actively influenced Dutch decision-making during the negotiations by alluding to the rich mineral resources of west New Guinea (Drooglever 1997). His ambition was to become governor after Netherlands New Guinea had become a separate colony. In this respect he failed. While he had overcome the handicap of not being an Indologist, his other handicap was that he was a Catholic. As part of the strategy that the Dutch government at the time had to follow in the appointments of top officials, the governor had to be a Protestant. After a Protestant, S. L. J. van Waardenburg, had been appointed (as proposed by a Catholic minister), van Eechoud became second in command. Soon afterwards he left in frustration for the Netherlands.

As the above argument intimates, a number of reasons — economic, ideological and political — were advanced to explain the exclusion of west New Guinea from the independent state of Indonesia. The difference between Papuan and non-Papuan cultures was only one of them. The relative weight of these reasons shifted over the course of the years, and the weight differed for the many people who had to play a part in the negotiations with Indonesian representatives over west New Guinea. For van Baal, both scholar and administrator, the Papuan population was 'explicitly non-Indonesian' (1980:16) given the 'linguistic, cultural and external racial characteristics'. Hence he felt that the separation of west New Guinea from the rest of Indonesia was called for. A career diplomat, de Beus, who was among the Dutch negotiators, acknowledged that 'many Dutchmen realised that New Guinea ... was not an intrinsic part of Indonesia with regard to either geography or to ethnic origin and culture of the population' (1977:250-1). But for Luns, Dutch minister for foreign affairs and a tenacious, eloquent and influential advocate of the retention of west New Guinea as a Dutch colony (de Beus 1977:247), the geo-political motive was paramount. West New Guinea was on the periphery of both South East Asia and the south-west Pacific, and control over New Guinea was the only means for the Netherlands government to maintain a presence in the area (van Esterik 1982:68). Moreover, west New

Guinea would thus remain one of the geographical links in the chain of islands between Japan and Australia, forged to contain further communist expansion (de Geus 1984:196ff.). Whereas the perceived ethnic distinctiveness of the Papuans may have helped Luns to formulate his argument and get it accepted, I doubt if it carried much weight for him. Nevertheless, his stance did entail that van Baal got the opportunity to develop his own views in the formulation of development policies for Netherlands New Guinea. They included continued research into the characteristics of Papuan cultures. I turn now to a brief discussion of the results of this research.

THE STATE OF ANTHROPOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE IN WEST NEW GUINEA IN THE LATE 1940s

Up to the late 1940s, little anthropological field research had been carried out in west New Guinea. Van Baal reckoned that then only the Marind-Anim, on the south-east coast, and the Waropen, on the east coast of Cenderawasih Bay, were well known ethnographically (van Baal 1954:441). The ethnographer of the Marind-Anim was Wirz who had worked among them in 1915-16. Subsequently he worked for shorter periods of time in the Central Highlands and in Sentani (Schmidt 1998). However, although he was a gifted fieldworker (van Baal 1966:4), he was no match for many of the anthropologists who worked in east New Guinea. The ethnographer of the Waropen was Held who worked among them in the late 1930s. He published a Waropen grammar in 1941, in what was then Batavia, and a major ethnography in 1947 (Held 1947; van Baal 1957). Kamma had started his missionary work in 1932, but again his main publications appeared after the war (Kooijman 1988:411-18). The same holds for van Baal. His 1934 dissertation dealing with the Marind-Anim was based on library research. When he was posted to Merauke as a colonial administrator from 1936 to 1938 he patrolled more than he was required, so as to learn about the people who lived there (van Baal, pers. comm.). His main anthropological work was published much later.

It would, however, be wrong to regard this dearth of ethnographic data as singling western New Guinea out as a neglected area. Until after World War II, academic anthropology in the Netherlands remained a discipline largely subordinate to subjects such as Indology, in other words to colonial administration. Compared with British and American anthropology, a fieldwork tradition was late to come into being. I mentioned that van Baal's dissertation was based on library research, but such was also the case with a famous anthropological study such as van Wouden's *Types of social structure in Indonesia*, originally published in Dutch in 1935.^x Many of the authors of

ethnographic work were employed either by the colonial administration, for instance Snouck Hurgronje, a scholar of letters rather than an anthropologist, or by the various missions, for instance Adriani, Kruyt and Vroklage. Moreover, anthropologists had to compete with lawyers, researching into customary law, with economists, researching the articulation of the Indonesian and colonial economies, students of literature dealing with Indonesian texts and Indonesian drama, and so on (Koentjaraningrat 1975). As far as west New Guinea is concerned, I mentioned four anthropologists above: van Baal was in the colonial service; Kamma was a Protestant missionary; while Held was employed by another religious organisation, the Dutch Bible Society. Finally, Wirz worked as an independent researcher who spent his father's inheritance on his Marind fieldwork (Schmidt 1998:35, 234). So none of these field researches resulted from an academic research program.

The Dutch anthropologist who most deeply influenced anthropological studies of the Netherlands East Indies was J. P. B. de Josselin de Jong. This was in part because he was an acclaimed and venerated teacher who taught a generation of prospective colonial administrators (van Baal 1965; Trouwborst 1995), and in part because of his efforts to perceive unity in the diversity of Indonesian ways of life. In his view the Malay archipelago constituted what he called a Field of Anthropological Study. He defined such a field as:

[a certain area] of the earth's surface with a population whose culture appears to be sufficiently homogeneous and unique to form a separate object of ethnological study, and which at the same time apparently reveals sufficient local shades of differences to make comparative research worthwhile (1977[1935]:167-8).

The Malay Archipelago was characterised as a Field of Anthropological Study by de Josselin de Jong on the basis of four features: one, asymmetric marriage connubium; two, a kinship organisation characterised double unilineal descent; three, socio-cosmic dualism; and, four, 'a remarkable resilience towards foreign cultural influence' (Pouwer 1992:89).^{xi} I refer to his concept in this paper because it acquired political significance in the Dutch-Indonesian conflict over west New Guinea. For, if west New Guinea could be seen to form part of a Malay Archipelago Field of Anthropological Study, the ethnic distinctiveness of its peoples would become doubtful. And that would remove one of the central tenets of the Dutch claim to west New Guinea.

THE VIEWS OF HELD AND VAN BAAL

Anthropologists started working in this area in the 1950s when western New Guinea had become the separate colony of 'Netherlands-New-Guinea'. After 1949 the Dutch and Indonesian governments had continued their negotiations regarding western New Guinea. While they lasted, the Dutch refrained, and had to refrain, from investing heavily in a further extension of the administration. Consequently they postponed framing and implementing research projects with regard to the New Guinea population. But in mid-1951 the *Kantoor voor Bevolkingszaken* — literally the Bureau of Native Affairs — a social science research institute, was set up with van Baal as the first director. From then until the end of Dutch rule, in late 1962, a large number of research projects were carried out, starting with Pouwer's research among the Mimika and van der Leeden's in the Sarimi hinterland.

In the same year in which the *Kantoor* was established, Held published his *De Papoea. Cultuurimprovisator (The Papuan. Culture improviser)*. It was the first book-length effort by an anthropologist to characterise Papuan culture, or maybe cultures. Like Bijlmer's essay in Klein's *Nieuw Guinee* (1935-8), the book is concerned with the island of New Guinea in its entirety, at least in so far as it was known anthropologically. And like Bijlmer, Held excludes New Guinea, with its Papuan population, from Melanesia which for him includes Manus, the Bismarck archipelago, the islands of New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, New Caledonia and Fiji. Although he posited that the population of New Guinea showed an 'almost discouraging diversity' (1951:8), he nevertheless concluded that they shared a 'tendency towards improvisation'. He coined improvisation as the master concept through which he pointed out:

That the Papuan again and again combines the culture elements that he has at hand into differing culture complexes. However, he does not make the effort to work these complexes into a fully developed, finished form (1951:51).

This statement, and many others throughout the book, show clearly that Held was also inclined to view Papuan culture as a single category. Very tentatively he argued that New Guinea had been disadvantaged by geographical isolation which had left its mark on the culture of its inhabitants. However, he did not try to argue a link between isolation and the tendency towards improvisation. Also Held was a pupil of de Josselin de Jong, a structuralist. Following his teacher's model, Held seems to have searched for structure in Papuan culture, but to have found only the elements of structure.

The way in which Held characterised Papuan culture fuelled a lot of discussion, and disagreement. Around the time he became governor, van Baal published two essays dealing with the characterisation of Papuan culture or

cultures (van Baal 1953, 1954). They formed part of a second compilation of data concerning New Guinea, again in its entirety, edited by Klein (1953-4). In his essays, van Baal endorsed Held's view, but commented that Held had not provided reasons for the Papuans' tendency towards improvisation. Van Baal presented two reasons. The first was his idea that the Papuan 'resists the coercion which society attempts to exert' and is inclined to escape from it. The second was that, in his view, Papuans show a lack of reflexivity, because 'the Papuan is not a thinker' (1954:439-41). Although he later rejected these disparaging ideas, he did not come up with an alternative characterisation (1989:204-5). Nevertheless, other remarks in his 1954 essays manifested an increasing sophistication of anthropological knowledge about New Guineans. Thus van Baal was able to contrast the dispersal of marriage ties here against endogamy elsewhere; to contrast the trading spirit of the Highland Papuans — that is to say, the Ekari, at the time the only ethnic group known — against its complete absence among the Marind; to contrast dull ritual among the Waropen against its pageantry on the Papuan Gulf (1954:439).

As Jaarsma remarks (1990:49), both Held and van Baal, like van Eechoud, illustrate the quandary 'is there one Papuan culture, or are there many?' Moreover, as van der Leeden argues (Jaarsma 1990:51), both Held and van Baal presented the diacritical element of Papuan culture as the element in which it differed from cultures elsewhere in Indonesia. So in their characterisations the separateness of Papuan culture was indeed emphasised.

THE VIEWS OF POWWER AND VAN DER LEEDEN

From the later 1950s the discussion was continued, especially by Pouwer and van der Leeden, hence it was informed by recent intensive field research. The first effort was the so-called Bangkok paper, a collective effort of the staff of the *Kantoor voor Bevolkingszaken*, presented at the 1957 Pacific Science Congress held in Bangkok (Bureau of Native Affairs 1958). The scope of the paper was reduced from the entire island to west New Guinea. The authors endorsed Held's and van Baal's characterisations of Papuan cultures, and subsequently attempted to find a reason for their improvisatory character, and also for the individualism of the people. They supposed it had to do with the harshness of the natural environment, the technology at hand to deal with it, and the precarious demography of local groups.

In a subsequent paper, Pouwer, one of the main authors of the Bangkok paper, and, like Held and van Baal, a pupil of de Josselin de Jong, proposed that New Guinea — again in the sense of the whole island — was to be regarded as a Field of Anthropological Study, a FAS in Pouwer's terminology. To characterise

this field Pouver referred to reciprocity and to the small scale of New Guinea communities. He again attributed these features to the harsh environment, the state of technology and to demographic factors, as in the Bangkok paper, but he added that small scale was also a matter of independent cultural choice (1961:6).

Also van der Leeden views New Guinea as a separate Field of Anthropological Study. He mentions five features which in his view characterised this field: one, receptivity to and ritual appropriation of foreign culture elements; two, socio-cosmic dualism; three, ceremonial exchange of wealth items in abundant quantities; four, bilineality; and, five, marriage systems on the basis of elementary exchanges.^{xiii} Van der Leeden adds that this list is preliminary and that economic and religious features may have to be added (van der Leeden 1994; 1995:49ff.).

His characterisation follows de Josselin de Jong's example closely. As van der Leeden himself admits, it remained liable to improvements, which is in line with the idea that a Field of Anthropological Study posits a research program rather than a statement of results. The features that van der Leeden mentions, or, by contrast, does not mention, are noteworthy. Characterising related ways of life without taking economy and religion into account seems incomplete. Furthermore, bilineality does not seem a characteristic of most New Guinean ways of life. Even lineality is often absent, often one sees filiation and cumulative filiation as indicating the absence of lineality (Barnes 1962; Knauft 1993:112). The same holds for the exchange of wealth items in abundant quantities (for example, Godelier 1991). But a second problem is the epistemological status of the features that van der Leeden advances.

In this respect Pouver's conceptualisation of the FAS approach is pertinent. In Pouver's view de Josselin de Jong obtained his characteristics by induction, by deriving the general features from the ethnographic data. Instead, Pouver favours a deductive model. Drawing on Lévi-Strauss's conception of social structure as formulated in the 1950s, Pouver conceives this deductive model as a construct built of components which appear in various modalities in the empirical realities of particular ways of life. Such a construct is to explain empirical variations by viewing them as modalities of the constituent components (Pouver 1992). However, Pouver has not employed this model for a New-Guinea-wide comparative study. In his analysis of the social structure of an Ok society in the Central Highlands of New Guinea he attempts to understand the kinship data especially in terms of lineal, lateral and radial principles (Pouver 1964). In my view these principles are suitably encompassing so they allow application in a wide variety of socio-cultural phenomena. However, 'The next, artful, step is then to ascertain and compare the relative weight of the mentioned

logically possible relationships for each empirical configuration.' (Pouwer 1994:6). To my knowledge, Pouwer has not so far done this for the region New Guinea. It seems a daunting task because such an analysis involves identifying the range of modalities of each of these principles as they occur within the region, while simultaneously identifying other modalities that occur outside it. In the same paper Pouwer approvingly quotes Barth's *Cosmologies in the making*, which deals with the Ok area. Nevertheless, Barth describes his procedure as either starting from social interaction and leading to the patterns which these processes may give rise to, or conversely, discovering a pattern and then finding out on which sequences of interaction it may be based (Barth 1987:83). These procedures seem different from the deductive one favoured by Pouwer. It is to be hoped Pouwer will continue his analysis.

The concept 'Field of Anthropological Study' has been a prominent topic in Dutch anthropology. Pouwer examined its history, elaborations and impact in a review article in *Canberra Anthropology* (1992). These aspects are not my concern here; instead, it seems important to note that Pouwer, by conceptualising New Guinea as a Field of Anthropological Study, excluded the area from Indonesia. He achieved this by using the very concept designed to point to the unity within the various Indonesian cultures. Thus, Pouwer made three interrelated points. Firstly, in his view New Guinean cultures diverged from the various forms in which cultural unity in the Malay archipelago was expressed. Secondly, with regard to the quandary; 'is there one or are there many Papuan cultures?' he made it clear that in his view there are many. And thirdly, he drew a sharp cultural boundary between New Guinea on the one hand and the Moluccas and the eastern Nusa Tenggara on the other. By making these three points, he set Papuan identity further apart.

In a more recent paper, Schefold (1994) implicitly acknowledged that New Guinea did not form part of what he calls the Indonesian FAS, without referring, however, to the abovementioned analyses of Pouwer and van der Leeden. Schefold follows Fox in advocating a search for 'the distinguishing features of an Austronesian heritage' (1994:814). Given the preponderance of speakers of non-Austronesian languages on New Guinea, it is doubtful if Schefold includes the island in an Indoensian FAS. At the same time, the occurrence of speakers of both Austronesian and non-Austronesian languages makes it doubtful if, for Schefold, New Guinea constitutes a FAS at all.

At the time Pouwer posited New Guinea as a separate Field of Anthropological Study, in 1961, the conflict between the Netherlands and Indonesia over the *de jure* and the *de facto* status of west New Guinea had escalated into a major political issue. Pouwer's scholarly ideas were in line with

the Dutch stand on the issue, but, of course, they had no impact. Shortly afterwards, the Dutch bowed to considerable international pressure and transferred the administration of west New Guinea to Indonesia. After the transfer, Dutch field research in the area almost completely ceased. It is only recently that it has been resumed, creeping, much like the historical expansion of colonial rule, slowly from west to east, from the eastern Moluccas to the Bird's Head. This areal focus is fortunate. If the island New Guinea can usefully be regarded as a separate Field of Anthropological Study, and if indeed the concept is an aid to analysis, the eastern boundaries of the field — where it borders on other parts of Melanesia: the Bismarck Archipelago, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu — appear vague. However, the western boundary — between a Malay Archipelago Field and a New Guinea one — must be more abrupt. Van der Leeden has started addressing this issue in a number of papers.

WEST NEW GUINEA — MOLUCCAS

Van der Leeden's brief comments are based on his recent field research in the Raja Ampat islands off the west coast of New Guinea, in the border area between New Guinea and the Moluccas. I mention two of his comments. The first concerns political organisation. The name Raja Ampat refers to the four local *raja*, whose status is modelled along Tidorese lines: in other words it is of Moluccan derivation. According to local mythology, however, the institution is of local derivation. Nevertheless, in the Raja Ampat islands the institution has not taken root. Politically the *raja* have lost significance 'under the pressure of both the Dutch and the Indonesian administration', while on Ceram, in the Moluccas, *raja* have retained political power as district heads, in other words as officials in the Indonesian bureaucracy (van der Leeden 1995:51). A second example of contrasting New Guinean and Moluccan modalities of an analogous institution is social stratification. Many Moluccan societies were subdivided into three endogamous strata: nobles, commoners and slaves. Breach of endogamy was penalised by a hefty fine (de Jonge and van Dijk 1995:xv). About New Guinea, Kamma reports that the Biak people, in Cenderawasih Bay, on the Bird's Head and the Raja Ampat islands, were similarly subdivided. However, the strata were not endogamous so they were crosscut by kinship ties. Slaves were often adopted into families (Kamma 1954:15; 1972:13). These facts suggest a more egalitarian ethos among the Biak than the neighbouring Moluccans.

Similarly, Ellen (1986) points to the different significance that Moluccans and New Guineans attributed to the titles, such as *raja* (ruler) and *orang kaya* (wealthy person), which pre-colonial and colonial powers bestowed on them. With regard to the titles bestowed by the ruler of Tidore, Ellen argues that among

the Moluccans such titles referred to 'real political functions', but not so among the Papuans of the western tip of New Guinea (1986:58-9). Whereas this contrast points to cultural differences between Moluccans and New Guineans, Ellen points out that they may have resulted from 'the [Moluccans] long prior period of historical contact with the Javanese' (1986:62), rather than from Moluccan culture as it existed before this contact began.^{xiii}

The influences that Javanese have exerted on Moluccans make it clear that comparisons between New Guinean and Moluccan cultures are complicated by differential exposure to outsiders, Javanese or otherwise. To a certain extent, these complications may be dealt with by focusing on pathways of change as they are followed by the successive members of the societies under scrutiny and then to compare these pathways. At present such results are unattainable for the border areas between west New Guinea and the Moluccas. That is because, unfortunately, the research required has not been done and is not on the current research agenda. The situation is the more tantalising since there are many more written documents dealing with the border area than is the case elsewhere in New Guinea.

APPENDIX

Below I list entries under the terms 'Papua' or 'Papuan' in a number of dictionaries and encyclopedias.

The 1982 supplement of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, Vol. 3, p.251, mentions both terms. 'Papua', also 'Papoo' or 'Papu', is said to derive from the Malay word Papua, meaning 'frizzled'. The earliest reference to the term dates back to 1619 in which it is used to refer to people. It is not clear from the reference where they were encountered.

The main entry for the term 'Papuan' is: 'formerly a name for the island of New Guinea and later for a territory consisting of its south-eastern part (now incorporated in the state of Papua New Guinea ...'. Under the heading 'A' follow two entries: 1. 'a native or inhabitant of Papua (or Papua New Guinea); also, a member of the racial type found there'. This meaning is characteristically ambiguous. The second entry is 'The Papuan group of languages'. The heading 'B' lists the meanings of the term 'Papuan' used as an adjective. They do not deviate from the headings under 'A' (*Oxford English Dictionary* 1982:251).

The quotations under these headings includes one from the ninth edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Vol. 3. It runs as follows:

The Papuan sub-region [the chief province of which is formed by New Guinea and its dependencies] comprises, besides the large and imperfectly known island,

whence its name is derived, three other provinces, which may be named the Timorese, the Celebesian and the Moluccan (Parker and Newton 1875:739).

This quotation, however, is taken from the *Encyclopedia* essay on 'birds' (Parker and Newton 1875:739) and describes the regional occurrence of bird species.

The *Australian National Dictionary* (W. S. Ramson, ed.) states that at one stage the term was used to refer to Australian Aborigines (1988:461).

Among the quotations listed in the 1903 edition of *Hobson-Jobson* are two taken from early Portuguese manuscripts dated 1528 and 1553 in which the name refers to people living east of the spice islands (Yule and Burnell 1903[1968]:671).

The essay on 'discovery' in the *Encyclopedia of Papua and New Guinea*, written by C. Jack-Hinton (1972:246-57) refers to an early toponymical use of the term. The map used on the first Portuguese expedition to the Moluccas in 1511-12, had the inscription 'Islands of Papoia', peopled by 'cafres'.

The German Brockhaus (Brockhaus Wahrig 1983, Vol.5:52) mentions that the term 'Papua' refers to the autochthones of the island of New Guinea and some neighbouring islands. The German Duden dictionary restricts the term to the autochthones of New Guinea (Vol.5:2481). The term is not listed in the *Woordenboek der Nederlandse Taal*, the dictionary of the Dutch language.

NOTES

ⁱ I would like to thank Ian Hughes, Chris Ballard, Leontine Visser and an anonymous reviewer for most valuable comments on an earlier draft of this paper.

ⁱⁱ A separate paper can be written about local usages. For example, in the Tidorese language the term 'Papua' means 'slave', a reference to the New Guinea slaves set to work and traded by the Tidorese (Visser, pers. comm.). J. P. B. de Josselin de Jong reports, as quoted by Kamma (1954:10; 1972:9) that on Kisar, off Timor, the term means 'pirate', referring to the Biak raiding in particular. In an appendix I list several dictionary entries for the terms 'Papua' and 'Papuan'.

ⁱⁱⁱ The English translation of Dutch sources is my own.

^{iv} Kamma was a protestant missionary who had worked in western New Guinea from 1932 (Kooijman 1988:412). His 1954 book is a PhD thesis in anthropology. Following Dutch academic custom, he added a number of 'propositions' on a loose sheet not included in the page numbering. Nor were the propositions included in the 1972 English translation of his thesis.

^v I use this term rather than the more usual 'Outer Isles', because the Dutch term *gewest* in Dutch colonial administration referred to an administrative unit (Sollewijn Gelpke 1996:604).

^{vi} I am unable to trace where I found this reference, so it has to remain incomplete.

^{vii} Hence it is most welcome that Leontine Visser is currently researching the experiences of the post-World War II administrative assistants in Papua of whatever ethnic background, or ethnically Papuan administrative assistants, in part based on their reminiscences.

^{viii} Although van Eechoud here overstates the differences between eastern and western New Guinea, at the time population density in the west was about one-third of that in the east.

^{ix} So as not to load the text unduly with the Dutch term 'Papoea', I use from here on the English 'Papuan' instead.

^x The sociologist Heeren decided around 1950 that he wanted to become a cultural anthropologist. But, he writes, 'in the modern way ... by doing field work' (1998:31).

^{xi} I mention these elements here to give an idea of de Josselin de Jong's frame of reference, but will not discuss their validity in defining a field of study.

^{xii} I am not sure what van der Leeden means by 'elementary' here. He is explicit that its meaning differs from 'elementary' as used by Lévi-Strauss in his *Structures élémentaires de la parenté*.

Ballard (pers. comm.) wonders why van der Leeden did not pay attention to political organisation in his characterisation of the New Guinea Field of Anthropological Study. I suppose this is because he stays so close to the de Josselin de Jong's characterisation of the Malay Archipelago Field of Study. The wide variety of political regimes in that area seems to defy finding a common feature. Strikingly, however, once van der Leeden starts contrasting Moluccan and New Guinean cultures, he turns to political organisation.

^{xiii} Ellen adds in the final paragraph of his paper that the titles tend to move from intruders, potentially dominant, to the intruded upon. In the New Guinea case, moreover, the titles may be re-constituted in terms of their own, existing relations of power

management and may be adopted contrary to the intentions of the intruders. Yet, Ellen argues that their adoption entails a transformation of those New Guinea cultures, 'more closely approaching that which is incipiently "dominant" (1986:62). I agree that the adoption entails a transformation of the existing culture, but do not see why it is necessarily a transformation making the existing culture more like the intrusive one.

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