

MERDEKA PAPUA: INTEGRATION, INDEPENDENCE, OR SOMETHING ELSE?

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*In memory of
Grandma Barbara,
Grandpa Royce,
Aunty Peppy,
and
my 'other brother' Johnny,
who are not here to see the final product of this project.*

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Abstract

In an attempt to bring discussions about West Papua back to the fore this thesis first argues that self-determination has never been realized in West Papua, thus making the United Nations' attempt at ending colonialism there an abject failure. To do so I recount the history of the half-island and the means by which it was colonized by the Dutch and then re-colonized by the Indonesian state. I then argue that in order for the fullest measure of self-determination to occur indigenous peoples must be allowed to choose any option for their future, be it integration, independence, or some other status including the possible formation of non-state entities or the complete withdrawal from the global system. In doing so I recount the forced integration of West Papua into the unitary Republic of Indonesia and then look forward to ways that self-determination and indigenous demands for *merdeka* might be satisfied, not all of which concur with presupposed modes of decolonization. This challenge of Western assumptions and regulations regarding decolonization is important as West Papua is a prime example where simply removing the colonizer and establishing a new state will not necessarily satisfy indigenous demands for independence.

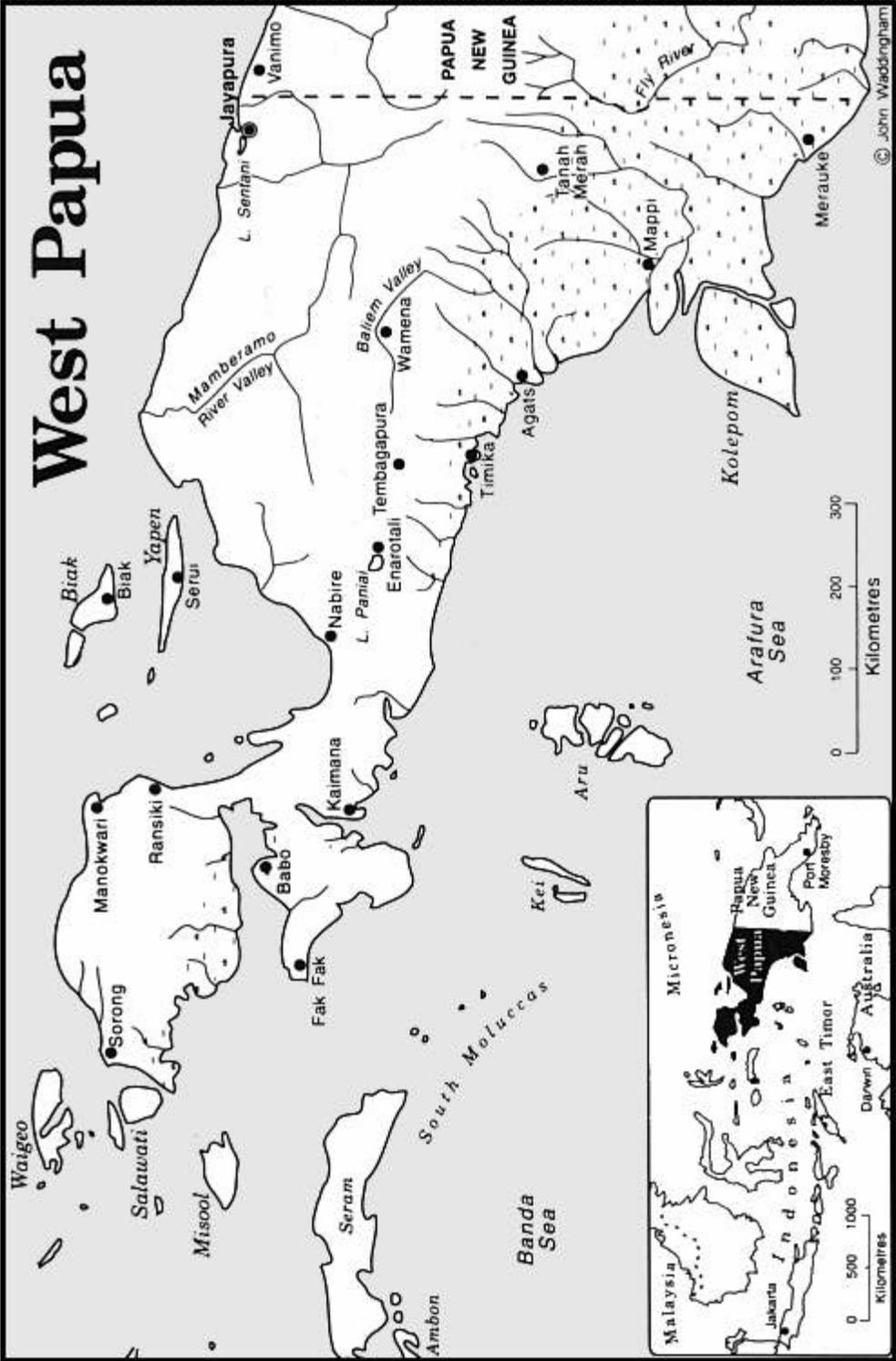
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Map of West Papua



Introduction

The history of West Papua reads something like a play. There have been many actors. There have been many roles. There have been plot twists, deviation and deception while the setting – the Western half of New Guinea Island – has been the same. Some commentators hail it as a triumphant and glorious tale of Indonesia’s power in defeating the Dutch, but for the indigenous peoples the reality is that the history is a dramatic, traumatic, tragedy. It is a tale of trickery, loss, exploitation, and murder. Unfortunately, this is no stage production. The blood spilt is very real. And it is ongoing.

The conflict is highly polarized. Some of the major players that have worked against, or at least not for, West Papua and its peoples include: the Netherlands, the United States, the United Nations and its decolonization agenda, the Indonesian government and its bureaucratic and military entities, transmigrant Indonesians, and the giant mining corporation of Freeport-McMoRan and its subsidiary company PT Freeport Indonesia. On the other hand, those responsible for publicly advancing aspirations for decolonization within West Papua have primarily been indigenous people and traditional leaders. Various Non-Government Organizations (NGO’s) and activist groups, most of which are overseas and often have been founded by or employ diasporic West Papuans, have also been outspoken in support of the cause.

For some time topics regarding West Papua were frequently featured in academic publications but their rate has declined to something of a trickle. Although issues concerning Oceania’s longest running conflict and most blatant case of re-colonization seem to have fallen through the cracks, their importance has not diminished in the least. Issues surrounding West Papua are complex and while this thesis does not purport to resolve them all, its substance is

grounded in two main arguments. In an attempt to bring discussions about West Papua back to the fore this thesis first argues that self-determination has never been realized in West Papua, thus making the United Nations' attempt at ending colonialism there an abject failure. To do so I recount the history of the half-island and the means by which it was colonized by the Dutch and then re-colonized by the Indonesian states. I then argue that in order for the fullest measure of self-determination to occur indigenous peoples must be allowed to choose any option for their future, be it integration, independence, or some other status including the possible formation of non-state entities or the complete withdrawal from the global system. In doing so I recount the forced integration of West Papua into the unitary Republic of Indonesia and then look forward to ways that self-determination and indigenous demands, encapsulated in expressions of 'merdeka,' (liberation) might be satisfied, not all of which concur with presupposed modes of decolonization. This challenge of Western assumptions and regulations regarding decolonization is important as West Papua is a prime example of a situation where simply removing the colonizer and establishing a new state will not necessarily satisfy indigenous demands for independence.

Conflict in West Papua is generally centered on two major issues: disputes over Indonesia's rights to sovereignty, and clashes over exploitation of the many rich natural resources available in West New Guinea as well as unequal distribution of wealth gained from such ventures. Independence is often held up by activists as the only possible method by which lasting peace can be brought about in West Papua; however, it is possible that an act of self-determination could lead towards arrangements acceptable to the UN besides independence that might equally fulfill the demands of indigenous groups. The United Nations' has outlined its decolonization agenda several times, most definitively in December 1960 when the General Assembly signed off on the *Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries*

and Peoples (UN Resolution 1514 (XV)) and Resolution 1541. The second resolution, passed only a day after the Declaration, identifies three political statuses as being acceptable forms of a decolonized territory, namely: creation of a sovereign independent State, free association with an independent State, or full integration into an independent State (UN Resolution 1541 (XV)). Geoff Bertram, in his analysis of decolonization in small Pacific States, cites a lesser known clause from the 1970 UN Resolution 2625 (XXV) *Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations*. This declaration notes the three previously mentioned modes of decolonization and then adds a fourth acceptable option for decolonization in “any other political status freely determined by a people” (Bertram 1987, 20). Bertram’s proposition that other options, besides those explicitly outlined by previous declarations may constitute a full measure of decolonization, opens the door to examine such alternative possibilities, including those of a more customary nature than previously conceptualized by western traditions.

Merdeka and its Meanings

Most English-speaking academicians of Oceania are familiar with the term merdeka in the context of the *Organisasi Papua Merdeka* (Free Papua Movement or OPM). The OPM has become the umbrella organization for all forms of indigenous West Papuan resistance to Indonesian sovereignty. These resistance movements include armed factions, de facto governments, and other groups and like-minded individuals working toward a free and independent West Papua – although exactly what that means varies. While the term OPM has been widely used to refer to the movement resisting Indonesian sovereignty, a brief investigation into the deeper meanings of the individual words that make up the acronym, particularly the

word *merdeka*, will broaden our understanding pertaining to indigenous desires for the final outcome of decolonization. The different forms and means of resistance undertaken by the OPM will be discussed in chapter 3. The outcome desired by many West Papuans, especially in rural areas, is in direct conflict with Western designs in which decolonization results in the formation of a new state. “The fact that many Papuans desire a revolutionary social and political order that goes beyond simply creating a new Papuan nation-state has largely been dismissed and relegated to the realm of the undiscussed” (Kirksey 2002, 6).

The term *merdeka* is a multi-faceted concept rife with meaning on many levels including “A desire for economic development, environmental sustainability, geopolitical independence, indigenous mythology and Christian salvation” (5). Various levels of development and integration or familiarity with mechanisms of government have led to a diversity of meanings now attributed to the word. The etymology of *merdeka* “can be traced to the Portuguese rendering of *Maharddhika*, which is Sanskrit for ‘great man’ or ‘high and mighty.’” It was then appropriated by the Dutch who used the word ‘*Mardijker*’ to identify “non-Indonesian Asians who were descended from freed slaves in seventeenth-century Batavia.” Eventually the term was readopted into the lexicon of colonial Java as “*mardikar* came to mean an area that was free of taxes and obligations to the colonial government” (Kirksey 2002, 85). Modern translations often interpret *merdeka* as meaning ‘liberation,’ although the *Historical Dictionary of Indonesia* cites its meaning as “Freedom,” and states that it was a “Common greeting during the [Indonesian] revolution,” (Crib and Kahin 2004, 271). During the Indonesian war for independence *merdeka* took on a strong anti-colonialist sentiment. This emotive factor was retained as the term was again employed to justify ‘Operation *Mandala*,’ the 1962 military offensive led by then General Suharto, to ‘liberate’ West New Guinea from the Netherlands.

West Papuans have now appropriated the term, retaining its anti-colonial nature, and utilizing it in their own to call for independence from Indonesia. This is a potent statement of political dissent as it places the Indonesians into the same colonial role as the Indonesians place their former Dutch colonial masters.

West Papuans use the Malay term to articulate their own aspirations for freedom and expectations for decolonization, by means of a new state or otherwise. Visible leaders calling for the creation of a new state are usually educated, often coastal, elites which represent only a small portion of the entire population, although, as Webster points out, these elites are not out of touch with traditional social groups or customs, (Webster 2002, 515). The idea for an independent state in West New Guinea was first put forth by the Dutch and, although never realized, the desire has remained. Whether or not West Papuans would opine for their own state had West New Guinea been included in the initial independence of Indonesia is of course speculative and unclear, especially as “Most Papuans were not familiar with the concept of an Indonesian nation state... until after the armed invasion of 1961 [by the Indonesian armed forces]” (anonymous West Papuan in Kirksey 2002, 21). Despite ulterior motives by the European colonialists, the fact that the Dutch prepared a small group of leaders who wanted independence and promised to create a fully self-governing political entity has fueled a movement that still continues, despite several decades of Indonesian attempts at indoctrination and Indonesianization.

West Papuan refugees in Papua New Guinea, Australia, Vanuatu, Europe and elsewhere also tend to see the creation of an independent West Papuan state as the end result of merdeka. One West Papuan now living in Papua New Guinea, whose identity shall remain anonymous, said:

This is what 'merdeka' means to West Papuans: We want to be free from the suppression or enslavery controlled and dominated by another government or persons. We want to live under a democratic system where four pillars of freedoms are exercised: freedom of speech, religion, assembly and want. We want to live in harmony without suspicion not only within our family, clan, tribe, neighbours but others as well including the enemies (if we have one) in this shared world. In the wider sense: we can say things without fear or favour; respect others reciprocally or considerate of existence of others; do what we want or wish to do without harming or endangering another person; moving anywhere anytime with anyone without being detected and threatened, considering limitation of environment and personalities; respecting the ethics and values of others; not inciting and provoking others. These are the basic rules of life in any given situation!

[I]f ever Indonesia is to leave, the Papuans want and expect the statehood of West Papua like any other nation in the world: the Papuan government that has her own three different arms of government – legislative, executive and judicative. The state of Papua that has her own constitution, coat of arms and flag, and a language that all Papuans understand –lingua franca/medium of instruction (constitutionally specified). In this case a Constitution can be drawn up by a Papuan Parliament, Coat of Arms – a Pigeon and the flag – Morning Star are already existing, the language is and will be Bahasa Melayu/Indonesia – sharing with Indonesia and

Malaysia. It is like English for United Kingdom, USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and others (personal communication, 26 April 2008).

The state system and the rights guaranteed therein have been accepted by many West Papuans, especially amongst educated classes and those now located abroad. Members of both of these classes have directly benefitted from state structures which have enabled them to either obtain knowledge or find safety under the auspices of refugee status or both.

Expressions advocating for merdeka are not only found among coastal peoples or elites, indeed they are often more prevalent in rural areas, far from the eyes of government and police. Like peoples throughout Oceania, land is an extremely important part of West Papuan cultures and as such definitions of merdeka have come to include indigenous connections to the earth. “Viktor Kaisiepo, a Papuan leader exiled in the Netherlands, defines merdeka as interdependence rather than independence: he advocates linking ideas about sustainability to definitions of merdeka. Merdeka should mean self-sufficiency in terms of food production and access to clean water free from pollution,” (Kirksey 2002, 91). People and social groups throughout West New Guinea have experienced Indonesian colonialism as their traditional lands for hunting and agriculture have been deemed *terra nullius* and are now being exploited. As a result, expressions for ‘Free Papua land’ (*tanah Papua merdeka*) are now more common than calls for a free West Papuan state (*negara Papua merdeka*) (Webster 2002, 520). It is primarily rural peoples, who are in many cases recently alienated from the lands of their ancestors, that are challenging the statist desires of their elite counterparts and the overall expectations as “a majority of Papuans in rural areas desire more than freedom from foreign occupation—they desire that a non-state form of government be instituted,” (Kirksey 2002, 95). Additionally, the few ranks of fulltime

freedom fighters, albeit poorly equipped and trained in comparison to their modernized counterparts, are made up of, and supported by, indigenous rural dwellers.

Residents of more rural locales within West Papua interact with state apparatuses on an irregular basis but when they do the results are often negative. As the Dutch colonial scheme placed a limited number of government officials, many of whom were from other parts of the greater East Indies colonies, and posts in mainly coastal locations, most of the inhabitants in outlying areas have never known the Dutch in their role as colonizers. S. Eben Kirksey, recounts an experience he had while conducting fieldwork in the highlands of West New Guinea. Gunshots had been heard in the vicinity and the village head gave the order to raise the Indonesian flag in the village as sign that the local Mee people were indeed celebrating the national Independence Day, (Kirksey 2002, 4). Such experiences tie the constructs of the state directly with violence and oppression. Perceptions of the state as a savage and foreign institution ready to commit violence with minor or no provocation have lead many West Papuans, especially rural dwellers, to question the necessity of state-based governance.

One of the primary sources highlighting West Papuan desires for a non-state nation is Eben Kirksey's masters of philosophy thesis completed at the University of Oxford in 2002. For his research Kirksey conducted 61 interviews in West Papua throughout 2001 and also spoke with West Papuans now living in the UK, Germany, the Netherlands and Eastern Indonesia. Kirksey models the discourse surrounding West Papua as polar in nature with opinions for the continuation of Indonesian sovereignty being orthodox while the opposing heterodoxy is formed by those advocating the creation of a free state in West New Guinea. Kirksey found that many, especially rural, West Papuans desire an alternative future, which has been excluded from the dichotomy created by the dominant discourse.

Overall West Papuan resistance and strivings for merdeka in all its forms is a direct response to Indonesian internal-colonialism as native peoples assert their indigenous rights to sovereignty. Indigenous activist and writer Saul Hindom shows that resistance is not a new phenomenon with its origins rooted in customary practice. “In the period before the Papuans were brought under non-Papuan domination, the tribes in West Papua were in fact sovereign small tribal states within which the group, which was an economic, political and military entity, was kept up by the mutual link springing from the fact of having common ancestors. Anyone not belonging to the group...was a foreigner who, if he entered the territory of the tribal state without reasons acceptable to that society, would be considered as an evil intruder and liquidated if need be” (quoted in Budiardjo and Liong 1988, 1). It is this level of sovereignty over traditional lands that is desired by most West Papuans. Re-attainment or restoration of this power is the ultimate goal of the people and the truest definition of merdeka. A land of merdeka is a place where West Papuan cultures and values are valid and the people are allowed to make choices for their own future. The truest form of self-determination for the peoples of West Papua would allow for them to choose a form of government that would allow them to retain sovereignty over their lands and the influences brought in from without. Merdeka could only be reached under a Western-style state government based on Weberian principles of bureaucracy if that government were to allot traditional social groups power over their lands. However, should the people desire, other alternative options, outside of the realm of orthodox state structures, must also be put on offer. These alternatives include free association with other states or – should the overall mechanism of state government be rejected – the formation of government based on customary ways of life and traditional forms of authority. A more likely option however, would consist of the merging of both customary and Western modes of authority and

power, thereby creating syncretic institutions and relationships where traditional leaders have a major say in a governmental entity that still somewhat resembles a state.

History and Definition of Terms

For the sake of clarity throughout this thesis I must first explicate the terms that are to be used. When referring to the geographical area at hand the names used are inherently and inextricably political. “Speaking the name West Papua is a political act in Indonesia that aligns the speaker with the self-determination movement” (Kirksey 2002, 9). Similarly, acceptance and use of the many names given the area by Indonesia either shows one is not aware of the issues, or aligns one with orthodox Indonesian nationalism, which maintains that the western half of New Guinea Island is, and always has been, an integral part of the state of Indonesia. As the semantics of terminology regarding West Papua is then extremely important, I will briefly discuss some of the history surrounding the many names that have been used in reference to the areas in and around New Guinea.

“The term ‘Papua’ or ‘Papuas’ was already in use in the fifteenth century when the Portuguese adopted it as an identifier for the peoples of Halmahera and the other Maluku Islands. It was also used to describe the Raja Empat Islands and the Bird’s Head...Peninsula region of New Guinea, appearing on early seventeenth-century European maps” (Moore 2003, 2). The name Papua is often cited as having reference to the natives’ frizzy hair, however Osborne has located another possible source for the word stating that it is Moluccan in origin and has reference to a person with no father, “implying that New Guineans lacked strong leaders to protect them from slavers,” (Osborne 1987, 2). In 1545 Ynigo Ortiz De Retes claimed the island for Spain and gave it the name *Nueva Guinea* (New Guinea), “because he perceived a

physical similarity between the inhabitants and those of Guinea in Africa” (Moore 2003, 76).

Hence the two major terms used to refer to the land mass, as well as the peoples themselves, are both foreign in origin and diminutive in tone.

The area was administered as part of the greater colony of the Dutch East Indies (*Nederlands-Indië*) until 1949 when the Dutch attempted to split the territory, which was then called Netherlands New Guinea (*Nederlands Nieuw-Guinea*), from the new state of Indonesia. In 1961 the Dutch changed the territory’s name to Papau Barat, an Indonesian term which literally translates to West Papua, in preparation for the impending Indonesian takeover (Moore 2003, 2). After taking possession of West New Guinea the Indonesians quickly changed the name to Irian Barat, although this name was also short lived. In 1973 the name was changed again, this time to Irian Jaya (Victorious Irian) as Indonesia’s President Suharto personally proclaimed the province’s new name during ceremonies for the opening of the Freeport mine (Leith 2003, 62). At this same time the provincial capital, an area customarily known as Numbay but called Hollandia by the Dutch but redesignated as Kota Baru in 1962, also received a new name and has since been called Jayapura (Victory City) (Bertrand 2004, 152). The word Irian is host to a pair of competing etymologies. Many translate it as a politically charged acronym ‘*Ikut Republik Indonesia Anti Nederland*’ (Join the Republic of Indonesia Against the Netherlands) (Cozens 2005, 487) while others cite it as an adoption of a Biak word meaning ‘to rise’ (Moore 2003, 3). Later, the territory’s name was again changed, this time to Papua, in 2002 as a part of the negotiation of the region’s new special autonomy status. In 2003 the western portion of the half-island territory was divided and known as West Irian Jaya until 2007 when the name was changed, this time to West Papua Province. The prescription of foreign names such as New Guinea or Papua to large geographic areas often assumes similarities between indigenous

inhabitants. Peopled with numerous ethnic and cultural groups, the islands of Southwest Oceania offer some of the most diverse cultural landscapes in the world. Therefore those embarking on a study of the region and the peoples within the colonially drawn boundaries must be careful not to assume any level of unity based on superficial boundaries drawn long ago in lands far away. While some identities are beginning to form in relation to these structures, even these are flexible at best, thus we must remember that not all West New Guineans readily identify themselves as part of the larger group in resistance or support of Indonesia. More on this topic will be discussed in chapter four.

The similarities of colonial names given to New Guinea Island's eastern territories have caused confusion and error, even amongst many professionals and academics, which sometimes refer to the entire island as Papua New Guinea and the independent state of the same name as East Papua. The northeast portion of New Guinea – including the Admiralty and Bismarck archipelagoes as well as the North Solomons – was called German New Guinea before being given to Australia as a Mandated Territory and then as a Trust Territory by the League of Nations and United Nations, respectively. New Guinea's southeastern portion was initially colonized by Great Britain and called British New Guinea before becoming the Australian Territory of Papua. The two were then administered as the separate Territories of Papua and New Guinea within a single unit by Australia until 1975 when the independent state of Papua New Guinea (PNG) was created (Moore 2003, 1-2). Within PNG the terms Papua and Papuan are widely used to refer to the lands and peoples of the old Territory of Papua, but are especially used to denote the Motu people, upon whose land the capital city Port Moresby now stands. While many writers and journalists have begun to use the term Papua and Papuan to refer to the lands and peoples of West New Guinea, in correlation with previously mentioned provincial

name changes, this usage is a potential point of confusion for those familiar with the connotation as applied in PNG. Thus, in order to avoid obfuscation, throughout my thesis I will refer to the greater territory of West New Guinea, comprising both existing Indonesian provinces, as West Papua and its native peoples as West Papuans collectively, as specified by native desires (see Bhakti and Chauvel 2004, 11), although the terms West New Guinea and West New Guineans will also be used occasionally.

Writing about issues relating to Indonesia also poses the challenges presented by additional language barriers as I am not familiar with Bahasa Indonesia (the primary language of Indonesia) or Logat Papua (the Indonesian dialect most commonly spoken by Indigenous West Papuans). Therefore, when possible, I will use the closest English translations in order to avoid the redundant usage of unfamiliar terms to maintain the reader's continuity that is easily broken by the need to constantly reference glossaries and tables of acronyms or abbreviations. This project has also been hampered by the inability to carry out field work in West Papua or other areas where diasporic communities exist. With these limitations exposed I must also point out that the sources utilized in this study primarily consist of publications available in the English, although some research materials were translated from other tongues before going to print.

Seeking for indigenous voices regarding West Papua's future is a difficult undertaking, especially when social networks, upon which researchers throughout the region must rely, are limited by great distance. West Papuan expatriates and refugees in Papua New Guinea, Australia and Europe are likely to be more outspoken in their opinions than indigenes residing in their homeland, where even the smallest hint of dissent might cause one to face a violent end. It is with these limitations that I have created this thesis.

Background History

The exact time period in which humans first came to New Guinea Island is not exactly known although scientific dating at archaeological sites places people in eastern New Guinea as early as 40,000 ago. Early human inhabitants are believed to have begun practicing intentional agriculture some 9,000 years prior to the modern day, placing them on an equal plane with the earliest vestiges of Western civilization (Thomas 1999, 122). The European colonization of New Guinea is, therefore, relatively recent, with boundaries officially outlined in 1848 when the Dutch specified their claim of the western part of New Guinea Island up to 141st degree line of east longitude. This arbitrary partitioning by Europeans created the only land border in Oceania while also dividing tribes and disrespecting thousands of years of prior history. In 1898 the Dutch assumed full administrative responsibility over West New Guinea although their first major use of the territory was as a dumping site for Indonesian communist and nationalist activists who were sent there in exile (Budiardjo and Liong 1988, 4; Elmslie 2002, 9). The Dutch East Indies Territory had formerly included all of the island archipelagoes that now make up Indonesia however the Dutch colonial government saw no need to cede West New Guinea to the newly independent state as the people and cultures were vastly different and had not taken part in the civil war for the recognition of a greater Indonesia Republic. Furthermore, the Dutch saw New Guinea as a potential political tool which could be used to save face after the shame of losing greater Indonesia by retaining a portion of their empire, while still allowing them the right to civilize primitive peoples and make use of the vast natural resources available there. Many West Papuans preferred the Dutch to Indonesians, as prior to Indonesian independence in 1949

the West Papuans had already built a large rivalry with the numerous Malays brought in by the Dutch colonial government as schoolteachers, government administrators, and other midlevel bureaucrats (Chauvel 2005, 6).

Throughout the 1950's the Dutch prepared the West New Guinea Islanders for an independent state of their own, or possibly even an independent Melanesian Federation (although no records suggest that they consulted the West Papuans or those under Australian rule to the East on this possibility), either way the bestowal of independence, and thus decolonization, according to the Dutch calendar was scheduled to be made in 1971 (Chauvel 2005, 61; Budiardjo and Carmel 1988, 11; Elmslie 2002, 10). Indonesian military forces invaded Dutch New Guinea in 1961 and the two powers, which had previously waged a long and gruesome conflict that resulted in Indonesia's independence, was on the brink of yet another war. This possibility did not go unnoticed by the international community and the two sides were quickly brought to talks that concluded in December 1961 by the signing of the New York Agreement which stated the after a short period of control by the United Nations the Indonesians would assume governance over West New Guinea and hold a referendum on sovereignty within six years. Throughout these decision making processes the indigenous peoples were almost completely left out.

Indonesian officials took over control from the UN earlier than agreed and were quick to begin intimidating and harassing indigenes on account of their Melanesian race, Christian religion, and perceived cultural inferiority. Although there had been doubt in the minds of many as to whether or not the Act of Free Choice would actually be carried out the plebiscite eventuated in the latter part of 1969. In the mid-1960's Indonesia withdrew from the United Nations and threatened not to fulfill its obligations to the New York Agreement. However the Jakarta leadership eventually changed their minds and President Suharto announced the

referendum himself in his Independence Day speech in 1967. His words are still unsettling as he proclaimed that this would be, “an opportunity for the people of West Irian to affirm their decision to remain part of the Indonesian nation” (Chauvel 2005, 35). From this statement it is obvious that the fate of the West Papuan peoples had been decided for them by Indonesia before they had a chance to voice their own opinion.

Violence has been the Indonesian policy of choice when dealing with indigenous West New Guineans who question the sovereignty of the Jakarta based government over their lands. This method of control has led to the deaths of untold numbers of Melanesians. Despite common knowledge of Indonesia’s deployment of such tactics against those who were now their own citizens, the international community has, with only a few exceptions, ignored the plight of the peoples West Papua and even acted in complicity, most conspicuously as the United Nations’ accepted the 1969 Act of Free Choice. The use of force is still the norm of control as Indonesia deals with elements of ‘separatism’ in West Papua and other places within its empire, especially when protecting its investments, such as the American-owned Freeport Mining Company’s Grasberg gold and copper pit which opened near Timika in 1973.

A new era of tolerance seemed imminent during the “Papuan Spring” of the late 1990’s, a period where dissent and open discussion of the future of West Papua was allowed. The Asian economic crisis, subsequent political crisis and downfall of President Suharto, and the East Timor crisis collectively created an atmosphere in which this new level of dialogue could take place. The culminating point of this new epoch was the passing of the Autonomy Bill of 2001, which fell far short of Papuan demands for independence but seemed a step towards lasting peace as it addressed some of the grievances uttered by Papuans. Initially, the prospects of autonomy seemed very positive, however, the law fell well short of its aims as most of the

reforms passed into law have been overlooked and instead older, and more repressive, standards have been enacted or reactivated, such as the division of the territory into three separate provinces (Timmer 2004, 410). Most analyses of special autonomy now regard it as a failure as the initiatives put forth by the measure have largely not been met.

The Peoples of West Papua

The indigenous population of New Guinea ranks among the world's most diverse. New Guinea Island is home to approximately 1,000 languages with some 250 located within the borders that now make up West Papua. "New Guineans have lived in upward of 1,000 small-scale language-and-territory-based units with no overarching political unity, and political units ebbed and flowed over the centuries. Political boundaries sometimes exactly duplicated language and dialect areas, but in other cases political alliances joined contiguous language and dialect areas, or deadly enmities occurred between close neighboring villages speaking the same language. There were always cultural spheres that linked wider regions, as well as close relationships between descent and territory" (Moore 2003, 50-51). The peoples of West Papua and New Guinea have often been classified along the lines of geographic or cultural features, such as trade relationships or modes of leadership and authority. "By far the most straightforward has been the 'cultural sphere' concept which divides New Guinea into a series of lowland, mid-altitude, and Highland spheres, separated by frontiers rather than hard boundaries, each with core and fringe areas, based on human population density and distance from centers" (41). These spheres, enveloped by flexible frontier regions rather than rigid boundaries, are further explained by David Hyndman and George Morren Jr.:

Frontiers describe the zones in which spheres meet and compete or, through occupation, reduce uncontested margins. Within a sphere, contiguous segments are linked or separated (as the case may be) by marriage, mobility, trade, exchange, alliance, warfare, ideological differences and similarities, co-operative demonstrations, competition and conflict. Changes at the center sometimes ramify to the periphery. ...On the island of New Guinea, spheres sometimes correspond to culture areas identified on ethnolinguistic grounds, but this is generally difficult to demonstrate in Melanesia where the location and territorial integrity of indigenous peoples has been disrupted by the invasion of hierarchically organized states (quoted in Moore 2003, 41-42).

The cultural sphere model has great relevance throughout the region of Oceania and indeed the rest of the world. The use of such a model is more conducive to showing the multi-dimensional relationships and identities that have connected Pacific Island peoples across the vast sea of islands, overcoming divisive and dated terms like Micronesia, Melanesia, and Polynesia. A broader view such shows that “distinctions between Polynesia and Melanesia are more theoretical than real, and that our academic interpretations of Pacific rank, leadership, and landowning have owed much to Western concepts” (51) (see also Guiart 1996).

The long, high, cordillera running across the middle of New Guinea Island is home to the largest portion of West Papua’s indigenous population. Some of the largest groups within the Highlands are the Damal, Dani, Delem in the northern part; Amungme and Nduga in the southern section; Kupel, Ngalum to the east and the Moni, and Ekagi tribes in the Western mountains (Beanal 1997, 78). Some of the other highlands tribes that are prominent in discourse about West Papua are the Mee, Wolani, Kamoro, and the Mek. Many of the highlands peoples

live within the mountains' fertile valleys, the largest of which are the Baliem Valley (also sometimes called the Grand Valley) in the island's center, and the Paniai Valley (with Enarotali as its main city) towards the range's western edge. The northern coastal areas of New Guinea consist of rocky hills while the southern portion is primarily made up of forests of mangrove and swamps. Traditional lowland settlements are commonly situated along coastlines and rivers and large groups of indigenous people can also be found on the Schouten Islands of Biak, Yapen, and Numfor, located off of the mainland's northern coast. The most developed urban centers have been built in the lower coastal areas, although as will be discussed in chapter three, indigenous persons now make up only a small portion of their populations. Some of these cities are "Jayapura..., Sorong, Manokwari, Biak town, Merauke, Nabire, and Fakfak" (Anti-Slavery 1990, 9). Some of the more studied peoples of the southern coasts include the Korowai, first made famous by the Russian anthropologist Nicholai Nicholaevich Miklukho-Maklai, and their neighbors the Kombai and the Asmat. All of these groups have been rumored to practice cannibalism at various times in history and are known for building arboreal domiciles. In fact, tales of anthropophagy have long been used by various governments, among them the Dutch, Indonesians, and Americans, as a means to rationalize the mistreatment and colonization of New Guinea and its peoples. The Asmat are also renowned for their elaborate wood carving styles, especially upon shields and totemic ancestor poles.

As this thesis posits that at least part of governmental sovereignty over land be returned to indigenous peoples, something must be said about customary social systems and modes of leadership and authority. Often perceived pejoratively as 'simple,' relationships between individuals and groups in New Guinea and western Oceania are actually quite complex. In his highly informative work on the history of New Guinea, Clive Moore explains that "The invisible

‘government’ of precontact Melanesia consisted of...interlocking exchange systems and associated human interchanges” (Moore 2003, 11). “Melanesian leadership styles have often been contrasted unfavorably with the more formal hereditary chieftainships of Polynesia. But Melanesian forms of leadership are actually extremely diverse” (51). He further states:

The political units of Melanesia were construed from a thousand ethno-linguistic areas, linked by interlocking trade systems radiating from cultural spheres, and often also by marriages and aggressive raiding that moved along the same exchange ‘roads’ and ‘passages.’ Europeans thought that Melanesia lacked regular government, and depicted the small-scale societies as each isolated from the other. They failed to realize that Melanesian society was constructed on the basis of close relationships between descent, language, and territory, and reciprocal exchange ‘roads’ and ‘passages,’ rather than on large and permanent territorial entities. New Guinea exchange networks – such as the *hiri* and *kula* in the southeast, the *tee* and the *moka* of the Highlands, or the *kain timur* in the Bird’s Head, and the *sosolot* network around Onin – linked generations and territories through material culture exchanges, intermarriage, ideology, and technology transfers (11).

Describing the leaderships systems of Highlands New Guinea, Ron Crocombe states that they are relatively democratic and that as “for societies of their size... [they are] among the most egalitarian in the world” (Crocombe 1976, 10-11). Crocombe further cites sources that reveal that change in such groups usually is instituted from the bottom up, rather than top down (10). In his article ‘Rich Man, Poor Man, Big Man, Chief,’ Anthropologist Marshall Sahlins highlights some of the prominent governmental structures found in many of the Pacific Islands. While this

paper is dated, covers only very broadly the systems found in New Guinea, and exemplifies academic preferences for the hereditary transmission of leadership, as is more often the case in Central and Eastern Oceania, it can be useful, especially as he does include examples from the Kapauku people of West Papua.

Sahlins outlines the general social structures of New Guinea and its surrounding areas by saying that “The characteristic western Melanesian ‘tribe,’ that is, the ethnic-cultural entity, consists of many autonomous kinship-residential groups. Amounting on the ground to a small village or a local cluster of hamlets, each of these is a copy of the others in organization, each tends to be economically self-governing, and each is the equal of the others in political status. The tribal plan is one of politically unintegrated segments” (Sahlins 1963, 287). Many, but definitely not all, groups in West Papua are led by figures now commonly described as Big-men. “Other leadership systems operate quite differently, from the warrior (*mambri*) system of the Biak, the clan-chief (*ondoafi*) system in the Humboldt Bay lowlands, and the *raja* system of the Fakfak area and the Raja Empat Islands adjoining west New Guinea” (Moore 2003, 51).

Big man status differs from other common forms of chieftainship in Oceania as “Big-men do not come to office; they do not succeed to, nor are they installed in, existing positions of leadership over political groups. The attainment of big-man status is rather the outcome of a series of acts which elevate a person above the common herd and attract about him a coterie of loyal, lesser men. It is not accurate to speak of ‘bigman’ as a political title, for it is but an acknowledged standing in interpersonal relations” (Sahlins 1963, 289). While Sahlins describes this system as ‘underdeveloped,’ as it does not feature many of the complex nuances found in the chieftainships of central and eastern Oceania, the big man system appropriately meets local needs, and is in fact, not at all simplistic as it is often portrayed. For centuries Westerners have

perceived the peoples of western Oceania, and New Guinea in particular, as extremely primitive in large part due to differences of race and social structures. The unique and diverse social structures of New Guinea and surrounding archipelagoes show that the indigenous peoples there have found alternative, more appropriate, means of obtaining and implementing authority. “The absence of social complexity can be seen as ‘the exploration of adaptive avenues other than general evolution’s one-way route leading from bands through chiefdoms to states’” (Moore 2003, 53).

The political system, which might be classified as big man structure, in use amongst the Amungme people is not unlike a representative democracy. Villagers, whose land is now the site of Freeport-Indonesia’s Grasberg mine, are expected to sort out minor issues between themselves but larger authority rests within a network of leaders, individually known as *menagawan*. This leadership role is not restricted by gender and each household, or *itorei*, is represented by a *menagawan*. These *menagawans* make up the village council, which usually consists of four or five individuals (Beanal 1997, 117). It is the duty of the *menagawans* of the village council to make “Every important decision which has repercussions for everyday life” (114). During village council meetings *menagawans* meet to consult and discuss solutions or strategies and then elect a leader, usually the most senior member, to carry out their initiatives. Above the village council is the regional council whose authority is called into play when matters that concern more than one Amungme village are deemed pressing. The regional council is made up of elected *menagawan* representatives from the village councils. Affairs affecting the entire tribe are the reserve of the tribal council. The tribal council is made up of individuals representing their respective regional councils. From these representatives a single leader is elected to direct the tribal council. The elected person is then known as *Menagawan Kalwang*. In his description

of the Menagawan System, Beanal consistently points out that an individual's personal characteristics like wisdom, kindness, honesty, and firmness are more important in qualifying one to become a menagawan, rather than one's gender or parentage.

Thesis Outline

The first chapter of this thesis outlines definitions of important concepts like colonialism and decolonization and then identifies trends and expectations associated with decolonization as put forth by the United Nations. Chapter two traces the history of West Papuan colonization and outlines the processes that took West New Guinea and its peoples from being a largely insignificant possession of the Netherlands and brought them under the yoke of Indonesian internal-colonialism where they are now held aloft as a nationalist trophy. The remaining chapters review the options for decolonization and how they have been or might be applied in West Papua, with an eye to indigenous concepts of merdeka to see how Western theories of decolonization and local ideas might be brought into harmony. The lengthy third chapter is dedicated to the currently exercised option of full political integration and exposes the history of violence, displacement, and exploitation that has become the nature of internal-colonialism which has held West Papua as a province of the Republic of Indonesia since 1969. Chapter three further discusses how the central government of Indonesia has tried to rework its colonial scheme through the introduction of a measure of special autonomy. Unfortunately, the focus of the special autonomy law has been economic development, ignoring roots issues of conflict. Further highlighting the initiative's shortcomings is the administration's inability to fairly and fully implement the law as some parts have been informally retracted, creating extended legal confusion. As integration and the subsequent offer of special autonomy have not satisfied

indigenous desires, chapter four is designed to look at how options of free association and independence might, or might not, satisfy the aspirations of indigenes while also making suggestions at how unique non-state options, outside of the accepted realms of decolonization theory, may be the most appropriate form of government and the best way for expressions of merdeka to be realized.

Chapter 1

The Decolonization Agenda and the United Nations Approach

Arguing for decolonization in West Papua assumes that the half-island territory is indeed colonized. This requires a definition for the terms ‘colony’ and the greater concept of ‘colonialism.’ I will highlight several key points and principles referring to commonly assumed processes of decolonization and notions frequently associated therewith, with a general view towards the Pacific Islands region. The focus will then shift to the United Nations approach towards decolonization, taking into account the difficulties of state-building once an acceptable mode of decolonization has occurred.

David Robertson’s *A Dictionary of Modern Politics* defines colonialism as consisting of two primary components, saying that “the land held as a colony must have no real political independence from the ‘mother country,’ but also the relationship must be one of forthright exploitation.” Robertson’s reference work further states that while an imperial scheme may incorporate territories into a greater commonwealth as equal members, a truly colonial system is based on strictly unequal grounds and “has often been justified...as an attempt to spread ‘civilization’ to socially underdeveloped societies” (Robertson 2002, 89).

Robert Aldrich and John Connell cite an older definition which states that a colony is “an area of land which, with its inhabitants, is entirely subject to the rule of an independent state, of which it does not form an integral part. It is not itself an independent state, though it may, according to its degree of political maturity, be given some self-government. A grant of self-government and of a representative legislature does not prevent the ruling state from disallowing any legislation of which it may disapprove. Colonies have usually originated in settlements by

traders or explorers of territories unoccupied by any other independent states, or in conquests of territories already occupied by other states” (Aldrich and Connell 1998, 2). However the authors further problematize the matter of defining the terminology by noting that, “there can be no precise definition of what is a colony,” and that “Since political shifts are crucial to colonialism and decolonization, any definition of a colony is condemned to flexibility and variable interpretations” (3-4). Such flexible interpretations are precisely the culprits in the conceptual rift that divides those who would see a free and independent West Papua, as proposed and attempted by the Netherlands and indigenous West Papuans, and those who would retain West New Guinea as a part of the greater Republic of Indonesia, viewing the Republic as a successor state to all of the lands of the former Dutch East Indies territory.

Aldrich and Connell do, however, offer a few general standards by which an overseas territory can be identified. These require constitutional differences between the territory and the political mainland as well as the need for sufficient distance from the metropole “for there to be no obvious geographical basis” for their political connection “other than accidents of history.” Finally the political dependence of the territory must be such that the area is ineligible for membership in the United Nations. The UN definition of colonies includes these points and further includes markers of culture and ethnicity by stating that “‘colonies’ are ... ethnically and/or culturally distinct from the countries administering them” (4-5). Although laden with pejorative labels, colonialism itself, we must remember, “was far from a homogenous phenomenon, and indigenous opposition to it was, in some cases, weak or non-existent” (6-7). Along with the perceived negative aspects of colonialism, many indigenous peoples reaped what they consider to be benefits. Such benefits have led some territories away from demands for

‘decolonization’ by the creation of a completely separate entity, as in the cases of American Samoa and Tokelau.

The term decolonization is in itself both passive and vague as it communicates that a place is no longer a colony. As such, decolonized territories can take many forms and can arrive at said status in many ways. Despite the complexities of its nature Stewart Firth is able to provide a straightforward explanation, stating that decolonization “refers to the withdrawal of direct legal and constitutional control [of colonizers] over their territories” (Firth 2000, 314). Despite the extraction of formal governing powers many cases of decolonization, at least at times, seem to be mere formalities with the metropolitan ‘parent’ (or ‘parents’ as in the case of Vanuatu) seeking to retain some level of control over their former possessions. Oceania’s freely associated States further show that decolonization does not always mean a complete severing of ties, as some level of control remains with the former colonizer, although how much is determined by the individual compacts defining those relationships.

Developing the Decolonization Agenda

The metropolitan powers of Europe had been gobbling up foreign lands to create gargantuan empires for centuries, however in the 20th centuries this trend began to decline as the process of political decolonization began with India and Pakistan gaining independence in 1947, although Pakistan at that time included present-day Bangladesh. The reversal in policy regarding the taking of colonies and the expansion of Western empires came through long processes, both in the individual colonial States, as well as in the greater arena of international politics. Colonialists saw the rise of rebellions which reminded them of the ‘biological law,’ put forth by Turgot prior to the French-revolution, which states: “just as fruit drops from the tree once it is

ripe, so will the colonies free themselves from the authority of the home country, once they have reached a certain stage of development and their citizens have become fully aware of their rights” (quoted in Grimal 1978, 1). This led to a vision of decolonization as a linear progression towards independence and was accepted as relating primarily to those colonies, such as New Zealand and Australia, where large numbers of Europeans had resettled. “As this process was considered to be inevitable, it was deemed good policy to allow independence to be achieved by peaceful means, thus preserving substantial links between the mother country and the former colonies” (1). European economic dependence on overseas colonies necessitated the preservation of these ‘substantial links’ (24) and this required peaceful resolutions with amenable outcomes so as to retain ties and thus continually benefit the colonizer.

The toll of two World Wars did irreparable damage to the image of prestige that colonizers sought to portray to their subjects while it also left colonial powers like Great Britain and the Netherlands in a weakened state, thus allowing for challenges against their dominance to have greater efficacy. French academic Henri Grimal, whose has already been cited, outlines several factors that figured into the creation of contemporary modes of thinking of decolonization. He notes that the creation of mandated colonies, those territories taken by the Allies from those on the losing sides of both World Wars, furthered the process of decolonization’s conceptualization as responsibility for such territories was given with instructions that they were to be prepared for independence (16). Grimal further names four major outside forces that influenced the drive for political independence in the colonies, namely: Christian churches, Marxist theories, American anti-colonialism, and the United Nations (138). Concurrent with these dynamics was “a period of global economic growth that coincided with

the diffusion and more widespread acceptance of notions of the nation-state” (Aldrich and Connell 1998, 7).

Created and originally dominated by metropolitan colonizers, the United Nations has been the primary driving force for decolonization amongst international organizations and associations since its inception in 1945. Numerous statements and at least one major declaration have been passed regarding the formal handover of governmental duties from metropolitan states to local leaders; in fact, the necessity of decolonization is even enshrined in Article XI of the body’s Charter.

UN Resolutions on Decolonization

Chapter XI of the United Nations Charter, encompassing Articles 73 and 74, instructs member countries to, “ensure...political, economic, social, and educational advancement,” increase the territory’s capacity for self-government, “promote constructive measures of development,” and to report regularly to the Secretary-General (Moore and Pubantz 2002, 400). Leaders soon recognized the vagueness of some of the language and worked to produce more literature for the sake of clarification thus UN Resolution 742 (VIII) was passed 27 November 1953 to further outline factors that determine whether or not a territory has gained a full measure of self-government. The UN sought to further clarify these previous resolutions on 14 December 1960 by officially signing off on UN Resolution 1514 (XV) the ‘Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.’ This declaration, dubbed by some as the “‘Magna Carta of Decolonisation’” (Aldrich and Connell 1998, 158), was quickly followed by more explicit literature which further defined acceptable outcomes for the decolonization agenda. UN Resolution 1541 (XV), passed the day after the previously mentioned decree, is probably the

most important as it specifically defines a full measure of self-government to be either the creation of a sovereign independent State, free association with an independent State, or full integration into an independent State (United Nations General Assembly Resolution 1541 1960, 29).

Integration and free association have not always been listed with the preferred method as “Over time the perception has grown...that the United Nations sought independence as the sole legitimate outcome of decolonization, but it has considered, and accepted, other outcomes, such as the forms of free association that developed between the United States and the Micronesian states” (Aldrich and Connell 1998, 158). As these key resolutions are regularly referred to and upheld by other UN documents it is important to realize the statist nature of the agenda as illustrated by the fact that each of these options requires the residents to join in the global state system in one way or another, thereby retaining relationships with the former colonizer and the greater community of States.

After lengthy colonial relationships colonized peoples have generally been expected to hold fast to the governmental systems introduced to them by their colonizers. Thus, states which have gained independence from Great Britain tend to have administrations modeled after the parliamentary system of Westminster and so on. In no case have colonized peoples been consulted with the option to reject Western models of authority and government and allowed to engage in ways of life more consistent with customary or pre-colonial practices. We must then question the statist agenda of the UN and whether state-based governments are the most appropriate forms of authority to operate in areas where Western ideals of democracy and Weberian bureaucracy may be as equally foreign as the Europeans or Americans that brought them to their islands. It is equally important to be cognizant that the introduced technologies and

systems, including those of government, have had an undeniable effect on the peoples that have been in close contact with colonial structures of Europe and North America. Perhaps unwittingly, the UN has, by way of a later resolution, allowed for a fourth option for decolonization, which permits other unspecified alternatives to be explored, including the possibility for the rejection of the nation-state system.

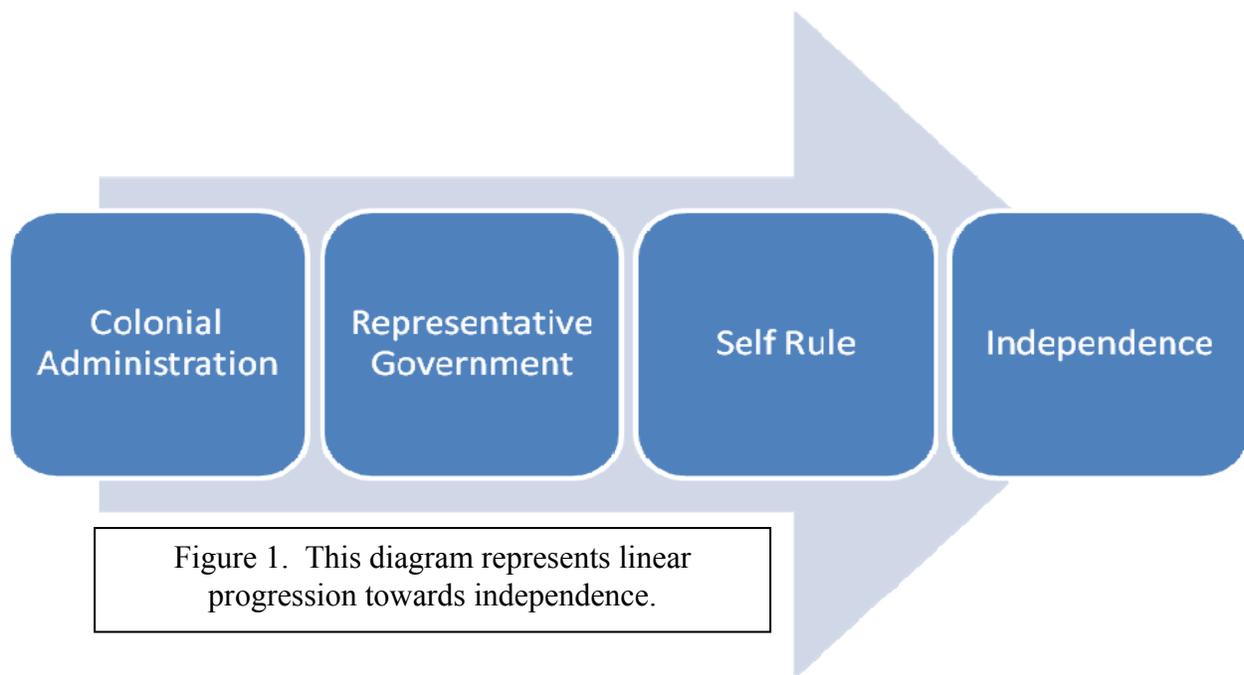
The 1970 UN Resolution 2625 (XXV) ‘Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations,’ lists the options for decolonization as: “the establishment of a sovereign and independent State, the free association or integration with an independent State *or the emergence into any other political status freely determined by a people* constitute modes of implementing the right of self-determination by that people” (United Nations General Assembly Resolution 2625 (XXV) 1970, 124, emphasis added). In his examination of decolonization processes in the possessions of the United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand, Geoff Bertram, the economist, originally from New Zealand, and coauthor of the famous (or infamous) MIRAB model, sees this lesser known clause as the addition of a fourth option for decolonization and includes it in his compass-like diagram of resolutions to colonialism. As this clause comes from an international-relations-oriented document and came later than declarations focused specifically towards issues of decolonization one cannot immediately accept it as the new primary definition of acceptable decolonization options, however, it does offer new and interesting possibilities and perspectives if non-self-governing peoples were given the option to perpetuate the use of indigenous modes of governance rather than being forced to adopt foreign-based state systems. While Bertram sees the potential for this fourth option to create new possibilities, his suggestions of how it might be fulfilled, by an agreement to the continuance of

the colonial order or voluntary switching of suzerains, remain couched within the state-structured status quo (Bertram 1987, 20). Statist views assume that in order for indigenous populations to participate on equal grounds in a postcolonial state of affairs, they must become like their former colonizers and adopt a Western-style state. This form of government is desirable to the West as it allows for open communication and continued access to available resources in the former colony. Ironically, even the carrying out of an act of self-determination requires people to buy into the democratic system and interact positively within its confines. It would seem much less likely that a population that has engaged in an act of democracy would vote to collectively walk away from such ideals in favor of traditional ways that are often given depreciatory representations by those who espouse belief in the superiority of the state form. On the other hand it is possible that groups would desire and be able to negotiate a way for more customary or traditional roles to play an important part and thereby create new syncretic forms of government pairing together indigenous and western systems.

Bertram points out that the key trait of decolonization in the Pacific was, “colonial policy,” and that such procedures were, “promoted and designed more by the metropolitan powers than by local initiative. This is not to say that the latter was absent; simply it was neither a *necessary*, nor the dominant, driving force in the process” (Bertram 1987, 16, original emphasis). Therefore, an examination of the decolonization process, especially throughout Oceania, will likely tell more about the initiatives of the colonizer rather than the native populations. Likewise a study of political systems in former colonies is usually more telling of governmental designs in the distant lands of Europe or America as systems of the peoples of these lands were passed off to indigenous populations as being superior to their long-established modes of governance.

Forms of Decolonization

Bertram identifies Western thinking on decolonization processes as linear in model as they follow the idea of “historical transition” (see figure 1). Colonies were to progress from a system completely administered by the colonial government that eventually, after meeting necessary levels of development, takes on the form of a locally representative government. This representative government then transforms into a responsible government with local elites filling key roles and leads to a fully self governing territory in preparation for the “logical



culmination” – independence (17). Such notions agree with ideas and expectations of economic growth, modernization, and seem similar to Marxist theories in their anticipation of “evolutionary progress...in terms of movements along a continuum” (ibid.).

Bertram counters simplistic notions of linear political and economic development by proposing a compass-like chart that places the colonial status territory in the center with options for movement towards its destination of choice (see figure 2). In Bertram’s analysis “full sovereign independence” lies due north. I have taken this model and updated it to better express

the processes and options that have been created by the world system in regards to decolonization (see figure 3). In this model the cardinal directions of north, south, east and west, have been discarded for their semantic baggage. Instead, all options are equal and the course is plotted by the will of the people as shown through self-determination and defined by destination. While the inherent conceptual flaws, due to vagaries of definition, of 'self-determination' are many and will later be discussed, this model is put forth to represent the assumptions already accepted and upheld by the international community. While "Political Independence" remains at

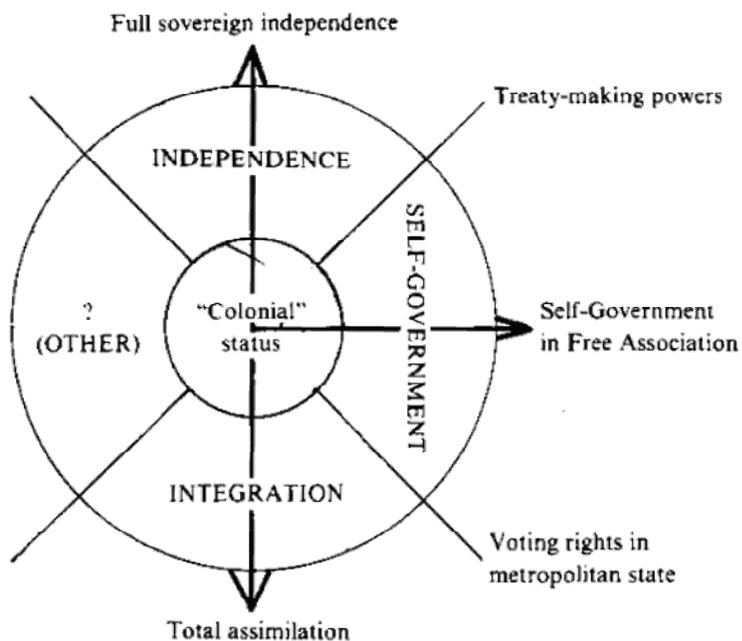


Figure 2. Bertram's compass illustrating options for decolonization

the top, it is by no means to be the only acceptable or desirable option, however, territories that elect, or are elected by their colonizers to become, independent states usually pass through the preparatory stages of governance as previously outlined by the linear design.

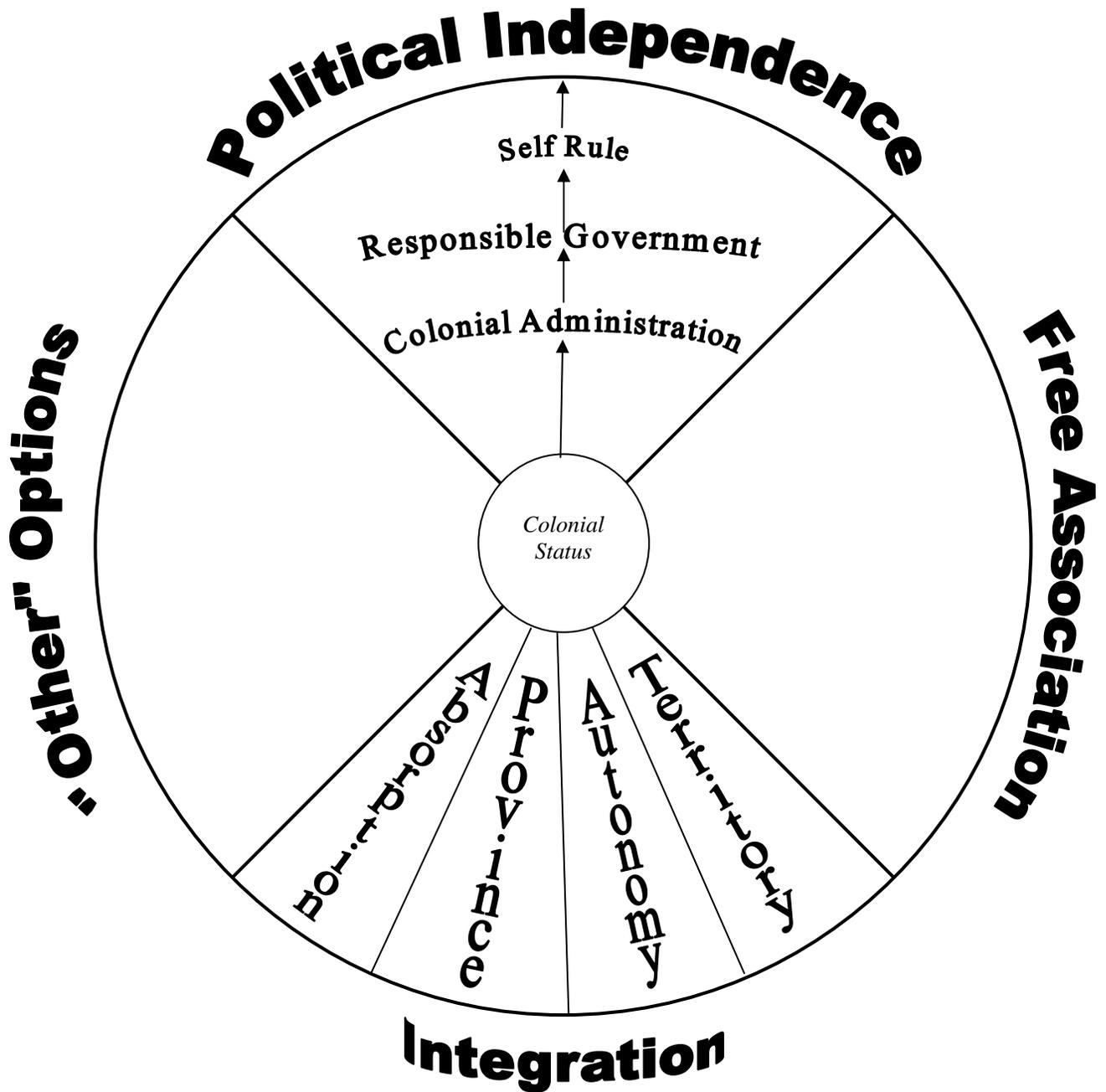


Figure 3. This updated version of Bertram's compass reflects linear paths to independence, varying degrees of integration, as well as less specified possibilities like free association and other, undefined, options.

Within the sector of free association lie the various possibilities that such agreements can bring. Charting the precise positions of the freely associated states on this graph is an exercise in inexactness as the stipulations of each compact make for difficulty in placing them on the spectrum. Indeed when examining self government in free association, “ambiguity is the keynote” as the relationship is a voluntary subjection to dictates of a suzerain power which can choose to employ heavy or light hand in ensuring that the articles of the compact are met (Bertram 1987, 20). Freely associated states have all the necessary trappings of fully independent states, including national symbols and constitutions, and full political independence could be only the stroke of a pen away. This legal association does not follow the transitional logic that would lead a colony towards either independence or integration, although either option is technically still possible. Relationships between such states and those with whom they are associated are dynamic, thus this unique option requires a change in conceptualization as “self-government in free association is no longer to be seen as ‘almost independence’ and is instead to be seen as an alternative state of affairs” (21).

Membership in the United Nations is often considered to be the hallmark of an independent government and has been used to describe the level of autonomy exercised by states in free association. Countering this notion, Dr. Jon Tikivanotau M Jonassen says that a more accurate measure of a freely associated state’s level of autonomy or dependence can be found in the handling of foreign affairs and defense. Jonassen is a Cook Islander originally from the island of Aitutaki and has formerly held governmental posts as secretary of Cultural Development, secretary of Foreign Affairs, and High Commissioner to New Zealand. He points out that, of the five states in free association (Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Marshall Islands, Niue, and Palau) only, Niue, one does not directly administer the foreign

affairs of the state, despite pressure from Wellington. While all three of the states in relation with the US are in charge of their own foreign affairs departments, Cook Islands is the only state with free association status that directly manages its own defense. Although the New Zealand military is usually called upon to assist in times of need, Jonassen states that Cook Islands has also called upon France and in one instance the Papua New Guinea Defence Force, for aid in issues of defense and has done so as a way to reassert sovereignty to Wellington. Thus, although Cook Islands is not represented at the tables of the UN General Assembly, primarily due to the fact that the cost of maintaining a mission to the UN in New York is greater than the entire national budget, it exercises the greatest level of national sovereignty of all of the Pacific's freely associated states (Personal interview, 11 February 2008).

People within integrated territories generally gain equal rights to citizenship within the greater state, although the status of American Samoans as US Nationals rather than citizens is an exception due to the territory's unorganized self-governing status within the United States. Within the sector of 'Integration' lie at least four statuses, that of territory, autonomy, province, or absorption into another sub-national entity. Areas like Guam and Tokelau remain in a political situation similar to that which decolonization efforts sought to break but for the time being are accepted in circles of authority, although New Zealand's efforts for Tokelau to become independent in free association show that they are no longer thrilled at the territory's presence. Sub-national units exercising high levels of internal autonomy within the constitutional framework of the larger power also fit the category of integration. Both Bougainville and West Papua have been allowed to form such governments although the latter has been only partially and unevenly implemented with numerous revocations and contradictions from the national government. Despite being called a 'state,' an example of integration on the provincial level

came more than 65 years after the US overthrew the Kingdom of Hawai‘i, as the islands were integrated into the United States as the State of Hawai‘i, creating a unique sub-national entity with equal status and representation at the national level. Rapa Nui (Easter Island), on the other hand, has been absorbed into Chile’s Valparaiso province, although recent results of drawn-out political processes have finally opened the way for the Island to gain special political status as a unique entity within the state (Gonschor 2008, 238).

When examining integrated territories it is important to note that it is easily the sector most fraught with controversy. With the exception of Tokelau and American Samoa, each of the previously mentioned areas has within it strong movements working against the current political arrangement. The Territory of Guam is home to movements seeking self-determination while Bougainville and West Papua were given autonomy status only after severe conflict threatened the integrity of the reigning state for a long period of time and the inhabitants of Bougainville will vote in a referendum on independence. Within the State of Hawai‘i there are numerous groups calling for sovereignty and the recognition of the rights of the indigenous people including many seeking a restoration of the former Kingdom. Their points are valid as the referendum of self-determination came only after the influx of large numbers of migrants, both laborers from various countries and interested parties from the US, arrived in the islands and the ballot options limited their choices to a continuance of territorial status or elevation to a state. It must also be noted that many in Rapa Nui also favor independence for their island.

One of the great ironies of the decolonization agenda is that decolonization itself is inherently still a colonial form of control as colonial powers require the formation of a new state and then force that newly created state to adopt all of the trappings required of such an entity including symbols and bureaucracy likely based on the legal systems of its predecessors.

Furthermore most acts of self-determination did not include all possible options, thus indigenous peoples were only allowed to choose between the choices offered by the suzerain. In the case of Hawai‘i, all residents, indigenous or not, were allowed to vote on whether to become a state or remain a territory. Without the options of free association, independence, or the restoration of the former government, residents of Hawai‘i chose full integration at the sub-national level over territorial status. This highlights another inherent flaw in the agenda: colonial states are free to determine what options for decolonization are open to their territories and are thus allowed to dictate the future relationship. This makes acts of self-determination less about the will of the colonized, emphasizing instead the continuation of the dominant role of the suzerain. In the 1983 referendum regarding the draft of the Compact of Free Association in what is now the Federated States of Micronesia Ponape residents voted against the terms offered. However, their actions were dismissed as irrelevant because the other three island states of Chuuk, Kosrae, and Yap approved the Draft (Hanlon 1986, xiii-xv). Similarly the United States has made ten attempts to override the anti-nuclear clause of the constitution of Palau but Palauans have rejected it every time, thrice as a trust territory and seven times as an independent state when ratifying the Compact of Free Association (Roff 1991, 1). It is noteworthy to show that, despite rejection by the greater electorate of Palau, the national legislature approved the compact, and in doing so ensured the delivery of the compact funds.

Building States

The devolution of supreme powers to a new, more local, government can also create further problems if the new state’s authority is not recognized by its citizens, what Fry and Kabutaulaka call the “legitimacy challenge” (Fry and Kabutaulaka 2008, 2). The example of the

Bougainville revolution, which started as a dispute over royalties from natural resource extraction operations but eventually focused on gaining independence from Papua New Guinea, highlights just one such example, wherein groups of people within the new state identified themselves as differing significantly from 'others' within the same, colonially drawn, boundaries of (is)land and sea. People then must have some reason to endorse and uphold the creation of the state – “that social organization which claims a monopoly of ultimate political authority within a defined territorial area” (Firth 2000, 316-317). While the state's ability to provide goods and services, or capture and redistribute aid flows (Bertram 1987, 17) to the general population can be all that is required for citizens to accept the notion of the state's right to rule, it is generally not enough, especially if the government is unable to fulfill these responsibilities.

Acceptance of and support for the state is often derived from shared experiences of the citizenry, and this is particularly true in areas where struggles for independence and resistance against colonial controllers have been necessary, but such state-wide unity is hard to come by in areas where multiple distinct peoples have been forced under a single governmental entity. “The nation-state has traditionally based its legitimacy upon the idea that it represents the nation, in spite of the fact that often the state once created had to engage in nation-building processes aiming at the forced assimilation of its citizens” (Guibernau 1999, 17). Coinciding boundaries of nation and state are a rarity, especially as the predecessors to the modern state system were both multi-ethnic and multi-cultural constructions. It was only after the creation of nation-states that nationalisms took on primordial features as it was “assimilated to skin-colour, gender, parentage, and birth-era – all those things one cannot help” (Anderson 2006, 143).

Nationalism, or at least the creation thereof, is a key element in legitimizing states and is a great challenge in places where differing ethnic, social, and language groups are required to

form a state without going through similar formative processes as their colonial ‘parents.’

Benedict Anderson is one of the leading theorists focusing on the creation of nationalisms in recent centuries, beginning with the formation of nation-states in Europe. One of Anderson’s key arguments is that language has played a much greater role than ethnicity in the creation of imagined communities such as states, explaining why few states are primarily ethnic creations. It also happens that much of Anderson’s influence comes from his research focus in Indonesia, although his most famous work *Imagined Communities*, from which I cite extensively in the following discussion, is based primarily on the creation of early nationalisms in Europe.

According to Anderson, nations were formed first in Western Europe, and then in other places, as “three fundamental cultural conceptions, all of great antiquity, lost their axiomatic grip on men’s minds” (36). The major social changes that led to the surge in the creation of nationalisms include: the decline of the dominance of foreign, usually liturgical, script-languages, such as Latin, the downfall of dynastic monarchies and/or church-led theocracies, and a change in social “conception[s] of temporality in which cosmology and history were indistinguishable, the origins of the world and of men essentially identical” (36). These fundamental changes in how people apprehended the world “made it possible to ‘think’ the nation” (22). Thus, the creation of national consciousnesses throughout Europe took place over long periods of time and was also the result of profound paradigm shifts.

After the change of conditions wrought by the downfall of previous social structures, several other factors combined in the initial formation of nations, and eventually states, in the form that we now see them. The Reformation and the downfall of Latin as a higher and holier form of speech accompanied the decline in the overall governing power of the church (39). Great technological advances, primarily the printing press and the start of print capitalism –the

first great capitalist endeavor – played a key role in standardizing vernaculars. As common vernacular languages became accepted mediums of communication, the printed word established connections between distant speakers of the same dialect. Eventually, ventures in international print capitalism led to the creation of official state languages like High German and the King’s English (45). “The convergence of capitalism and print technology on the fatal diversity of human language created the possibility of a new form of imagined community, which in its basic morphology set the stage for the modern nation” (46). Created as a direct result of these long processes of social and technological change, nationalisms then, are cultural artifacts of particular machinations (4).

While these drawn out processes took place in Europe, the expectation that similar state models be accepted and followed in colonies has continued, despite their very different cultural or social structures. Indeed, since the formation of the League of Nations “the legitimate international norm was the nation-state” (113). This has led to the socio-cultural assumption that everyone has a nationality just as they have a gender (5). Political theorist Anthony D. Smith recognizes this when he states that nationalism “holds...that mankind is naturally divided into distinct nations, each with its peculiar character, and that everyone must, again as a matter of nature, belong to a nation, which is the source of all power and every liberty” (Smith 2004, 33). The United Nations, successor to the League of Nations, continues this legacy by guaranteeing all persons the right to a nationality.

The majority of people now accept states and nations to be natural forms for the foundation of social entities as

“most states now have unquestioned meaning in peoples’ lives. For most people, states are more than just a source of services and material goods. They are also

more than just an effective nest for patron-client units. This shared meaning has developed through the creation of law, public rituals, and informal interaction that constitutes and reconstitutes public space. Together, these factors can naturalize the state. In such cases, most people simply cannot imagine life without the state, in the same way they cannot imagine life without oceans and mountains. Even when a state becomes inefficient and corrupt, people generally imagine new leaders rather than a new organizational structure” (Dauvergne 1998a, 4).

Whilst decolonization is often conceptualized as being both morally and organizationally straight forward, the process of state-building in the Pacific must deal with the messy and complex realities intrinsic to regions that host numerous indigenous societies. To form an independent country in an area of high diversity the nation must be built subsequent to the state – a reversal of the format which created the first international entities at Westphalia. After centuries of Pacific peoples being labeled as ‘backwards’ it turns out that many of their contemporary problems stem from the adoption of Western political models. Nation-building after state-building has led Teresia Teaiwa, commenting on the coups in Fiji, to declare that “the problem with Fijian nationalism is that there is no Fijian nation” (Teaiwa 2007). Similarly former Solomon Islands Prime Minister Solomon Mamaloni has called his country a “nation conceived but never born” and further stated that “Solomon Islands...has never been a nation and will never become one” (Kabutaulaka 2002, 4).

Benedict Anderson notes that imagined communities in post-colonial settings have been formed by greater connectivity between a territory’s populations due to improved technologies of transportation. He also sees the intelligentsia, educated mid-level bureaucrats of the colonial government, as an important key. They were often bi-lingual and could understand both the old

and new system, and communicate effectively with either (Anderson 2006, 115). State, church, and other groups also usually play a role in the creation of national solidarity, primarily through the establishment of a territory-wide modern education system (116).

The trend of creating a state language carried over into overseas colonies where many indigenous populations use colonial tongues such as English, Portuguese, Spanish, or other languages, in national administrations. Other Creole languages, also part and parcel of the colonial legacy, such as Tagalog, the various forms of Neo-Melanesian, or Bahasa Indonesia, have also come to be used both in colloquial speech as well as being recognized as official state languages. Indonesia represents a departure from this theme as it was the only major/important colony that was administered largely through an Asian language, although the form was originally based in the Riau dialect of Malay (Anderson 2000, 323). Anderson explains that the fact that Dutch was not the primary language shouldn't make us think that Indonesian nationalism is any different than that of other groups even though others might use the state language of the original colonizer because language is not an emblem of nation-ness. "Much the most important thing about language is its capacity for generating imagined communities, building in effect *peculiar solidarities*" (Anderson 2006, 133, original emphasis). Despite the colonial heritage of such languages the communities now using them lose none of their integrity as distinct vehicles through which nations are imagined. "If a radical Mozambique speaks Portuguese, the significance of this is that Portuguese is the medium through which Mozambique is imagined" (134).

Anthropologist Christine Jourdan echoed Anderson's points of the importance of commonality of language and education when she suggested ways that a nation might be built within the framework of colonially created state like Solomon Islands. Jourdan outlines how the

combination of three elements – a standardized education system, Pijin as a national language, and popular culture – might act as ‘stepping-stones’ towards building a shared national consciousness amongst Solomon Islanders (Jourdan 1995, 127-128). Jourdan’s analysis is deserving of merit as it gives a practical framework which might be employed to create a nation from within a state. Her emphasis on the creation of a common national language corresponds with Benedict Anderson’s postulation that commonality of language was one of the driving forces behind the creation of European nationalisms. As such Solomon Island Pijin would need to undergo a process of standardization which would likely occur in the popular print media. Unfortunately, academic analyses cannot account for all of the complexities of binding diverse peoples together in an imagined community that is based primarily on a strong and transparent state government. This can be shown by the prolonged conflict that ensued on Guadalcanal only a few years after the publication of Jourdan’s article. Nation building is especially difficult in the Pacific, and especially in Southwestern Oceania, as many indigenous islanders maintain polycentric identities (see Kabutaulaka 2005).

Once a state is created, the task of defining and fulfilling the roles to be performed by government still remains. As Peter Larmour explains:

“In each country local governments is part of a wider set of relationships between (on one hand) parts of the state, and (on the other hand) between state, society, and the territory they occupy. Decolonization typically involves changes in each relationship. The introduction of ministerial government, for example, changes the relationship between the bureaucracy and the politicians in the colonial legislature. Localization of the public service changes the relationship between introduced state and local society, domesticating the state and giving a group of

local people a long term personal interest in its survival. The need to fix and protect frontiers and exclusive economic zones changes the relationship between the state and the border areas or outer islands of its territory, which had previously been left to themselves” (Larmour 1985, 354).

Arguments what states are supposed to do and how to go about fulfilling those requirements are ongoing in Pacific Island nations, just as they continue in the ever constant debate between the Republican and Democrat Parties of the United States. John Momis, one of the primary architects of Papua New Guinea’s provincial system asserts his view that government should be a forum “for collective decision-making.” He placed his view in direct contrast to that of his opponents who considered the government’s main role to that of deliverance of services – “a view he condemned as characteristic of authoritarian regimes” (355). Furthermore, state appendages for the protection of citizens and the control of violence must also be defined and created, trained, and implemented. A state’s ability or inability to appropriately wield its monopoly on violence will often determine its future stability.

International organizations and colonial powers have placed heavy emphasis on the preconceived necessity that a state be strong, transparent, and meet a set of minimum standards of its citizens’ needs. “International institutions, such as the UN, not only have consecrated the state as the normatively appropriate way to organize rule over people, they have also empowered it by helping shape what it does and how it is constituted. International agencies have made all sorts of assumptions about how the state should occupy itself. It is expected not only to protect its population but to improve peoples’ material lives, ensure their dignity, organize many of their activities, rectify the conditions of women and children and indigenous communities, and much

more” (Migdal 1998, 15). Such rigid expectations are as new as the international organizations which proclaimed them. Even a century ago few states fulfilled all of these requirements.

In fact, many ‘post-colonial’ states struggle to fulfill these obligation levied by former colonizers and multi-state bodies. Dauvergne points out that a weak government may not necessarily undermine a state’s legitimacy as “Other factors can reinforce cohesion in these states” (Dauvergne 1998a, 4). One of the possible factors is the fact that, in ‘weak’ states, many people do not depend on the services provided by the state to survive. Dauvergne further points out that in places like Solomon Islands, where as much as 85 percent of the population engage in subsistence or semi-subsistence lifestyles, people expect little from government because of its poor service record and the fact that customary leaders and social groups, NGOs, churches and other organizations provide for other needs. Therefore, in Solomon Islands “most people, especially outside the capital of Honiara, can easily survive without the state” (ibid.).

Further complicating the task of state formation and maintenance is the fact that many European multi-nation states, from which modern state models and ideals are descended, such as Prussia –an amalgamation of Germanic, Slavic, and many other peoples – no longer exist while others like the United Kingdom and Russian Federation have undergone bouts of both unification and separatism. The formation of states in colonized areas such as Oceania, Africa, Asia, and South America pose major problems to those who would form large independent countries in areas of vast cultural and national diversity. If boundary lines were adopted to precisely fit individual self-identified nations then decolonization would have seen the formation of literally thousands of nation-states around the globe of various sizes with many being relatively small to what can be seen on the globe today. This then begs the question ‘how small is too small?’

Colonial powers themselves did, at times, facilitate the division of territories as the US controlled Trust Territories of the Pacific Islands broke into the four separate entities of Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Palau, and the Federated States of Micronesia. The United Kingdom also split its holding of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands into the nations of Kiribati and Tuvalu. In all of these cases the divisions came only after pressure from the Islanders themselves and were tolerated only, “so as to achieve a better accommodation between self-identifying cultural groups and new states” (Firth 2000, 318). These splits were allowed as they suited colonial interests (or lack thereof). In the larger Pacific Islands further west the notion of such practice was abandoned as “the same principle applied to Melanesian colonial territories would have produced a parody of the modern states system, with hundreds of microstates each corresponding to a self-identifying micro-national group. The ultimate logic of the nation-state would have been fulfilled at the cost of absurdity” (ibid.). This statement overlooks the fact that the populations of many cultural and ethnic groups within the larger islands of Western Oceania largely outnumber many of the smaller sovereign States to the east where bestowals of independence or negotiations of compacts of free association were never questioned nor labeled ‘absurd.’

The fact that states were created upon what were usually illogical lines and without regard for indigenous boundaries underscores the idea that one’s own national and cultural identity are now expected to be secondary to one’s identity as a member of a state. That this idea has rubbed off on post-colonial states is shown by Papua New Guinea’s slogan for the 2005 Independence Day celebrations, marking 30 years since the end of Australian rule. The Tok Pisin catchphrase ‘*putim PNG i go pas*’ (put PNG first) was circulated widely throughout the celebrations and seems to have been designed to encourage citizens to place national needs ahead

of local or tribal divisions that are often blamed for halting development in that country. With the supremacy of state fixtures strongly emphasized decolonization assured an ongoing process of cultural, social, economic, and political change.

Another important aspect of governmental legitimacy mentioned by Firth becomes particularly important when considering issues of decolonization in areas where large groups of settlers, usually from colonial homelands or laborers from different parts of the empire, have moved in and concerns governance based on indigenous rights or the consent of the majority (320-321). While indigenous peoples and organizations may petition for rights to land their calls for self government are very difficult to realize when Western notions determine that the right to govern is determined by a blind counting of votes, after which the majority rules. Settler populations, which usually support the colonial status quo, also create a quandary for referendums of self-determination as the exclusion of groups of residents is generally frowned upon, especially when based on concepts of nationality or race. Difficulties with such dilemmas in the Pacific region can be found in Fiji, Hawai'i, New Caledonia/Kanaky, New Zealand/Aotearoa, West Papua, as well as amongst the Torres Strait Islanders and Aborigines of Australia. Gaining recognition of the rights of indigenous peoples has been especially difficult in states and territories, like those mentioned above, where settler populations are nearly equal to, or outnumber, indigenous persons. Now often referred to as the 'fourth world,' disenfranchised groups may now see a glimmer of hope as the United Nations has finally passed the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples which outlines rights to self-determination, cultural practices, and redress for past wrongs such as forced integration. The declaration is limited in its reach though as it is to be implemented by the existing governments themselves and expressly affirms its intent not to break up existing states.

The end of formal government controls and the creation of new states have not stopped many former colonizers from continually trying to influence the political direction and dealings of previous colonies. It is because of this that, in an interview with Robert Borofsky, Edward Said states that he has avoided the term ‘postcolonial’ as, in his view, the colonial period never really ended. Said stated that his interest was “in showing that there is a continuity between colonialism and post-colonialism. The people who were oppressed before are often still oppressed, though perhaps in different ways” (Borofsky 2000, 443). Leaders of Pacific Island States address concerns that metropolitan countries are meddling in internal affairs, thereby committing an affront to national sovereignty, with seeming regularity. One of the most recent examples, contemporaneous with the composition of this thesis, regards demands made by Australian officials that the Papua New Guinea government publicize its report concerning the administration’s handling of the so called ‘Julian Moti affair.’ Leaders in Port Moresby are alleged to have arranged Moti’s escape from PNG to Solomon Islands on a military transport aircraft, despite the issuance of warrant for his arrest in Australia for crimes believed to have occurred in Vanuatu several years before. As Australia’s demands came just before the 2007 national elections Prime Minister Somare accused Australia of trying to interfere with his party’s chances at returning to government (“Moti Affair Taints PNG Relations With Australia,” 2007). Australia’s dominance at the Pacific Islands Forum and general presence and involvement in the region has also become regular points of contention and resentment.

Former Solomon Islands Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare has also been critical of Australia’s role in the region, and particularly within his own country, as Australia plays a major role in the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI) and is actively engaged in what he “calls the Australian re-colonisation agenda” (Solomon Star 2007). The mere presence

of RAMSI in Solomon Islands demonstrates the contemporary expectation that states be strong and stable regardless of ethnic or cultural makeup or the incompatibility of the gifted state with local social structures.

The perceived necessity of a strong and transparent state government is even included in the Pacific Plan, another of Australia's initiatives for the Pacific region that has drawn critical fire but nevertheless was passed by the Pacific Islands Forum. One of the Plan's four major points of emphasis is focused towards 'good governance' as "the challenges of Pacific 'nation-building' have shifted to challenges of 'nation-preservation'" (Governance Summary 2005). The focus on the need to strengthen existing neighboring states comes on the heels of doomsdayist analyses of the region such as the *Pacific 2010* series, which paints a bleak future for Oceanic states as well as Ben Reilly's theories on the 'Africanization' of the Pacific (see Reilly 2000). Concomitant to Pacific doomsdayism have come the discourses of the failed state and the increase of Australia-led 'cooperative' interventions. Indeed stronger and more transparent state governments throughout the region are seen as something of an antivenin that can bring stability and cure the blight of failing states.

Perhaps the most universal of the assumptions of the decolonization agenda is the idea that once an act of decolonization has occurred and a new state created, "no further decolonization is thought necessary within these states because the colonized people are deemed to have achieved freedom and self-determination" (Firth 2000, 315). This assumption is not unique to the withdrawing colonial states as evidenced by the final communiqué of the 1955 Asian African Conference hosted by President Sukarno at Bandung, Indonesia. The message advocated for the exit of the Netherlands from West Irian and the annexation of the latter by Indonesia, possibly mediated by the UN, in order to accomplish "the abolition of colonialism."

The document also supported the Arab people of Palestine against Israel and pro-independence North African nationalists against France (Romulo 1956, 99). Interestingly enough the conference was attended by delegates from both India and China. Shortly thereafter India annexed the Portuguese colony of Goa and China invaded northeastern India, taking over Tibet. Despite ‘postcolonial’ status, states can easily become dominating colonial suzerains and have often done so using the same rhetoric employed by the original colonizers, namely: salvation, civilization, and/or liberation.

While many Pacific places have still not undertaken such a process, the assumption that a single, western-prescribed, action of decolonization is sufficient it is in itself a colonialist postulation and is more than worthy of reconsideration. Such thinking either espouses the notion that only Western civilization could possibly exploit other peoples for their labor or resources, or is self-congratulatory and desirous to be rid of colonial burdens to the point that it cannot be bothered with a critique of the means and methods employed. The numerous movements to address issues of ongoing colonialism in previously ‘decolonized’ territories, especially amongst fourth world peoples, such as the numerous Native Hawaiian movements, New Zealand Māori groups, the long and bloody Bougainville Crisis, nearly routine declarations of independence from various parts of Solomon Islands. Efforts to gain independence by West Papuan groups and even Papua Besena in Papua New Guinea further show that decolonization from outside sources does not mean that internal colonialism cannot occur, thus “Decolonization now assumes a variety of meanings in a variety of contexts and is the goal of widely disparate political movements” (Firth 2000, 315). Despite its removal from the agendas of governments and international decision making bodies there is dire need to refocus attention, this time with a more critical view, towards issues of decolonization and self-determination.

Whilst it is not the goal of this discussion to be a detailed and comprehensive analysis of all forms of colonialism and decolonization, it is designed to cover the broad spectrum of the decolonization agenda and its applications, particularly in Oceania. Replete with paradoxes and contradictions the reverberating effects of decolonization are only rivaled in scale by the colonization itself. It is with these numerous issues in mind that I turn to an examination of colonization and its supposed deconstruction in West Papua.

Chapter 2

“By Whatever Rightful Means”: Integration in Two Parts

Dutch rule of the West New Guinea territory could generally be described as a very relaxed form of colonialism. Initially, both the English and Dutch used their claims in New Guinea as buffer zones between their overseas interests and those of each other as well as the Germans in the Island’s northeast but showed no interest in exploitation of the land, people or resources as the land was deemed too inhospitable and difficult to colonize and the people regarded as too backwards (Budjiardo and Liong 1988, 2). For this reason the Dutch, in an agreement signed in 1660, gave control over the island to the Sultanate of Tidore, a neighboring vassal state, which would rule, albeit nominally, for the Dutch by proxy. Lagerberg quotes Robert Bone as saying “the convenient fiction of Tidorese sovereignty was utilized as offering the most expedient and cheapest means of fore-stalling any annexationist ambitions by other European powers, above all England” (Lagerberg 1979, 36). This relationship was reconfirmed and reconfigured in 1797 (Osborne 1987, 7) but it was not until 1828 that the Dutch assumed full sovereignty over the Island of New Guinea, formalizing the boundary at the 141st meridian east of Greenwich (Elmslie 2002, 9).

Missionization

Whilst Christian missionaries had arrived in the islands off New Guinea’s eastern tip as early as 1847 it was not until 1855 that the first Protestant preachers, who were actually from Germany, arrived to begin their vocation of conversion at Dorei Bay near what is now Manokwari. “At a certain moment the number of dead on the side of the missionaries was higher

than the number of converts – who were not even members of the Manokwari tribe...but people from the mountains, possibly slaves of the coastal people” (Lagerberg 1979, 37). After fifty years of proselyting the missionaries had only succeeded in setting up five mission stations, most of which were located relatively near to one another, and collectively gained all of 260 converts. Catholic Jesuits began their teaching in 1888 and focused their efforts along New Guinea’s southern and western coastlines; and, like their Protestant counterparts to the north, the Catholics were also met with limited results to their initial efforts (Moore 2003, 123-124). The legacy of the Christian missions and their eventual successes remains even still as a large portion of the West Papuan population, particularly in coastal and urban settings, still practices the religion introduced by the Dutch and their practice of Christianity was seen as one of several points used to justify the Netherlands’ attempt to divide the West New Guinea Territory from the rest of the Dutch East Indies upon Indonesia’s attainment of independence. Furthermore, Christian churches are often seen by the Indonesian government as staging points for ‘separatism’ and leaders of various ministries are often targeted as many are publicly critical of human rights abuses by the Government and Army.

Throughout the history of West New Guinea it can be undeniably stated that “the flag used to follow the cross” (Lagerberg 1979, 21). The first major use of the New Guinea territory by the Dutch was as a prison camp for Indonesian communist and nationalist activists who, after having staged uprisings on the island of Java in 1926 and 1927, were exiled to Boven Digul (also identified as Tanah Merah), north of Merauke in South New Guinea, in 1928 (Budiardjo and Liong 1988, 4; Elmslie 2002, 9). Later Dutch efforts to colonize the land used other Asian subjects as the middle level bureaucrats employing them as “civil servants, policemen, teachers, evangelists, military personnel and traders” (Budiardjo and Liong 1988, 4). This domination by

outsiders as colonial middlemen fueled resentment against Indonesians long before the question of sovereignty over West Papua ever arose.

Early Dutch Colonialism in New Guinea and Indonesia

The earliest colonial incursions into the part of South Asia that now makes up Indonesia were undertaken in order to gain a corner in the European spice trade. Throughout the 1600s Dutch, English, and Portuguese vied, sometimes violently, for trading posts in order to dominate the lucrative market (Drakely 26-27). Eventually the Portuguese, who had greater interests in the Americas, settled on the retention of only a few colonies such as Macau and East Timor, while the Dutch and English (British after 1707) continued to compete for dominance until endeavors in India and the Americas led the British to reduce their interests to what is now Brunei, Malaysia, and Singapore (27). The Dutch company that had established the dominance of the Netherlands as a European power in the Indies eventually went bankrupt and, after brief French and British administrations due to the Napoleonic Wars, the Dutch state assumed full colonial control in 1816 (34). Organizations touting various forms of Indonesian nationalism began to spring up in the 1900s. Several of Indonesia's future leaders were heavily involved in these movements, several of which were communist or Islamist in nature, and they were often stringently put down by the Dutch. In September 1944, towards the end of the Japanese occupation, the Japanese promised independence for Indonesia (72) but instead of formally granting powers to a new state government they simply withdrew. As the Dutch were unable to return immediately British forces were to receive the colony from the Japanese and hand it back to the Dutch but the growing power of the newly formed republican government led the British to concentrate on other tasks. Upon arrival the now-weakened Dutch realized that they would

have to reconquer the East Indies territory (77). After four years of fighting and negotiating the Dutch recognized Indonesian independence in 1949. Since the beginning Indonesia has been a multi-ethnic and culturally plural whose borders were initially constructed by European capital interests.

The early colonial governing of Dutch New Guinea was relatively ad hoc, but a new system eventually evolved that essentially had colonial subjects working to expand and maintain the empire. In its most basic form the later Dutch colonial effort is comparable to the infamous ‘divide-and-conquer’ tactics used by numerous other imperial superpowers. There are, however, some key differences to this method as applied in West Papua. Firstly the traditional divide-and-conquer method pits neighboring rivals against each other, usually empowering the weaker group to retain control over the larger whole. While this could have been easily done in the West New Guinea Territory itself, an area inhabited by hundreds of differing tribes, some of which do occasionally take to warfare with each other, the Dutch colonial government instead chose to use methods of indirect rule, by importing workers and administrators from Java, Sumatra, and other islands that now make up Indonesia, in order to further their goals more quickly.

Labeled as *amberi* (non-white foreigners) by the indigenous peoples of West Papua, sending in these foreigners would likely save time and resources, while not endangering their own people with exposure to disease or possible violence. Some of the westernmost coastal regions of New Guinea such as Fakfak did have some prior connections to the adjacent islands of the Moluccas and the Sultanate of Tidore, mainly through trading routes whereby New Guinean slaves and wood products were traded for beads and textiles, otherwise the hundreds of groups of indigenous inhabitants had no direct connections or relations to the Javanese, Sumatrans, or other Indonesians (Chauvel 2005b, 63).

The addition of these distant ethnic groups, who the Dutch imported mainly for mid-level government bureaucratic jobs, built a multi-tiered colonial establishment that redirected the focus of angry indigenes away from the European colonizers as colonial resistance was instead aimed at a suddenly more ubiquitous group of invaders. For this reason most West Papuans never really considered themselves to be a colony of the Netherlands since, “the Papuans did not come into face-to-face contact with the Dutch as colonizers until after 1949” (Budiardjo and Liong 1988, 4). Richard Chauvel’s policy study for the East-West Center also notes the general preference for Dutch authorities over Indonesians amongst the older generation of living West Papuans; however this feeling could speak more to the harshness of the Indonesian colonial regime than to an actual affinity for the Europeans (Chauvel 2005b, 46).

The New Guinea Dispute

Despite demands from the newly independent government in Jakarta the Netherlands refused to relinquish control over the territory of West New Guinea. The Indonesian government saw itself as the successor state to all of the territories included in the area of the former Dutch East Indies while the Dutch, on the other hand, exercised what little remained of their authority by seeking to override the former’s irredentist attitudes, divide the remnants of their empire, and retain a small portion of their former glory. There are several motivating factors which directed the Dutch endeavors to maintain a portion of their empire, and, despite the fact that they ultimately failed, the legacy of this effort remains important as it is the spark that ignited the ongoing drive for further decolonization in West New Guinea.

Seen as a continuation of the Dutch colonial scheme by Indonesians and a denial of their rights as successor state to the territory, the division of the New Guinea Territory from the rest of

Indonesia by the Netherlands was justified by the Europeans by citing differences of ethnicity, religion, and desires of the indigenous community. While some might be tempted to see this move as a show of benevolence towards the indigenous New Guineans the Dutch were also “hypocritical in playing the role of defenders of the poor backward Papuan, because it was not until 1898 and 1901 that the first government posts were established,” and that not without pressure from Australia (Lagerberg 1979, 22). Any considerations for the well being of the indigenous population was still couched within colonial mentalities which also saw many potential uses for West New Guinea including opportunities for profit, the use of the large land mass as a destination for migrating Europeans, as well as a chance to save face after their defeat by the Indonesians and salvage some of their injured pride.

Although the country was but little developed, it was not without obvious resources and there were prospects for agriculture. It could therefore be used as a ‘withdrawal’ area for the 200,000 Eurasians in Indonesia who, having staked their future on Dutch domination, risked being branded as undesirables in the new state. The Dutch also said that they had a right to protect the poorly developed peoples of New Guinea against a possible mass influx of Indonesian Muslims. It is very doubtful whether the Dutch saw this, as some critics have stated, as a convenient springboard for a possible recapture of the archipelago” (Grimal 1978, 212). The idea that West New Guinea be used as an area for immigration did not extend solely to Eurasians living in the East Indies as it might also have been used as “an outlet for the overpopulation of the Netherlands” (Lijphart 1966, 55). Ironically Indonesia has drawn heavy and deserved criticism as it has employed the large land base for exactly the same use.

Grimal shows the Netherlands’ desire to keep New Guinea was an attempt to save face and restore political prestige as he cites Gerbrandy’s suggestions that retention of New Guinea

will, “revive the self-respect of the Netherlanders and help to keep alive the spiritual urge without which no people can survive” (Grimal 1978, 213). This desire to retain a portion of the previously held self-image becomes particularly evident when accounting for the economic detriment that retention could bring as Lijphart points out that “the Netherlands had no objective economic or other interests in retaining control of New Guinea; in fact, it was economically more advantageous to relinquish New Guinea, and Holland’s net economic interest in the colony was not merely small or zero but clearly negative. This means that the subjective and psychological elements were not merely subsidiary or contributing factors behind the Dutch colonialist policy. In other words, the case of West New Guinea demonstrates that subjective and psychological factors can be sufficiently powerful to constitute by themselves the driving force behind colonialism and the obstacle to decolonization: *emotional attachment can be exclusively responsible for colonialism*” (Lijphart 1966, 8-9, original emphasis).

The Dutch attempt to retain Netherlands New Guinea caused great controversy in international arenas. The two parties had tried to come to an agreement regarding the territory before Indonesian independence but as no accord was forthcoming, the matter was simply delayed until one year after the full independence of Indonesia, (15). There is little doubt that the Dutch attempt to divide their former colony contributed to future movements for independence within West New Guinea, however exactly how much is difficult to gauge as strong resentment from native peoples towards Indonesians was already strong prior to the formation of the Indonesian State and the eventual inclusion of West Papua. Although initial Dutch desires to retain sovereignty over West New Guinea had an air of paternalistic exploitation, by 1950 their official policy for the future of the province included the preparation of the area for self-determination (Lagerberg 1979, 22) and possibly independence and a nation-state of its own.

There was also talk that the territory could be merged with the Australian territories of Papua and New Guinea to the east to form an independent Melanesian Federation. Either way the bestowal of independence, and thus the Dutch version of decolonization, was scheduled to be take place in 1970 or 1971 (Budiardjo and Liong 1988, 11; Elmslie 2002, 10). Towards this goal the Dutch began building infrastructure and organizing a government which would be prepared to take over government from the Europeans. West New Guineans were allowed their own flag, called the ‘Morning Star’ (*Bintang Kejora* or *Bintang Fajar*), and a local government, called the *Volksraad* was arranged in 1960. Officials in this government were elected by popular vote with 100,000 of the colony’s 800,000 people taking part. As neither the Dutch nor Indonesians were willing to relinquish their claim to the half-island the issue quickly took on great international importance as Cold War politics created a scene that easily attracted attention from the highest levels of political leadership and dragged out the debate for more than a decade. Dr. Peter King points out that, “the issue of New Guinea was supposed to be settled within two years, but the two sides remained deadlocked in conflict over it for another 13” (King 2004, 21).

Despite opposition from a small minority of Indonesian leaders, like revered founding father and first Vice President Mohammed Hatta, Indonesia eventually succeeded in its irredentist quest for New Guinea. Hatta’s opposition likely sprang from his intimate knowledge of the area as he “was the only major contributor to the debate who had been exiled to Boven Digul in Dutch New Guinea” (Chauvel 2005a, 111). Years in the prison camp also called Tanah Merah gave Hatta a chance to see the land and know some of its peoples. Incorporation of West New Guinea into the Republic of Indonesia came about in two distinct stages. The first phase took several years and played itself out on the world stage before finally being settled by the Bunker Plan and its culmination – the New York Agreement. The outcome of this first period

was heavily affected by Cold War politics and its resulting rivalries. This first stage of incorporation ended in May 1963 when West New Guinea was brought under formal Indonesian control after a short period of administrative intervention by the United Nations. The second phase was fulfilled when the sovereignty of the Indonesian State was formalized by way of a severely flawed referendum, the Act of Free Choice, which was carried out by the Indonesian government under UN auspices and noted by the UN General Assembly in 1969. Throughout the implementation of decolonization processes in West Papua the international political climate of the Cold War had a much greater effect in influencing the scheme for self-determination than did the United Nations and its decolonization agenda, resolutions, General Assembly, or responsible agents.

American interests and positions on issues pertaining to Netherlands New Guinea were centered primarily in regards to the spread of communism and the avoidance of war. As early as 1948 the Washington's support of the Dutch began to wane with US authorities threatening to withhold Marshall Aid, the critical financial initiative to rebuild postwar Europe, in the name of "decolonization" (Budiardjo and Liong 1988, 7). The disagreement seems to have been of lesser international concern until 1957 when Indonesia began receiving arms and diplomatic support from the Soviet Union for the sole purpose of 'liberating' Irian. The Marxist-Leninist ideology adopted by the Soviet Union was stalwartly anti-imperialist in nature and leaders saw an opportunity to strengthen its growing influence in South Asia by supporting Indonesia's bid to capture West New Guinea. Seeing that the communist party was already very strong in Indonesia, the "United States had by now decided that there was less political risk in supporting Sukarno's Irian campaign than in trying to frustrate it" (King 2004, 22). By 1959 US allegiances had completely changed from their previous pro-Dutch standpoint and by January 1961,

American President John F. Kennedy had promised to end Soviet aid and intervention in Indonesia (Papua Chronology). Later that year, during his April 1961 visit to Washington DC, Indonesia's President Sukarno promised that only if the United States would support his country's New Guinea claim that he would oppose communism (Ondawame 1996, 104). So seriously did the United States perceive communism as a threat that in that same month the US supported a failed invasion at Cuba's Bay of Pigs. The loss of American support was the final nail in the coffin of Western support for the Dutch campaign for retention of Netherlands New Guinea. Once the US had withdrawn support its support of the Dutch interests, Australia, formerly one of the Netherlands' main allies and colonial partner with whom the New Guinea territories might have been fused, quickly followed suit and also began supporting Indonesian claims to West New Guinea.

War over West New Guinea was a real possibility as, during an address given 8 March 1962, President Sukarno himself encouraged the Indonesian people to be prepared to "liberate West Irian by whatever rightful means," further stating that "It can be by means of skirmishes, or large-scale fightings or all out war. All rightful ways must be followed...to restore West Irian in the territory under the authority of the Republic" (Sukarno 1962, 8-9). Sukarno and other ranking officials gave numerous such speeches threatening the use of force to take and incorporate West New Guinea. With this eminent threat coming on the heels of the massive destruction of World War II and at the height of the Nuclear Age and the dark period of prolonged animosity between capitalist and communist states known as the Cold War, all involved were reticent to begin a new campaign of violence in New Guinea that would have lasting reverberations the world over. Although the Kennedy administration now supported Indonesia's claims, the US had not completely abandoned the Dutch and was actively seeking a

compromise to avoid another major conflict in south Asia. In a telegram dated 31 March 1962 from US President John F. Kennedy to the Dutch Prime Minister, Kennedy complimented the efforts of the Netherlands and further encouraged the Dutch towards a compromise as:

we face a danger that increasing concentrations of military forces will result in a clash which will be a prelude to active warfare in the area. Such a conflict would have adverse consequences out of all proportion to the issue at stake.

This would be a war in which neither the Netherlands nor the West could win in any real sense. Whatever the outcome of particular military encounters, the entire free world position in Asia would be severely damaged. Only the communists would benefit from such a conflict... If Indonesia were to succumb to communism in these circumstances, the whole non-communist position in Vietnam, Thailand, and Malaya would be in grave peril, and as you know these are areas in which we the United States have heavy commitments and burdens, (Meiselas 2003, 107).

In light of the Indonesian threat, and despite starting an ambitious development program in 1960 that would give independence to “last remnant of the former Dutch colonial empire in Asia” (van der Kroef 1958, 38), by 1962 the Dutch were also ready to appease the demands of Indonesia; however this would not take place without one last checking move from the US in the chess-like realm of international relations. The Bunker Plan, so named for Ellsworth Bunker, the American strategist and former diplomat, helped the US government to essentially, “[take] the wind out of the Soviet sails by brokering the August 1962 New York Agreement under which the Dutch undertook to transfer control of West New Guinea to Indonesia by May 1963” (King 2001, 22). This agreement provided for a United Nations Temporary Executive Authority (UNTEA) to oversee the gradual transfer of administrative powers between the two nations as well as, more

importantly, installing a provision for an act of self-determination, called the Act of Free Choice, in which the citizens would be able to vote on their political status, which was to be carried out within 6 years.

Throughout the entire process of planning the local indigenous population was almost completely left out of the process despite demands by Dutch Governor Pieter Platteel (the last Dutch colonial governor of Netherlands New Guinea), the New Guinea Council, and the major political parties of the territory, that they be included in the proceedings. To appease such demands Papuan delegates were eventually invited to the forum but “As it turned out, the Papuan advisers arrived in the US after the negotiations had been finalized, as agreement between Indonesia and the Netherlands had been reached sooner than anticipated” (Chauvel 2005b, 30). Those who would determine the fate of the West Papuan peoples and lands had already made up their minds beforehand making the meeting a mere fulfillment of the formalities of protocol. The foreign metropolitan powers were glad to finally solve the conflict that had plagued them so long and those on all sides were eager to sign the deal and be done with it. Needless to say the idea of such an arrangement was rejected outright by the Papuan people. Papuan leader Markus Kaisiepo denounced the accord saying, “we were traded as goats by the Americans.” Yohanes Bonay also recalls two of the chants at a demonstration against the new arrangement: “How many dollars for Papua, Yankee,” and “We Papuans want freedom, not Soekarno” (ibid.).

In accordance with the terms set out in the New York Agreement the United Nations Temporary Executive Authority (UNTEA) formally took over governance in West New Guinea on 1 October 1962 and was accompanied by a contingent of 1,537 Pakistani soldiers to be employed as a peacekeeping force. The effort was to be financed equally between the Netherlands and Indonesia (Gorman 2001, 167) and last until May 1963. Although some three-

quarters of the previous colonial administration had been made up of indigenous New Guineans the UN administration employed mainly Indonesian migrants who “quickly outnumbered the United Nations staff” (Robie 1989, 59). Despite pressure from the indigenous community for UNTEA to stay and carry out the promised referendum, UNTEA finished its assignment, as instructed, in May 1963 when the national government of Indonesia assumed full responsibility over West New Guinea thus ending the first stage of the Indonesian takeover of the territory.

With no official say in the handover of administrative powers from the Dutch colonial government to the Indonesian government the area was actually recolonized by another power as foreign and alien to most of the indigenous residents as the Dutch had been. As such, and without inclusion into the working of the government that would oversee them “the Papuans duly passed under the control of a power with which they had never identified, and entered into a fate that they would certainly never have chosen. For Indonesia, this was the completion of nationhood; for the Papuans, it was the wreck of it” (Budiardjo and Liong 1988, 22). Despite this setback those informed retained hope in the fact that they would be allowed a free choice in the future referendum.

The Dutch attempt at building infrastructure and preparing future government officials had created a very small class of elite indigenes and “By 1963, when West Papua was transferred to the Republic of Indonesia, there were a total of about sixty Papuans who had been trained by the Dutch to be administrators of the colonial state” (Kirksey 2002, 41). A number of trainees left the country with the departing authorities and went to the Netherlands or other parts of Europe. While the exact number of dissidents that were able make it out before the takeover by the Indonesian regime is uncertain, one can be sure that they had an inkling of what was coming.

Many West Papuan groups, operating under more traditional systems of leadership rose up quickly and violently in opposition to the Indonesian occupation. By December of 1963, only a few months after the initial assumption of administrative powers by the Indonesians, native groups in the areas of Merauke, Manokwari, Sorong, Biak, and Jayapura had all staged armed rebellions of various forms. These uprisings were, in large part, responses to the oppressive policies of the new regime. They were however unsuccessful in bringing about major change or attention to their opposition to the situation. Had the attacks and uprisings been coordinated or better strategized they would likely have been much more effective, however lack of unity, communication, and access to more lethal arms prevented this from happening. Many authors have noted that the Indonesian buildup and practices of brutality have actually encouraged and built unity in opposition against them, leading to a united front of resistance. An organized militant wing of freedom fighters was formed early on and still exists to this day. With efforts often less effective due to poor communications and strategies these guerrillas are widely supported by the people and are known as the *Organisasi Papua Merdeka* (Free Papua Movement or OPM). The construction and significance of the OPM will be discussed in chapter three.

Perhaps the only possible good to come out the debacle so far was the hope that the Papuans had in the possibility that a future referendum, to be held at an as yet unspecified date, that ideally would allow the people of the land to decide their own fate. In December 1962 the Biak-Numfor Regional Council, a local body of representatives elected in 1959 by universal suffrage (the denial of said universal voting rights would later become a key tool in ensuring Indonesian sovereignty over the territory), protested the arrangement and stated that, “the UN had handed over the Papuan people from western colonialism to ‘an even more ruthless power.’”

They further demanded that the UN oversee the plebiscite regarding Papuan sovereignty rather than the Indonesians and that they do so in 1964 instead of the promised referendum being held in 1969 and being administered by the State (14).

The 'Act of Free Choice' in the Cold War Era

Writing in 1966 and referring to the Act of Free Choice guaranteed by the New York Agreement, Arend Lijphart noted that “The only major Indonesian concession to the Dutch was on the matter of self-determination for the Papuans. However, the plebiscite is to be held after a many years of Indonesian administration. In the light of Indonesia’s consistent and firm opposition to self-determination, it is highly doubtful that the Papuans will get a completely free choice” (Lijphart 1966, 21). Lijphart’s statement turned out to be more prophetic than cynical as the referendum was, for a time, cancelled and its final realization was far from free. What followed “turned out to be an outrageous exercise in duplicity, intimidation and coercion on Indonesia's part” (King 2004, 22).

In the mid-1960’s Indonesia withdrew from the United Nations and threatened not to fulfill its obligations to the New York Agreement however the Jakarta leadership eventually changed their minds. The country’s leadership underwent one other major change in the mid-1960s as President Sukarno was ousted from his role as head executive and replaced by General Suharto. Suharto immediately began establishing the *Orde Baru* (New Order), creating a regime that would stand strong for over thirty years. One of the main factors allowing the Order to last was the regime’s willingness to use force whenever necessary. Within hours of the 30 September 1965 coup, which allowed for Suharto’s takeover, a campaign was begun to liquidate Indonesia of political dissidents and especially communists. Between 1965 and 1966 hundreds

of thousands of people “were killed by the army and its civilian allies” (Drakely2005, 110). Western powers took notice of the events in Jakarta but were willing to accept the New Order government due to its anti-communist stance. “When Sukarno was replaced in a military coup in 1965 and Suharto became President, Australia seemed prepared to overlook gross violations of human rights in exchange for a stable anti-communist regime pushing economic progress. Successive Australian governments courted the new administration and acquiesced when the Indonesians invaded East Timor and took over the Western half of New Guinea, decisions which have scarified relationships ever since” (Graham 2004, 4). Subsequent crack downs against protesters by the New Order government were unable to uproot the West Papuan resistance movement “but the repressive measures ensured that the independence movement made no apparent political progress” (Drakely 2005, 133).

Although there had been doubt in the minds of many as to whether or not the Act of Free Choice would actually be carried out, due to both the change in leadership as well as Indonesia’s withdrawal from and readmittance to the UN, the plebiscite eventuated in the latter part of 1969. President Suharto announced the referendum himself in his Independence Day speech in 1967, though his words are still unsettling as he proclaimed that this would be, “an opportunity for the people of West Irian to affirm their decision to remain part of the Indonesian nation” (Chauvel 2005b, 35). From this and many other similar statements, it is self-evident that the fate of West New Guinea’s peoples had been decided for them by Indonesia before they had a chance to voice their own opinion.

In May 1969 two members of the Provincial Assembly, Clemens Runaweri and Willem Zongganau, were dispatched to New York to represent the people of the land. The men carried documents “proving Indonesian repression, explosive evidence which may have had a bearing on

the Papuan question being discussed in New York” (Wing and King 2005, 1). Runaweri and Zongganau crossed into the Australian territory of Papua and New Guinea to seek assistance from the Australian government to get to New York but were sent to Manus Island while the government deliberated what to do with them. Saltford points out that at the request of Indonesian Foreign Minister Adam Malik, Gordon Jockel, the Australian Ambassador to Indonesia recommended to his government that the two be prevented from going to New York as the “early arrival of these [two] West Irianese at UN could stimulate defiance and seriously upset the management of conduct of Act of Free Choice within West Irian” (quoted in Saltford 2000, 327).

Under the observation of the Ortiz Sanz, the Bolivian delegate to the UN who was designated to oversee the Act of Free Choice, the Indonesian government carried out the voting from June to July 1969, the latest possible moment so as to keep with the New York Agreement. West Papuan leaders like Nicolaas Jouwe had previously called on UN Secretary-General U Thant to have the UN carry out the vote, rather than merely observe, so as to ensure the integrity of the balloting, however this idea was rejected. West Papuan fears that the vote would not be just were well founded as Indonesian authorities temporarily abandoned ideas of universal suffrage as a group of 1022 (some sources say 1025 or 1026) male West Papuan leaders were chosen to stand as eight representative councils (Robie 1989, 59), who were then intimidated, and in some cases incarcerated, before the vote was to be held. One Brigadier-General Murtopo reminded the men that 115 million Indonesians had fought for West Papua and that he would not allow a few West Papuans to undo their efforts. Any who spoke against the Indonesians in the vote would have, “their accursed tongues...torn out, their full mouths wrenched open.” Murtopo himself threatened to shoot them on the spot if they voiced sentiments of independence

(Budiardjo and Liong 1988, 25). President Suharto also joined in the process of intimidation to guarantee the results he desired when he warned that any whose votes opposed integration into Indonesia would be guilty of treason (Robie 1989, 59). Even more devious methods, if such can be found, were put to use in the Paniai lakes region in the town of Enarotali where “men assigned by the people to represent their opinion were simply replaced by Indonesian substitutes, if it was suspected that they would not make a pro-Indonesia choice” (Lagerberg 1979, 118). This system of representative councils, known as *musyawarah* in the Indonesian language, is a far cry from an act of self-determination of any sort as only one choice of integration, with no alternatives, was offered to a small group of people who were literally manipulated by the Indonesian government. *Musyawarah* is often translated as ‘representation by council’ but also refers to “‘reaching consensus,’ a method which, by its very nature, should be unacceptable as a way of testing public opinion” (Budiardjo and Liong 1988, 24). After confinement and threats on the lives of the men and their families, the representatives unanimously ‘voted’ in favor of Indonesian sovereignty over West Papua. “Since then, all of the selected ‘representatives’ have testified that they were coerced by threats to their families and villages” (Ondawame 2006, 106).

Although numerous previous elections had allowed universal sovereignty in choosing leaders and various government functionaries the Papuan populace was denied the opportunity to vote because the Indonesians claimed that, “the level of education and cultural development of Papuan society was so low” (Chauvel 2005, 35) and “that the Papuans were ‘too primitive’ or ‘too simple’ for universal suffrage” (Budiardjo and Liong 1988, 24). Apparently, their development was immediately fast tracked since only two years later all eligible West Papuans were expected to vote in Indonesia’s general elections without representatives to decide their views for them. This flimsy logic further proves that the West Papuan people were denied the

vote in the interests of the Indonesian government, who knew that a popular vote would not go in their favor. Jacob Rumbiak, a West Papuan activist, later stated: “The OPM [Organisasi Papua Merdeka or Papua Liberation Organization] has the support of the entire population of West Papua. This can be easily proven. If the UN were to conduct a proper referendum, the results would show quite clear what Papuan people want. The Indonesians have always known that the Papuans want independence. That is why, instead of using the democratic, one-man-one-vote system, they used ‘*musyawarah*’ (consultation), according to which, Papuans through their ‘representatives,’ chose to stay with Indonesia. By using this system, it was easy for the Indonesians to exert pressure” (quoted in Budiardjo and Liong 1988, 75) and ensure the outcome.

Although “there was enough evidence from documents produced by the Indonesians alone to prove that the Act was nothing more than a charade,” no action was taken to prevent the UN General Assembly from accepting the sham as a legitimate referendum of self-determination (25). Sanz, the UN observer, noted discrepancies in the administration of the referendum and the brutality of Indonesian military forces towards dissenters, but recommended it be passed on for recognition by the General Assembly anyway. Despite numerous protests by indigenous leaders to the UN Secretary-General the United Nation General Assembly of 19 November 1969 “took note” of the Sanz report. Sixty countries voted in favor of accepting the act, while only fifteen countries, all of them African including Togo, Zambia, Ghana and Sierra Leone, voted in opposition, and 39 states abstained (Osborne 1987, 49). “The division came not on lines of support for West Papuan self-determination, but on lines determined by international political alignment” (Webster 2002, 514). The dissenting African votes came from states aligned with the conservative Brazzaville Group while many supporting votes came in response to foreign

minister Subandrio's assertion that since Indonesia had backed African claims for independence, those nations should return the favor and vote for Indonesia, regardless of the merits (ibid.).

In fact, there is little more that the UN could do besides notation as it had been previously decided that "the United Nations had no authority to overrule national legislation, but should 'take note' of the cessation of reporting [to the UN Special Committee on Decolonization]" (Aldrich and Connell 1998, 157). Thus the UN had little influence in the performance of the 1969 plebiscite. This shows the organization's impotence in the matter, despite the fact that the numerous repressive actions employed by the Indonesian government in preparation for the Act of Free Choice to suppress the free will of the peoples of West Papua are in direct conflict with the principles established in UN Resolutions 1514 (XV) and 1541 (XV).

United Nations Resolution 1514 (XV) clearly outlines that "All peoples have the right to self-determination; by virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social, and cultural development," and that, "All armed action or repressive measures of all kinds directed against dependent peoples shall cease in order to enable them to exercise peacefully and freely their right to complete independence." The measures of intimidation and influence enacted against the West Papuans counter the very principles upon which the UN decolonization agenda was built. Furthermore the denial of universal suffrage on grounds that the populace of West New Guinea was not well enough educated should not have been tolerated as the "Inadequacy of political, economic, social or educational preparedness should never serve as a pretext for delaying independence" (United Nations General Assembly, Resolution 1514 (XV), 67). Furthermore Resolution 1541 (XV) guarantees impartiality in the conduct of self-determination and universal adult suffrage to all of a territory's peoples (United Nations General Assembly, Resolution 1541 (XV), 30). Clearly the Act of Free Choice was not

carried out in accordance with the specifications set out by the United Nations in its resolutions of nine years before. As such it should not even have been passed to the General Assembly, and once there it surely should have been struck down.

Forgotten in the surge of Cold War animosity and fear and beset by the irredentist desires of a more powerful suzerain the evidence that the implementation of the tools for decolonization in West Papua was an abject failure is undisputable. The acceptance by the United Nations of the Act of Free Choice represents a travesty and a grand failure in the implementation of that organization's decolonization program and is a scathing indictment of major world powers that headed the UN and its drive towards an end to colonial hegemony. Even greater than this shortcoming is the fact that the UN lacks the checks and balances that would allow for a redress of its own failed actions. Therefore there are no methods or means by which wrongs can be righted unless the body of the UN itself decides to do so. While expectations that the United Nations and other international bodies ought to reexamine and redress issues of decolonization might be deemed idealistic, the original belief that colonial powers would seek to decolonize in fair and amenable ways exhibits an even greater level of naivety. Reneging on an act of political integration becomes even more complicated when considering another point of Resolution 1514 (XV) that states that attempts to disrupt "national unity and the territorial integrity of a country" are also against the ideas set forth in the UN Charter (UN General Assembly, Resolution 1514 (XV), 67). It is likely with this in mind that Indonesia, and those seeking its favor, now regularly state that West Papua is an integral part of the Indonesian state.

With no police to oversee the UN and correct its oversights, the only way major changes can occur is often through public opinion in more powerful states, which is often spurred by the popular media. Using the media is also a very difficult route as the general public is usually

slow to protest about wrongs committed in faraway places by foreign entities, even when committed on a grander scale than that of West Papua, as is the case in Sudan and the Congo, or is more visible in the press as was the recent suppression of protests against the governing junta in Burma. Indonesian bans on the international media entering into West Papua have made facts about the situation there even more difficult to obtain and even the local media is not allowed to analyze violence or list groups of activists or paramilitary fighters by name, but are instead required to refer to with, “symbolically charged acronyms instead” (Kirksey 2002, 3).

Chapter 3

Internal-Colonialism and the Forgotten Colony

“Question: How many Indonesians does it take to control one East Timorese? Answer: Three. One to hold a gun to his head, one to convince him that he is a fellow Indonesian, and one to convince the Americans – or Australians, for that matter – that he is really a fellow Indonesian,” (Aditjondro).

Although the above joke, which was given by academic in exile George J Aditjondro at a rally commemorating the 1991 Dili massacre, is aimed specifically at Indonesian attitudes towards East Timorese, it is also directly applicable to the neo-colonial relationship between Indonesia and West Papua. It is primarily this same attitude that has pushed the indigenous inhabitants, who greatly differ from the rest of the populace of Indonesia in culture, history, ethnicity, language, and religion, to consistently raise a united front against their foreign-imposed colonial arrangements.

This thesis has previously shown the colonial nature of Indonesia’s relationship towards West New Guinea by denying an act of self determination to ensure sovereignty. As this work now aims to investigate all possible options for future decolonization, I will first undertake to interrogate the current political arrangement, namely integration, which has expanded the borders of the Republic of Indonesia to encompass the lands of West New Guinea. A brief examination of the past and present of West Papua as an integrated province of Indonesia will show that a future combined with Indonesia will not bring about peaceful resolution of the ongoing conflict over sovereignty, due to the colonial nature of their relationship. A fair and democratically decided referendum would lead the West Papuan peoples away from Indonesia and into different avenues of political sovereignty, possibly into an independent state, or another,

unique, political entity. It is precisely because of this likelihood that the Indonesian government has assertively repressed 'secessionists' in West Papua, as well as expressions of West Papuan cultures, which it deems as nationalist and 'separatist' in nature.

West Papuan academic and OPM spokesman Dr. John Otto Ondawame has more specifically labeled Indonesian colonialism in West Papua as internal colonialism. Ondawame defines internal colonialism as, "oppression that is perpetuated by a government over its own people within a nation-state. Typically it involves exploitation of resources in the periphery and enrichment of the center, the accumulation of power and wealth in the hands of a small central power elite, while the periphery remains poor, and affecting a direct and overall subordination of citizens for economic and political interests" (Ondawame 2006, 107). The central government has suppressed West New Guinea's approximately 250 indigenous languages, the rate of HIV/AIDS which is estimated to be about 5 percent is increasing, and "according to UN statistics, the people of Irian Jaya have the lowest quality of life of any of the 27 provinces in Indonesia (measured by life expectancy, years of schooling, and purchasing power)" (Cozens 2005, 489). Such statistics show that West Papuans have gained little, if anything at all, by their inclusion into the Indonesian Republic despite the fact that they are supposedly full and equal citizens. Furthermore, it is estimated that over 100,000 West Papuans have been killed throughout the duration of the Indonesian occupation, although no official numbers exist. This intentional decline in population, along with the theft of traditional lands and the state sponsored programs to dilute the quantity of the indigenous population, has unfortunately gone largely unnoticed in the broader international community, which generally accepts Jakarta's assertions that problems within its territory are strictly internal matters and not the concern of other states as Indonesia is a 'post-colonial' nation.

Just as the process of integration of West Papua into the Indonesian state came about in two distinct stages, the territory has also come under two separate statuses under the auspices of the national government. The first, and longest lasting, arrangement of provincial government officially began immediately after integration by the Act of Free Choice in 1969. This period is marked and marred by the countless acts of overt state sponsored violence, development of natural resource extraction industries, and the migration of settlers from various parts of Indonesia. Throughout this time West Papuans resisted on many levels with the loosely-organized Organisasi Papua Merdeka and armed guerrilla fighters leading the way.

The second period of West New Guinea's integration began in 2001 and was marked by the passing of the Special Autonomy Law. While this bill's passing into law was supposed to bring about great change in the way that the colony's government was to be administered by the central government, the only consistent program is found in the Jakarta's inconsistency in implementing its own laws. Special autonomy in West Papua was supposed to bring peace and prosperity to West Papua, but has ultimately failed due to unequal and inconsistent implementation by both the national and local administrations. Despite claims of reformation and democratization West Papua remains a zone of conflict and contestation.

The Provincial Era

Indonesian neo-colonial policies enacted even before the process of integration was fully completed have created and perpetuated a plethora of problems which can generally be categorized as human right abuses and are most often in the form of political oppression and economic exploitation – especially of natural resources. While tomes upon tomes of information could be compiled regarding the issues that have come about since the advent of Indonesian

governance, it is within the scope of this thesis to focus on only a few in order to highlight the predicaments and problems besetting the West Papuan people since full political integration into the Indonesian state.

West Papuan ‘Separatism’ and Indonesian Nationalism

The level of political oppression meted out prior to and during the Act of Free Choice was but a sign of things to come. Those who publicly opine for a free West Papuan state are labeled as ‘separatists’ and are often subject to various means of oppression. “The state security apparatus has sought to eliminate and silence opponents of Indonesian rule through human rights violations, including forced disappearances, extrajudicial killings, torture, rape, and abduction” (Bonay and McGrory 2004, 441).

Although labeled as ‘separatists’ by the Indonesian government, pro-independence supporters, activists, and paramilitary fighters are more accurately designated as ‘anti-integrationists’ as they dispute the original annexation and eventual forced integration of West Papua into Indonesia rather than supporting secession of the area from within the state. Although it may seem trivial, the terminology used to describe the West Papuan resistance greatly influences the way that their situation is perceived, particularly in international forums where terms like ‘secession’ are frowned upon. This is particularly pertinent discussion in an age where discourses of weak or failed states abound in political analyses of the Pacific region, with West Papua making up a key portion of the so-called ‘arc of instability.’ While the analyses of many Western academics place the conflict within the framework of regional security, the Indonesian government is concerned with the possible loss of a nationalistically symbolic, economically valuable, and vast portion of the state. Concerns for the integrity of the state as a

whole ups the ante as many within Indonesia's governmental hierarchy adhere to the rhetoric that independence for West Papua would spell doom for the rest of the Republic as it would encourage and incite other separatist factions and eventuate in the complete break of the multi-ethnic archipelagic state. On the other hand, "Some academic commentators believe that the separation of Aceh and West Papua from Indonesia would not lead to the disintegration of Indonesia... But the transition to separation from the Indonesian Republic would probably involve violence on a scale much larger than in East Timor" (Dibb 2001, 837).

Weak and failing state analyses combined with Indonesia's international clout have made foreign powers and entities very reluctant to comment on the West Papuans' situation, and indeed, many states would need a great deal of convincing to endorse the possible creation of a new state in what is often considered to be the third world. Similarly, the high likelihood for extreme violence in the event of change, coupled with the Indonesian government's insistence that its handling of West Papua is strictly an internal matter, makes for a very delicate diplomatic situation and has even led formerly outspoken critics, like Papua New Guinea's Sir Michael Somare, to shrink away from such standpoints once installed into high office. The United Nations has also shied away from challenging the colonial order that it helped to establish. The involvement of the UN in leading an intervention to halt state sponsored violence in Indonesia and enact a new opportunity for self-determination is a crucial necessity in bringing about lasting peace to the territory.

"Papua is no more or less part of Indonesia than Yogyakarta or Manado. This statement of Jakarta's formal position belies the importance of Papua in the construction of Indonesia and in the Indonesian national enterprise. Papua is important because it marks the eastern boundaries of Indonesia—geographically, strategically, and culturally. As a boundary marker Papua helps

define the whole” (Bhakti and Chauvel 2004, 1). Consequently, the idea of secession from the apparatuses of the Indonesian state runs, “anathema to mainstream Indonesian nationalism” (Watson 2005, 484). Indonesia’s nationalist philosophy, which consists of five principles and is called *Pancasila*, was carefully constructed by Sukarno and other founding architects of the state prior to declaring independence. The doctrines of *Pancasila* were first publicly articulated by Sukarno in 1945 (Bhakti and Chauvel 2004, 5). The five principles, in Sukarno’s order, are: “nationalism, humanitarianism/internationalism, social justice, representational government, and belief in God” (Drakely 2005, 73). These ideals were not undisputed as many saw them as secular and not in good standing with fundamental principles of Islam; however, their enshrinement in the 1945 constitution saw to their indefinite espousal. Symbolic representations of *Pancasila* are found in several national symbols including the national coat of arms where they coupled with the national motto “*Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*” (“Unity in Diversity”), signifying that these values are to be shared amongst all of Indonesia’s diverse population, despite differences in ethnicity or how the area was incorporated into the state.

It is Sukarno’s first point of nationalism, which includes the concept of the absolute maintenance of the unity of the state that is in direct conflict with ideas of independence for West Papua, even in the name of decolonization. However, those seeking an Indonesian renunciation of its West Papua claim do so with the ideology that such would come through a previously omitted and properly conducted vote for self-determination – unlike the Act of Free Choice – to end a colonial relationship, rather than a bilateral agreement of secession between Indonesia and West Papua, which would validate the years of Indonesian sovereignty and exonerate that state of colonialism. Following this rationale, the state as it was constructed in 1949 could be

maintained, and a change of West Papua's status as part of Indonesia could be accepted as it was never supposed to have been a part of the Republic to begin with.

Stringent adherence to the nationalist ideals embodied by *Pancasila*, that is the necessity to maintain the integrity of arbitrary and colonially-drawn geopolitical boundaries without regard for differences of culture, ethnicity, or local opinion, has created a long lasting atmosphere of conflict in various parts of the Republic of Indonesia as that state has faced no less than four independence movements at any given time. Some of the most well known amongst these are found in Aceh, Kalimantan (the Indonesian part of Borneo Island), Maluku (the province containing the Mollucca Islands just west of New Guinea), and West Papua, however several others have flared and faded over time in other regions. Richard Chauvel and Ikrar Nusa Bhakti stress the importance of understanding official Indonesian patriotism as they advance the argument that “the nationalist conviction that Irian Jaya (Papua) is an integral part of Indonesia, developed by Suharto and cultivated by his daughter, remains the dominant framework in which government policy is made and public opinion formed” (Bhakti and Chauvel 2004, 1).

When investigating the West Papuan relations with the Indonesian central government, one must be aware that inconsistent national policies based on the general principles of *Pancasila* have created a common atmosphere of misunderstanding and mistrust as “Jakarta's policy responses have combined the accommodative and the repressive—sometimes in different periods, sometimes simultaneously” (4). Presidents Sukarno and Suharto, although having run their respective administrations differently, related to dissent in West New Guinea in a similar manner: with heavy-handed militarism. Suharto's lengthy administration articulated its position through a set of policies known as the New Order. The New Order, “rejected the Sukarno model of attaining national unity and integration by symbol-wielding and revolution in favor of

consistent emphasis on political stability, order, and economic development, even at the price of the limitation of democracy and the imposition of military rule...” (Drake 1989, 49). Such efforts engaged in violent oppression, what Bhakti and Chauvel have called the ‘security approach,’ in order to sustain the borders of the state by completely quelling resistance and aspirations for independence, however, security forces never completely accomplished this goal and demands for self-government continue. More recently, leaders in Jakarta have taken softer lines to deal with independence seekers in West Papua, even going so far as to offer special autonomy, although still withholding the possibility for self-government, but the central leadership has been frustrated as these efforts have also been met with resistance. The failure of these more accommodating tactics has led to resurgence in the employment of violence as per the security approach, but both methods of maintaining the state have only galvanized resistance and created a sense of Papuan nationalism, separate from Indonesia.

The combination of mistrust and violence has become, and remains, the mainstay for Indonesia to assert its sovereignty over, and complete control of, West Papua, despite claims of reform in the post-Suharto era. “George Aditjondro provides some insights into this problem in his observations about how Indonesians interact with Papuans. He associates the prevalence of human rights abuses against Papuans with the common Indonesian notion that Papuans are not really human in the ‘hierarchy of civilizations.’ Aditjondro notes that the Javanese, Buginese, and Malukan soldiers stationed in Papua for six month periods of duty tend to become trigger-happy not so much through bravado but as a result of their fear and suspicion of Papuans” (quoted in Bhakti and Chauvel 2005,36). The actions of Indonesians, fuelled by such less-than-human perceptions, have led West Papua’s indigenous peoples to always be wary of Indonesians, and has led to a general relationship of mistrust and suspicion, even amongst close colleagues,

teachers and students, and particularly between incoming transmigrants and indigenous residents. “Generations of Indonesian administrators and soldiers, arriving in Jayapura from elsewhere, have learned quickly that ‘every Papuan is probably secretly OPM’ – just as American GI’s arriving in Vietnam learned that ‘every villager is probably a Viet-Cong’” (Bell, Feith and, Hatley 1986, 545-546)

Militarism

Indonesia’s primary side arm in ensuring its continued domination of West Papua has always been the presence of a large contingency of the armed forces. Militarism is a common sign of internal colonialism but is especially noticeable in a land where the arsenals of even the best armed opposing factions primarily consist of bows and arrows, spears, and only a handful of modern weapons. “The Indonesian military has undertaken successive military operations, ostensibly to crush the ‘separatist rebellion.’ For this purpose, 60,000 troops were deployed to West Papua from 1967 to 1972. Current estimates of military and police personnel number 15,000-20,000” (Bonay and McGrory 2004, 440).

Since the initial deployment of troops first occupied West New Guinea in 1962 the Indonesian army has been engaged in a secret war. Although their first assignment was to oppose Dutch forces and ‘liberate’ the peoples of West New Guinea, the role of the Indonesian army quickly changed as they were met with unexpected opposition from those to whom they thought they were bringing freedom. In 1965 the Army faced its first major tasks in quelling dissent amongst a large group of people when the Arfak people staged an uprising after it became apparent that their complaints about “shortages of commodities, lack of employment and their refusal to declare loyalty to Indonesia...had fallen on deaf ears” (Anti-Slavery 1990, 51). It

took the army two years to subdue the insurrection; however, it would never truly end as this conflict saw the beginning of a poorly armed, loosely organized, low-level insurgency that would eventually become known as the *Organisasi Papua Merdeka* (Free Papua Movement), or OPM for short.

The role of Indonesia's military goes far beyond merely putting down resistance and defending national borders. While the OPM, whose formal numbers might include 1,600 people, including several groups seeking independence through nonviolent means, has never truly been a threat to the substantially larger and better trained and equipped armed forces of the Republic, "their activities have provided justification for the far-reaching militarization of West Papua. The presence of security forces in West Papua and their *modus operandi* cannot be separated from their political and economic interests" (Bonay and McGrory 2004, 440). The army is indeed a political and economic entity unto itself with many high-ranking officials serving in equally high-level government offices, including the Foreign Service; whereas other officers might feel, "much more at home dealing with Chinese and foreign businessmen than commanding troops in the field" (Anti-Slavery 1990, 50). Peter Dauvergne cites Clark D. Neher who said, "in no other Southeast Asian nation, with the possible exception of Burma, has the military so pervasively intervened in politics" (Neher quoted in Dauvergne 1998b, 140). The deep involvement of a large number of military personnel in politics and civil administration reflect the rationale developed early in Indonesia's history as an independent state, namely that, "civilians still need the strong leadership that only the army can provide" (Anti-Slavery 1990, 49). The direct involvement of the armed forces in the business sector has been especially focused in state-owned firms as well as "illegal logging, protection of vital commercial installations, trade in protected wildlife, and so forth" (Bonay and McGrory 2004, 440). The necessity for the armed

forces to engage the private sector came as the state developed but was unable to supply enough funds to cover all of the military's expenses. Thus, military involvement with businesses aimed to "supplement the limited funds allocated by the government by establishing various enterprises and controlling certain elements of the economy..." By doing so "the army sought to free itself from domestic criticism, bureaucratic controls, and foreign pressure by creating the impression that military expenditure was less than it really was. Indeed, by the mid 1970's, at least half the army's operating funds derived from extragovernment sources" (50). The military's direct involvement in violent operations against pro-independence groups, and Papuan nationalists, as well as close associations with lucrative, yet controversial, business operations, especially those focusing on natural resource extraction, have made the complete withdrawal of the armed forces one of the singular most important demands of West Papuan activists and groups.

As previously mentioned, the massive reserves of military and police forces stationed in West Papua are deployed to engage in actions against leaders, indigenous groups, and organizations believed to be resisting Indonesian supremacy and sovereignty, as well as to look out for national economic and political interests. While occurrences of violent repression of opposition were apparently common in various parts of Indonesia throughout the era of the Suharto regime, his deposition has not curtailed violent repression of those voicing anti-Indonesian sentiments.

The Organisasi Papua Merdeka

The primary vehicle representing West Papuan resistance to Indonesian sovereignty is the *Organisasi Papua Merdeka* however the OPM is less of an organization than it is a movement characterized by nebulous command structures and general dis-organization. Despite these

characteristics, that many might see as weaknesses, the OPM “is one of the world’s least known but most durable liberation forces” (Osborne 1987, xvi). The exact origin of the terms making the acronym OPM are unknown although some have suggested that the moniker was actually a creation of the Indonesian government (OPM Information, Webster 2002, 518). The term OPM has often been applied as an umbrella term to describe all forms of West Papuan resistance including guerrilla fighters, activist leaders, and average citizens who oppose the sovereignty of the Indonesian state. As such the contemporary OPM is not an armed band of guerrillas. It is a cultural movement with a broad base of support (Kirksey 2002, 92-93).

Due to the unstructured nature of the movement its support base or membership numbers cannot be known. “‘We are all OPM,’ remains a common saying. A Papuan joins the OPM not by signing a membership card, but simply by taking up arms and calling himself OPM” (Webster 2002, 518). The head of the OPM office in Vanuatu, Dr. John Otto Ondawame says, “It is difficult to know the exact number of people involved in the struggle, because in different areas there are different structures. We have nine regional commands, but only five will be active in military terms. But in political terms, 95% of West Papuans support the idea of independence” (Galiana 1999). Jim Elmslie cites an interview with OPM commander John Somer in which the leader indicated “that there was a fighting force of between 38,000 and 48,000,” (Elmslie 2002, 53). While this number must be questioned Elmslie shows that gatherings of 200-600 supporters and potential fighters were not uncommon in the 1990s when the interview occurred and if such numbers were to turn out in area of the OPM’s organized zones, then such a high figure might actually be logical. In the year 2000 a document from Indonesia’s Ministry of Internal Affairs estimated support for independence, perhaps conservatively, at 10 to 20 percent (Bhakti and Chauvel 2004, 28-29), however the text judges support for independence, not for the OPM, and

how those figures were obtained is unclear. Tight regulation over the conducting of research on such topics in West Papua means that even investigative methods such as surveying and polling are off limits, hampering efforts to gauge opinions across even the smallest cross-section of society.

According to some indigenous leaders though, establishing estimates of the human membership is not enough as “According to [Viktor] Kaisiepo, OPM membership goes beyond the realm of humans: in West Papua every rock, tree, fish, and even nature (*alam*) itself is a member of the OPM” (Kirksey 2002, 92). Seemingly natural deaths of Indonesians have been attributed to the guerrilla elements of the natural world as “malarial mosquitoes, venomous white snakes, and the trees themselves are foot soldiers of the OPM” (ibid.). The attribution of such qualities to nature is consistent with belief systems of at least the Amungme people. As Tom Beanal recounts “the Amungme regard every single thing, whether moving or still, growing or idle, as distinct characters which are always ready to provide assistance and ensure their well-being” (Beanal 1997, 83). The Lani people hold similar views as members of the group told S. Eben Kirksey that the crash of a plane carrying 10 high-level military officers into mountain side was no accident but that nature had aided the OPM as ““something pushed them”” (Kirksey 2002, 93-93).

In its early stages the OPM was primarily an outfit of armed resistance. But as the movement has changed shape over the years to include non-militant and diplomatic groups and measures, the armed resistance has taken on a different name, although still identifying under the OPM umbrella. The armed wing of the OPM is also commonly referred to as the TPN or TEPENAL (*Tentara Pembebasan Nasional* or National Liberation Army) but it is only ‘armed’ in the sense that certain elements of the group do have access to a small quantity of usually

dilapidated firearms while the rest carry weapons like spears, bush knives, or bows and arrows. The first somewhat organized group to be labeled as OPM was formed in 1965 during the Arfak rebellion mentioned previously. After Indonesia had announced withdrawal from the UN and the cancellation of the Act of Free Choice the Arfak people of the Manokwari area staged a major uprising led by Johan Ariks (Webster 2002, 517-518). The first full-time guerrilla forces were organized in 1968 by Jacob Prai, a former student at Cenderwasih University. Prai and his small group were soon joined by Seth Rumkorem who added a layer of military leadership and expertise as he was a deserting officer of the Indonesian Army (Elmslie 2002, 37). Rumkorem, who for a time served in the Indonesian military, was especially disturbed as villagers would come to his father to complain of abuses. "They spoke of being tortured with implements such as hot irons, stingray tails and electric current," as well as rape and murder by soldiers (Osborne 1987, 51). Further reports of the murder of a pregnant woman and the dissection of the fetus in front of her village, as well as the mass killing of 500 people in Lereh district, both in 1970, motivated Rumkorem to join Prai's nascent band of regular guerrillas force based in the hard-to-reach forests (50). Unfortunately, such accounts of torture and abuse can still be easily found and firsthand descriptions are especially common amongst activists.

Prai's education and knowledge of the local area combined with Rumkorem's charisma and military skills gave the Free Papua Movement great potential in bringing about real change in West Papua while garnering international attention and creating awareness. One of the groups more notable achievements was the reading of a Declaration of Independence over a military radio at a captured post on 1 July 1971 (Elmslie 2002, 38). Despite bouts of infighting the OPM fighters were able to survive extended operations staged by the Indonesian military to uproot them from their hiding places deep in remote areas. Crossing the PNG border to escape army

patrols has proved vital to their survival, as has their ability to literally disappear into the bush, making them very hard to exterminate. Retreating to isolated bases for support has not always worked to ensure the safety of those waging resistance in any form as the military has not shied away from the indiscriminate bombing and gunning of villages and refugee camps. Using American-made Bronco aircraft, pilots have even carried out orders against to strafe targets, mainly refugee camps, located well within the borders of Papua New Guinea (Osborne 1987, 73).

With no major financial backers and depending wholly and completely upon local villages in remote areas for provisions the guerrilla fighters have amazingly been able to continue waging their war for independence throughout the entire occupation, despite the numerous concerted attempts by the Indonesian Army to root out their hiding places. Although the OPM might be “weak in its capacity for central direction of local activity” (Bell, Feith, and Hatley 1986, 547) the flexible and less organized nature of the movement have allowed it to survive as a visible and structured organization would make easy targets of both leaders and supporters alike. Since the inception of special autonomy in West Papua the OPM and TPN have changed to tactics of non-violence in support of diplomatic processes.

Political Oppression

The first, and most obvious, act of political oppression concerns the Act of Free Choice discussed earlier. The intimidation, imprisonment, and replacement of voting delegates, in order to ensure a unanimous vote for Indonesian sovereignty, were not the first such actions against West Papuans. However it was a key turning point for many indigenes who realized that continuation of Indonesian rule would mean a future filled with similar incidents. Despite pockets of support for Indonesia prior to the Act of Free Choice, such harassment of political

thought has served to create a form of nationalism, strongly based on resistance to Indonesia, amongst most of the Papuan peoples of West New Guinea. In an independently authored East-West center Policy Study, Richard Chauvel provides just one example of how the behavior of the Indonesian regime was counterproductive to the little support that they previously had in West Papua. The indigenous people of Serui, on the island of Yapen, have held traditional connections with the Moluccas to the west long before Dutch contact. The European Colonial schools and missions were especially focused on the people of Yapen and its surrounding islands making many of the people of the Schouten Islands (the archipelago comprising Biak, Yapen and the other small islands off the north coast of West New Guinea) among the educated and political elites of Papua. Initially, the people in Serui favored the claims of Indonesia to West Papua due to political influences exerted Indonesian nationalists who been sent there in exile. Support for Indonesia quickly diminished though as the people became disillusioned with the Indonesian regime because of its brutality and unfairness. The conclusion of the Act of Free Choice at the end of 1969 solidified the change of heart of most of the people of Serui (Chauvel 2005, 69-75).

Such overt oppression of dissenting political thought and action has wrought widespread distrust throughout West Papua, especially as military retribution is often much greater than the original offenses, which range from rumors that one is an OPM supporter to small hit-and-run attacks by armed guerilla factions. The mere suspicion of OPM sympathies or involvement can place individuals in danger of an indefinite stay in jail or joining the ranks of the untold numbers of those who have simply disappeared. During the early 1980s, when General Benny Moerdani served as commander of Indonesia's armed forces, many arrests ended in 'mysterious shootings,' wherein suspects were executed without due process and their captors never investigated (Bell, Feith and, Hatley 1986, 548). Such conduct, especially larger scale massacres, has served to

motivate increased numbers of dissidents to violence-exactly the opposite goal of the operations which are supposed to quell opposition.

Besides directing efforts at individuals within the independence movement, the Indonesian government has actively sought to crack down on any and all symbols and activities it dubs as nationalistic. While overt symbols of the independence movement like the Morning Star Flag (also known as *bintang kejora* or *bintang fajar*), the banner designed to represent the independent state that the Dutch aimed to create, are comprehensibly suppressed, expressions of indigenous languages and cultures have also been aggressively censored as their perpetuation is deemed to be a form of resistance to the superiority of the Malay race and culture. These notions, now institutionalized by government programs, represent what is essentially an insidious form of orientalism in the Orient.

As Jacques Bertrand points out that, “The Papuans’ culture was seen as an obstacle to their ability to become modern citizens of Indonesia” (Bertrand 2004, 153) and government development programs, which use an official scale of five different levels of ‘backwardness,’ refer to the region as being “among the most ‘backward’ of Indonesian provinces” (West Papua Report “Indonesian Government”). Such high levels of indigenous backwardness necessitated, in their minds, the need for new civilizing missions. ““Having liberated Papuans from colonialism, the next step was to liberate them from backwardness.’ Foreign minister Subandrio said their mission was to ‘get them down out of the trees, even if we have to pull them down”” (Webster 2002, 516). Furthermore indigenous or Dutch place names have generally been changed to Sanskrit-based words strongly reflecting Javanese culture. One of the most obvious instances of such changes can be found in the name of the territory’s capital and largest city Jayapura, meaning ‘Victory City,’ which was previously called Hollandia by the Dutch, although

is still referred to by many indigenous locals by its original name, Numbay. Cultural reengineering through 'Indonesianization' programs has done more to create or strengthen rivalries between the Malay colonizers and West Papuan indigenes, rather than fostering development, loyalty to the state, or Indonesian concepts of 'civilization.'

As previously noted, "Papuan songs or cultural expressions were deemed to be nationalist. The government sought instead to bring the Papuans within the common realm of Indonesian culture" (Bertrand 2004, 152-153). One of the most noticeable differences between the indigenous West Papuan peoples and their Indonesian counterparts, especially in rural areas where contact with outside civilizations has been minimal, is the style and amount of clothing worn on the body. Thus shortly after 1969 the national government launched 'Operation *Koteka*.' *Koteka* is a derisive term that refers to the traditional penis sheaths worn by men in many highlands areas (Webster 2002, 517) and the 'operation' of the same name sought to bring the tribesman out of their presumed primitiveness by making them wear pants. The short trousers they were given caused many skin infections as the people, who, having never worn such articles before, did not know of the necessity to regularly wash them (Osborne 1987, 66). Apparently, in their haste to Indonesianize those they considered backwards, the overseers forgot to teach them about doing laundry. The wearing of the *koteka* is still banned in public places, but the practice continues, although it is sometimes worn underneath the mandated trousers, and is still prevalent in areas of cultural seclusion.

The Indonesian government has also sought to curtail indigenous traditions of warfare, particularly in the highlands regions. Attempts have been made to ban traditional means of compensation and reconciliation, usually shells received from coastal areas by extensive trading networks, to discourage such fighting; but authorities have also sought, on occasion, to intervene

directly. A traditional tribal fight in 1977 between the Dani and Lani tribes in the interior mountain region was interrupted by heavily-armed Indonesian military troops. Things quickly changed as existing resentment against the Indonesians turned both sides against the foreign fighters. People from throughout the Baliem Valley, even those not involved in the original dispute, turned up with their bows and arrows to harass the army, while men, women, and children drove wooden stakes into remote airfields, essentially cutting off the means for the army to receive fresh supplies and reinforcements. Their efforts again gave the army the justification they needed to demonstrate their superior force, which they did by bombing local villages and dropping napalm over the densely vegetated mountains (Elmslie 2002, 42). “Reports put the number of villagers killed at several thousand, although Indonesian officials claimed only 900 people had died” (43). The harsh means of forced acculturation and the subsequent retribution for resistance employed by the army demonstrate Indonesia’s relentless determination to withhold freedom of culture and force their concepts of civilization at all cost.

Cultural censorship has not overlooked purveyors of the arts and popular culture, especially when they undertake to critique national policies regarding issues in their homeland. The Black Brothers, an award winning and nationally renowned pop reggae band which sold over 1 million albums in Indonesia, “went into voluntarily exile in 1979 to protest Indonesian policies on their home island; they lived and worked in Vanuatu before moving to Papua New Guinea” (Lockard 1998, 105). Prior to their stay in Vanuatu the band was based in the Netherlands, where they released their album ‘Alive and Well in Europe.’ The surviving members now reside in Australia where, in recent years, they have reformed for a small number of concerts. Although their songs were not overtly charged with political dissent, the fact that their tunes were often either sung in indigenous dialects and English or remakes of

nonconformist Jamaican reggae classics like Jimmy Cliff's 'The Harder They Come' and 'Strugglin' Man,' made them enough of a threat to the establishment that the band members thought it wise to make a sudden departure. Others were either not so lucky, or chose to ignore the warning signs.

Another figure of popular culture whose case stands out is Arnold Ap. Ap was something of a bridge between the academy and popular local culture as he simultaneously worked as curator for the Cenderwasih museum, popular musician, and founder and leader of the Mambesak theater company. Ap was also labeled an OPM sympathizer although the level of his involvement with the movement is unclear. Ap formed the Mambesak theater group in 1978 as a vehicle to "articulate West Irian concerns, including opposition to environmentally destructive forestry and mining operations" (105). Ap's assertion of traditional culture as both valid and valuable, as well as his links to groups seeking an end to Indonesian rule, led to his final demise as he was arrested and imprisoned 30 November 1983. Official records state that Ap and another member of the Mambesak troupe Eduard Mofu, were shot and killed on the evening of Saturday 21 April 1984 in an 'escape attempt.' Other eyewitness accounts suggest that the escape attempt was a setup crafted by the army because "the Indonesian military authorities regarded Arnold Ap as extremely dangerous because of the activities of his Mambesak players, and wanted him sentenced to death or given a life sentence. However, they could find no formal grounds for a charge in court" (Budiardjo and Liong 1988, 130-131). Referring to Ap and Thomas Wanggai, another activist who paid for flying the Morning Star flag with his life, Jim Elmslie said that they "could not reject their identity as Papuans, when they asserted this through their actions, their lives were and those of their families were destroyed. They had reached a point where their

sense of self-respect, of dignity, could no longer be bought off by the trappings of success within the Indonesian state, and they committed metaphorical suicide” (Elmslie 2004, 26).

Indonesia has recently sought to extend its censorship overseas as the Indonesian embassy in Wellington New Zealand pressured organizers of the Asia Pacific festival to stop a musical composition entitled ‘Papua Merdeka’ from being performed publicly. The piece, composed by Dr. Martin Wesley-Smith, was instead performed in a private setting because embassy official feared its presentation might be upsetting to Indonesian nationals. Tri Purnajaya was quoted as saying that “to talk about Indonesia in a different way will somehow, I think, cause them to feel upset” (Wellington Festival Performance Censured by Indonesia, 2007). Such concern for political correctness and sensitivity, even going so far as to pressure arts and media displays in foreign countries, directly contradicts Indonesia’s actions within their own borders where travel within the province is restricted and the media heavily censored and no sensitivity is displayed for ‘backward’ cultures.

Indonesia’s requirements that residents of West Papua have permissive documentation when travelling within the territory, especially near sensitive areas like the Freeport mine, is eerily reminiscent of similar restrictions levied throughout the Soviet Union where cities like Krasnoyarsk 26 and Tomsk 7 were sealed off in order to conceal important, usually nuclear, secrets. West Papuans must obtain permits to travel, even when visiting their own villages and are required to carry identity cards (Ondawame 2006, 115). The obtainment of such documents necessitates one to patronize the bureaucracy while complying with its standards. This reduces accessibility for all people, rural or urban, and raises serious questions about what is being hidden or protected.

Along with bureaucratic requirements for movement about within the territory the Indonesian government has also placed strong restrictions on the way that the media reports on happenings there, and have completely banned the entry of all foreign journalists and news media. It has previously been mentioned in this paper that media outlets must refer to dissident groups like the OPM using politically charged language such as “Security Disrupting Elements” or “Wild Terrorist Gangs” (Bell, Feith, and Hatley 1986, 551). Furthermore, “In West Papua, news magazines and daily newspapers have been banned, and the authorities provide guidance to local journalists and editors on what they should write and print” (Ondawame 2006, 115). Even after an era of supposed reform, government officials refuse to allow foreign media entry into their borders, stating that it is still “not the right time to open to foreign journalists and fact-finding missions” (Indonesian MP, 2007).

Throughout the Suharto era, mere possession of a Morning Star flag was a criminal offense, and raising the banner could land one in prison or worse, as was the case with Elias Warsey. In 1984 Elias Warsey, a native West Papuan corporal in the Indonesian Army, raised the banned Morning Star flag at the provincial parliament headquarters, as part of an OPM offensive in Jayapura. For his so-called crime Corporal Warsey was shot down immediately along with a West Papuan janitor standing nearby. His death for attempting to raise the flag set off an unexpected chain of events that includes the desertion of the entire 751st Battalion, which was made up entirely of West Papuan soldiers, house-to-house searches for the deserters, and eventually an international crisis that saw some 10,000-12,000 individuals, including the wife and children of Arnold Ap, to leave their homes in search of asylum and refuge across the nearby PNG border (Osborne 1987, 99-100; Elmslie 2002, 45-46). This sudden influx of refugees added to the smaller groups that had slowly been trickling over the border since the ‘60s and garnered

much media attention throughout the region and the world. Their sudden flight proved to skeptics that the West Papuans actually did have legitimate reason to fear the Indonesian government and its army. This event also highlights the amount of support the OPM had, even amongst the more elite classes of Papuans living in and working in the provincial capital as amongst the refugees were “members of mutinying units of the Indonesian army and police and some hundreds of civil servants and university people” (Bell, Feith and Hatley 1986, 539-540). Many of the refugees saw themselves as supporters or members of the OPM and hoped to be in PNG for only a short time. One exclaimed, “We came here because if we are killed, the guts of West Papuan hopes will disappear with us” (Hewison and Smith 1986, 202).

The government in Papua New Guinea was not prepared to handle such large numbers of “border-crossers” and has regularly sought to prosecute and repatriate them so as to not “antagonize Indonesia by being too welcoming to refugees fleeing its rule” (Bell, Feith, and Hatley 1986, 541). This occasion was no exception and Christian missions soon took up the bulk of the care, however this was often difficult as large quantities of resources were difficult to come by. In August of the same year some 92 refugees died of starvation in a camp near the southern border. Subsequently many parliamentarians blamed the Somare administration for the incident, claiming that government had acquiesced to Indonesian pressure to prevent church groups from sending aid in time (542). Although that actual attacks on Jayapura themselves were relatively inconsequential, the unplanned fallout from the operation, and the simple raising of the Morning Star flag, had reverberating effects throughout the international community.

Many others have been jailed for displaying the colors of the Morning Star. Thomas Wanggai was jailed in 1989 and given a sentence of 20 years for flying the Morning Star banner and his Japanese wife served 8 years for sewing it (Elmslie 2004, 24). Wanggai later died in

Cipinang jail in Jakarta in 1996, probably from poisoning (King 2004, 46). Filip Karma and Yusak Pakage were also jailed for raising the flag at Abepura in 2004 and have subsequently been sentenced to serve 15 and 10 year prison terms, respectively. Their case is particularly salient as their imprisonment came in an era of supposed reform and dialogue and several years after the passing of the special autonomy law that originally allowed the flag's public display.

Exploitation of Natural Resources

Aside from the harsh repression of 'separatist' actions, West Papuan discontentment is also fueled by Indonesian exploitation of natural resources. New Guinea Island is rich in timber and marine resources, as well as deposits of fossil fuels and minerals. While the extraction of these reserves has been the catalyst to much conflict, there is yet another natural resource, uncommon to most Pacific Islands, whose exploitation has created great strife, namely: vast amounts of open and arable land. The area of West New Guinea is 420,540 square kilometer[s] and the, "territory cover[s] over 22 percent of Indonesia's landmass with only 1 percent of its population (McGibbon 2004, 21). This section will briefly address issues regarding ore extraction operations of the Freeport Mine before moving to a larger discussion of the national government's program of transmigration, which is designed to alleviate crowding in other islands while influencing local culture and demographics.

Copper deposits were first discovered in West Papua by Jean-Jacques Dozy in 1936, although this information was not reported to the outside world until he published a report in 1939. Earlier geologic explorations performed by the Dutch, British, Japanese and Americans had found oil reserves but Dozy's expedition was the first to survey the interior highlands (Leith 2003, 1). Officials of the Louisiana-based Freeport mining company became interested in

opening the site to extractive operations not long after the report's publishing but it was not until 1965, only a month after the deposition of President Sukarno by General Suharto, that the company moved into official negotiations. By 1967 the Indonesian government, which had still not carried out the Act of Free Choice, awarded the company a mining license good for 30 years, thereby making Freeport the first international corporation to operate in the Republic (2-3). Freeport's Erstberg (now closed) and Grasberg mine sites have provided huge revenues for Jakarta bringing the country out from the brink of bankruptcy. "Today, with estimated reserves of 50.9 billion pounds of copper and 63.7million pounds of gold, it operates the largest gold mine and the most profitable copper mine on Earth" (3).

Besides being a major point of contention for its extraction practices and environmental damages, the Freeport Mine, which reportedly "provided Indonesia with \$33 billion in direct and indirect benefits from 1992 to 2004, almost 2 percent of the country's gross domestic product," is also a major employer of the military and police forces, which it pays generously for 'security' services. These expenses were given in detail in a December 2005 article in The New York Times. The paper reported that "from 1998 through 2004, Freeport gave military and police generals, colonels, majors and captains, and military units, nearly \$20 million. Individual commanders received tens of thousands of dollars, in one case up to \$150,000, according to the documents." Freeport also spent copious amounts (some \$35 million) to provide the needed infrastructure for the armed forces while gifting 70 Land Rovers and Land Cruisers to military commanders. Contributions to paramilitary units also included \$200,000 to the police Mobile Brigade, which is regularly implicated in incidents of "extrajudicial killings, torture, rape, and arbitrary detention." The American-owned company's special treatment extends even further as individuals and their families, who by law are not allowed to receive personal contributions from

private companies, were given plane tickets and food allowances of up to \$100,000 per year, as well as other gifts and awards worth tens-of-thousands of US dollars (Bonner and Perlez, 2005). Although Freeport's stock values reportedly declined somewhat following the publication of the article, the mine is still in full operation and continues to employ the military and police to defend it, although exactly from what is unclear. Although the OPM has carried out a few strikes against the mine in the past, none have been of so great consequence as to warrant the extreme level of paramilitary presence and 'protection' employed by Freeport Indonesia.

As previously mentioned in Chapter 2, the idea that large groups of people be relocated to ease population pressures was part of the original Dutch colonial scheme. By 1940 the Dutch had relocated some 200,000 people to Lampung, in southern Sumatra, as well as to Kalimantan and Sulawesi. After independence the Indonesian national government continued with this initiative with the twofold goals being to "avoid further population growth on the overpopulated islands" and "to bring about the better utilization of the potential of the Outer Islands" (Donner 1987, 46-47). Furthermore, the government believed that, "By relieving the pressure on densely populated land, soils that are of marginal economic use could be returned under ideal conditions to afforestation. Thus, more protective forests could be used to fight erosion by acting as reservoirs of humidity, and so forth. By moving large numbers of people to neglected forest areas, arable soils could be taken into agricultural production, providing food and income for the cultivators. Properly executed, such a policy could well lead to a better and more protective use of the nation's natural resources" (43-44).

The Indonesian Government's 1960 Basic Agrarian Law guarantees ownership rights to traditional landowners only over lands that had yield, thus lands left fallow in preparation for future field shifting, as well as traditional hunting lands, were claimed by the government

(Budiardjo and Liong 1988, 50-51). Major land grabs are a common practice of colonial governments and Indonesia has proved no different. Following the securing of its claim to West New Guinea, Jakarta began a government-sponsored program of transmigration which has changed the demographics of the territory greatly. The state-sponsored program of transmigration was, “designed to maximize national development through exploiting the rich natural resources of the outer islands and plentiful supply of labor in Java” (McGibbon 2004, 15). This plan could also accomplish another goal in a province plagued by security issues. “Expanding the flow of transmigrants into Irian Jaya was seen by some people high in the Indonesian government as a way of building a ‘human fence’ along the PNG border and effecting a drastic change in population balances to deal with ‘security problems’ (Bell, Feith, and Hatley 1986, 548). From the other side this plan is seen by many Papuans as an extermination order to reduce opposition to Jakarta by strategically depopulating the land of its indigenous inhabitants (McGibbon 2004, 18).

Those eligible for state sponsorship are mostly farmers from Java, Madura, Bali and Lombok, Sumatra, Kalimantan, and Sulawesi, while the program itself covers six sectors, namely: food crop farming, estate farming, animal husbandry, fish-pond farming and fishery, manufacturing industry, and mining. The majority of the program’s emphasis, however, has been on the first two farming categories of natural resource exploitation (Donner 1987, 47-50). “From 1964 to 1999 nearly 250,000 households—or over 500,000 people—have been settled in Papua, living in more than 200 settlements or villages built by the government. Slowly but surely these transmigration sites have developed into towns with rapidly increasing populations” (Scott and Tebay 2005, 603-604). Funded in large part by the World Bank and foreign-owned private businesses (Bell, Feith, and Hatley 1986, 548) whose revenues from oil and gas sales that

probably came from West Papua, the government-sponsored program of transmigration has not been the foremost vehicle for the constant in-flow of Indonesians into West Papua. Although the transmigration program was to conclude with the implementation of special autonomy it is apparently still in operation.

While the efforts of the national government have succeeded in relocation large amounts of people “It was ‘spontaneous’ or unsponsored migration that had the greatest impact. Indeed, for every transmigrant that relocated to the province from 1970 to 2000, nearly three unsponsored migrants also resettled there. Despite the enormous controversy that transmigration provoked in Papua, the market trumped the state as the main generator of population movement into Papua. In fact, the total number of unsponsored migrants settling in Papua had exceeded 560,000 by 2000. The growth of unsponsored migration continued to accelerate during the 1980s and 1990s. From 1990, a threefold increase occurred. Since 1998, it appears that these trends have continued largely unabated” (McGibbon 2004, 23). Although their fares were not paid for by the state, these voluntary transmigrants were encouraged by the central leadership and in 1977 “Irian Jaya was named a priority destination” (Bertrand 2004, 152). Easier modes of travel, particularly on passenger ships, have allowed for larger numbers of spontaneous migrants to travel to Indonesia’s eastern-most province.

Calculating demographics in West Papua, and Indonesia in general, is an exercise that borders on futility as population estimates put forth by various publications report very different figures for the same year. The *Encyclopedia of the Stateless Nations* estimates that in 2002 there were approximately 2,228,000 total residents in West Papua with indigenes numbering about 1,160,000 or 52 percent. The other 48 percent is made up of Indonesians with the Javanese and Balinese accounting for about 21 percent, Madurese 16 percent, Ambonese 5 percent, South

Sulawesis 4 percent, and other Indonesians 2 percent (Minahan 2002, 2052). On the other hand, an East-West Center Policy Study by Richard Chauvel and Ikrar Nusa Bhakti puts the non-indigenous population in West Papua at about 35 percent (772,684 people) of the area's total number of inhabitants (Bhakti and Chauvel 2004, 2-3). This percentage is from an estimate of a total population of about 2.1 million whereas an account by Jacques Bertrand lists an approximate total of 2.6 million with 1 million of that sum being transmigrant residents (about 38 percent) (Bertrand 2004, 152). Despite inconsistencies in census data reported in various analyses, all of the literature does point out the massive explosion of immigrants as the number of non-indigenous residents in 1960 was just 2.5 percent (18,600) of West Papua's population, but by 2000 they constituted at least 35 percent (736,700)" (Watson 2005, 482) (Bhakti and Chauvel 2004, 2-3). Although the demographic statistics vary by publication they all point to the fact that West Papuans are quickly being marginalized and soon risk becoming a minority in their own land.

Over the years urban centers have received the greatest portions of migrant Indonesian settlers. Jayapura, formerly known as Hollandia to the Dutch and still called Numbay by the local indigenous peoples, numbered between 50 and 80,000 in the 1970s, however estimates for the city's population in 2000 numbered 200-300,000. Other urban centers such as Timika and Sorong are also believed to have their total number of residents quadruple in the same time span while overall the Papuan population changed little due to high infant mortality and overall poor health (Bertrand 2004, 152).

With unrestricted growth taking place in urban centers, indigenous Papuans have been relegated to the fringes of Indonesian society. This trend looks as though it will continue as the number of new arrivals steadily increases. "The central government had actually fixed a target of

1.7 million, which would have rendered the Papuans a minority in their own province” (Bertrand 2004, 152). While West Papuans are becoming a minority in their own lands in terms of population proportion, they have also come to be marginalized in the private sector and public service, as recently arrived Indonesians tend to dominate small businesses and local administration. “The majority [of new comers] are better educated and have better developed skills than the locals and come quickly to play a dominant role in society. They excel in trade, services, construction and contracting in West Papua. All government offices and private companies have come to be dominated by migrants” (Scott and Tebay 2005, 604). Even qualified indigenous West Papuans have been left looking for work as “This trend was reinforced by corrupt practices by which migrants controlling access to new positions hired friends and families over local Papuans. As a result, Papuans found themselves relegated to their traditional means of livelihood, isolated from the cities and decreasing in numbers” (Bertrand 2004, 152).

One of the biggest examples of a company preferring to bring in non-native workers, rather than hire local laborers with the same skills, is the American-owned mining operation Freeport Indonesia (FI). FI has imported numerous laborers to fill unskilled and semi-skilled positions. For example, migrants from Java and Bugi were brought in to drive taxis and trucks, despite that fact that local residents were competent to perform such jobs. Prior to 1996, only about 670 of Freeport’s 17,308 employees were West Papuan, however, the company has reportedly increased this number by some 46 percent after riots in March of the same year demanded more locals be hired (Ondawame 2006, 119). If these hirings (which would total about 308 workers) did indeed take place, then the indigenous workforce employed at the mine would number approximately 978, and would still make up less than 18 percent of the

company's total personnel. "This bias in the allocation of jobs has become one of the main factors fuelling widespread social resentment in the region" (119).

The national government has also shown bias for transmigrant communities in the territory as evidenced by its slanted distribution of development funds. In 1974 the total amount of rice produced in West Papua was a mere 900 tons. By 1990, government subsidies had helped this number to increase almost fifty-eight times, to a total of nearly 52,000 tons. While rice cultivation takes place mainly in transmigration areas, no subsidies were provided the production of the local staple, sago (Bertrand 2004, 152). "Of a budget of \$34 million (compared to estimates of \$600 million in revenue from exports from the province), most of the funds in 1990 were allocated to administrative costs (67 percent), roads (10 percent), and transmigration (8 percent). The few agricultural development programs were all aimed at transmigrant communities, while Papuans were recipients of national Indonesian programs and slogans with little impact on their daily lives" (151).

In the government's view, West Papua could possibly hold up to half of Java's population although some constraints exist, however this has not stopped them from previously stating that all those who oppose the transmigration program should be labeled as separatists and enemies to the government to be exterminated (Donner 1987, 50). Such official statements showcase the national government's ulterior motives, couched within a program that is designed to have tremendous benefits for the Indonesian state as a whole. While decreasing population pressures in the nation's crowded centers and maximizing the use of existing resources, the fact that the rate of transmigration to West Papua is 88.4 percent higher than to other areas along with the obvious support to transmigrant communities over indigenous groups, has brought charges that implementation of the transmigration program in West Papua is specifically designed to

dilute the population, cultures, and even gene pool of the indigenous Papuan peoples. This internal immigration scheme has been used as a tool of internal colonialism, “to secure Indonesian political and social dominance in an economically crucial area. The result is the political and social marginalization of the Papuans and ultimately a process of cultural genocide. In 1985 the Indonesian Minister of Transmigration said ominously that the goal is to “integrate all ethnic groups into one nation,” so that “different ethnic groups will, in the long run, disappear,” and there will be one kind of man, the Malay race” (Ondawame 2006, 115-116).

Special Autonomy

President Suharto’s military regime fell in 1997 as political tensions in Indonesia boiled over and the Asian market economy took a major downturn. His final deposition and the new government’s calls for reform allowed for new, more liberal laws, and an era of supposed reform. This allowed for greater political freedom in West Papua in a time that has become known as the ‘Papuan Spring,’ and effectively marks the end of West Papua’s integration as a single province. The period following Suharto’s reign of terror was the greatest era of freedom ever experienced by the Indonesian people in general and led to a revival of calls for a free West Papua. Eager to cast off the image of the previous brutal military dictatorship Presidents Wahid and his successor Habibie were tolerant of shows of indigenous culture, and allowed the election of the Papuan Presidium Council as something of a de facto indigenous government. Bans on demonstrations and flag raisings calling for independence were also lifted. However, “The openness of this era was never backed by a real intent within the Indonesian government to seriously consider West Papua’s secession from Indonesia” (Bonay and McGrory 2004, 444). Calls for reconciliation and national dialog for peace in West Papua eventually led to the passing of the Special

Autonomy Law of 2001. Rather than an honest attempt at problem solving or conflict resolution, the granting of special autonomy was an offer made with hopes that it would appease and placate dissatisfied citizens so that they would no longer seek independence. Bonay and McGrory further point out that “Special autonomy approaches the ‘Papuan problem’ as a problem of development, with the assumption that it can be resolved by increased revenue and decentralized governance” (ibid.).

Two conventions of the Second Papuan Congress (dubbed the Second Congress in recognition of the first such Congress which was convened in 1961, prior to the Indonesian invasion) were held in Jakarta to consider the needs of the Papuans. This group made a series of demands to the Jakarta government, including a renewed call for recognition of the unilateral declaration of independence issued by the first Papuan Congress, and that the New York Agreement and the Act of Free Choice be repealed (Ballard 2002, 467). Such open statements against Indonesian sovereignty were new and this conference provided a major boost to the independence movement. Attendees also recognized the election of officials to the Papuan Presidium Council, the new and universally recognized de facto government. The President was Theys Hiyo Eluay, a Sentani chief, elected chairman with Thomas Beanal, an Amungme, as vice-chairman. Neither of these elected officials had a spotless record in the eyes of the people, as they had worked with Indonesia in various ways to bring about their own personal success. However they quickly gained respect. It is also interesting to note the election of Thaha Al Hamid, a Muslim Papuan from Fakfak, as the Secretary-General of the Presidium (Chauvel 2005b, 69). Apparently desires for independence have spanned the divide of religion in some cases, although his views are not espoused by all indigenous followers of Islam.

The Autonomy Law was drafted by a board of West Papuan academics and political leaders with Provincial Governor JP Solossa leading the committee. Although rejected by many West Papuans who sought for independence members of the drafting committee “perceived the Special Autonomy...to be an option in so far as the core Papuan problems were addressed. In other words, Special Autonomy should allow the substantial political issues that underline the ongoing antagonistic relationship with the central government to be addressed peacefully,” (Sumule 2003, 356). Included in the law were provisions for an upper house of parliament in the provincial government. This body was to be given power to control the placement and number of military personnel in the province. This is especially important to note since most of the human rights abuses have been carried out by the armed forces and their strong presence has been a constant point of dispute. Other legal stipulations allowed for a system of preferential employment for Papuans, since Indonesians had almost always been chosen over locals, as well as an end to the controversial transmigration program. The law further “included clauses protecting and reinforcing Papuan values and culture, substantial devolved power to the province, and proposed that 80% of revenue be retained by the provincial government” (Bertrand 2004, 158). Two of the most symbolic portions of the law were the lifting of the prohibition of the flying of the Morning Star flag, which would be allowed to fly alongside the Indonesian national flag (but only as a ‘cultural symbol’) and the renaming of the province from Irian Jaya to Papua.

The Papuans flew in the face of Indonesian logic when the masses rejected the autonomy bill, often referred to by them as ‘otonomi,’ even though they were not really given a choice. While some West Papuans agreed that special autonomy was a positive change that could lead to eventual independence and was acceptable as the best alternative under the circumstances, a seeming majority resisted the very idea from the start. “Opposition to special autonomy stems

from a lack of faith in the Indonesian government, born of experience. Opponents also point out how Papuan objectives for the plan – expanded self-rule – were vastly compromised in negotiation on the final legislation and that the drafting process did not respect for the right of the people to participate in decision making about issues that impact directly on their welfare and security” (Bonay and McGrory 2004, 444). Even throughout the drafting process, which was being carried out by West Papuans, the proposal was met with firm opposition and protest (Bertrand 2004, 159). In the minds of many West Papuans the only goal is the immediate withdrawal of Indonesia, not a glorified, yet still colonial state. This sentiment was echoed by Theys Eluay who, in noting the Presidium’s position on the bill, said: “The people [indigenous Papuans] have rejected any kind of autonomy. We want our independence. We are not Indonesian. Our culture, our skin, our hair are so different. We will never be part of Indonesia” (Program, 2001).

Despite their support for special autonomy, members of the drafting committee did not leave independence out of the question. “Special autonomy is not to be used to eliminate the hope for independence that has been aired in various circles of the Papua people. Special autonomy must be used precisely for positioning and channeling the aspirations for independence in a legal, peaceful and dignified political format to achieve a thorough solution for the problems of the Papuan people” (Sumule 2003, 356). Governor JP Solossa, who led the drafting committee, was member of the previously mentioned group of 100 that confronted President Habibie and demanded independence, and the first draft of the special autonomy law included provisions for the ‘rectification of history’ and the possibility for a new referendum. Unfortunately this draft would not be passed by the national legislature and underwent several

emendations before being passed on 21 November 2001 and officially implemented on 1 January 2002 (see Sumule 2003).

Many of the possibilities that special autonomy could have offered to the West Papuan peoples were undone when President Megawati Sukarnoputri, who signed the bill into law, failed to enact major portions of the law. Instead she explicitly worked contrary to its spirit by enforcing a 1999 law dividing West New Guinea into three separate provinces (Irian Jaya, Irian Jaya Barat, Irian Jaya Tengah) (Timmer 2004, 410). This move was immediately resisted as “The fragility of social stability in Papua was demonstrated in September 2003 when a decision by Jakarta that split Papua into three separate provinces led to violent communal clashes in Timika, the capital of the new central Irian Jaya province (Bonay and McGrory 2004, 445). While the bestowal of autonomy had wrought new and stronger hopes for an independent West Papua, or at least a greater degree of self-rule through devolution of legislative powers, the government moved to quell separatist sentiments while creating more mid-level bureaucratic jobs for trans-migrant Indonesians. Although the law dividing the province has been annulled by Indonesia’s Constitutional Court it still remains officially intact (“Papua in Confusion,” 2004). Although only one new province was formally created, making a total of two in West Papua, this territorial division has only frustrated indigenes and exacerbated desires for independence – quite the opposite result to their original aims. Recent reports state that there is now talk of dividing the half-island territory into as many as four full fledged provinces, (Papua, South Papua, Southwest Papua, and West Papua) even though the original number of three was never met (Somba 2008). This plan has also received severe criticism from locals including “the Reverend Socrates Sofyan Yoman, general chairman of the West Papuan Baptist Church, who called the move to split Papua further a divide-and-rule tactic by Jakarta. ‘There is no rationale behind it.

The only aim is to divide Papuans and gain favours with some of the local elite,' he said. He added: 'Dividing Papua will not bring prosperity. It will bring more problems and corruption. What we need is an honest and balanced discussion with Jakarta on how to solve Papua's problems'" (West Papua Report-"Indonesian Central" 2008).

Besides the unconstitutional dividing of West Papua into separate sub-national administrative divisions and the possibility for further partitioning, special autonomy has also been labeled as a failure on many other fronts. In an August 2007 presentation to parliamentarians in Canberra, Agus A. Alua, Chairman of the Papuan People's Assembly in West Papua, the body created by the special autonomy law for local government, reported that human rights violations had actually increased in the 5 years after implementation (Alua 2007, 2). Furthermore, the local parliament promised by special autonomy was not created until four years after the initial implementation of the law. Moreover, the West Papua parliament still lacks authority in regulating provincial affairs. Alua further points out that the local parliament is far from an exclusively Papuan institution and that "Local parliament members' work [is] more concentrated on political party than focus[ed] on Papuan people's need for protection and empowerment." He also pointed to problems within the central government in Jakarta, stating that it "lacks the political will" to fully implement the special autonomy law and that disagreements between military and central government on how to be the law is to implemented only hamper efforts. The military also continues to play an antagonistic role as it supports pro-Indonesian militia groups – including radical jihadist elements, has framed the OPM for crimes committed by the military, and purposely created false information for the National Intelligence Institution. Paramilitary elements have also created greater instability by overseeing illegal businesses like prostitution and illegal logging and fishing. Despite these activities the numbers

of the armed forces increased substantially and still received orders from administrators in Jakarta, instead of decreasing and being placed under the direction of the provincial government (5-7).

The unofficial repeal of special autonomy also led to a renewed crackdown on Papuan expressions of independent aspirations, which then put many members of the Presidium into hot water. Presidium President Theys Eluay was assassinated by Special Forces troops, ironically after having attended an amicable dinner at a Special Forces army base. On the way home he was abducted, his driver having escaped, and the next morning his tortured body was found in the driver's seat, starved of oxygen due to a plastic bag having been placed on his head – a trademark of Special Forces murder tactics (Ballard 2002, 474).

This bid to suppress desires for independence has also led to the re-banning of the Morning Star flag and harsh retribution for those who possess, and especially raise, the red, white, and blue ensign. Although Flag raisers are not usually shot in the act, as seems to have been the precedent before the 2001 legislation, several have been jailed for terms longer than deserved by their 'crime.' The ban to keep international media outlets from entering the province, so as not to bring in unwanted attention from negative press reports, remains in place while citizens still need special travel documents in order to travel to other areas.

Special autonomy has not made any significant changes in West Papua because it has never truly been implemented. Implementation of special autonomy was the desire of a few powerful elite groups within West Papua and does not really reflect the views of average people (Ondawame 2006, 131). The few portions of the law that have been applied have been implemented irregularly and inconsistently at best, but most of the government-enacted policies put in place since the law's passing have gone completely against both the spirit and letter of the

law. Special autonomy is a failure on all fronts and has not led to decreased violence nor silenced desires for the re-separation of West Papua. This is in large part because the special autonomy initiative was designed as a measure of economic pacification, which sought to buy out dissent by means of a provincial name change and monetary benefits, rather than a sincere attempt to resolve the longstanding conflict. It is clearly visible that “special autonomy [had] not been devised to serve the interests of the Papuan communities or through consultation with the people it affects (Bonay and McGrory 2004, 445).

Even within the confines of the 2001 law Indonesia has latently employed many of the same domineering tactics to keep West New Guinea firmly within the grasp of Jakarta and the rest of the state. For instance, the acceptance of independence symbols as ‘cultural symbols’ is an attempt to devalue their meaning and reengineer independence aspirations. Such tactics, combined with the legal violations listed above, are reminiscent of the days of Suharto’s New Order and are potentially damaging to the government’s attempt to improve its image, both at home and abroad. As John Ondawame states: “If Jakarta persists in continuing with the old paradigm of control through coercion, they cannot hope to sustain good relations” (Ondawame 2006, 133). An earnestly implemented plan for regional autonomy and a greater amount of self-government for the residents of West Papua would undermine the initial process of integration as it would weaken the state’s absolute control. Decreased ability to control its peripheral province threatens Indonesia’s first stated value of national unity, one of the five points upon which the entire state is based (131).

Reform and Democracy

Bhakti and Chauvel's Policy Study for the East-West Center discusses how Jakarta's handling of West Papua has, as in cases of violence as well as tolerance, garnered results opposite of their original aims to quell dissenting desires for self government. They further show that Indonesia's continued resolve to maintain West Papua in its case of nationalist trophies, even if it requires the use of force. This is unsettling as Indonesia asserts claims that it is now reformed and truly democratic Republic. As Ron Crocombe states: "Democracy is such an 'in' word that one has only to throw it into a debate to negate all other views. It is also used so loosely that its analytical value gets ever more compromised. Perhaps it is time for us to look more deeply at the details of the forms of government in the region and elsewhere. Most countries in the world describe themselves as democracies despite radically different forms and practices. But one common assumption is that the voter determines the policies and practices of the government. It is increasingly a myth" (Crocombe 2003, 226).

Indeed, a closer look at reform policies is needed but in cases where self-determination has been replaced by forced integration – no amount of reform will satisfy. "With the Indonesian democratic transition in 1998, the popular appeal of the nationalist movement became clear. Democratization could have begun a period in which ethnonationalist appeals would be diminished, as institutions became better vehicles for the representation of interests. Yet, in the case of Irian Jaya, Indonesian democratization led to a resurgence of Papuan nationalism" (Bertrand 2004, 153). A more democratic government has not, however, become a better vehicle for the people to voice concerns and this is primarily due to the institutionalization of a system that only recognizes national political parties. In a state where the government-approved mantra states that maintaining existing boundaries is priority one, no nationwide party would risk its

very existence by supporting initiatives for a renewed act of self-determination. It is no wonder then that democracy has not brought great change in West Papua as local concerns are superseded by national party politics.

Although the days of military dictatorship are gone, democracy in Indonesia, and thus West Papua, is still a work in progress. A more democratic Indonesia appeals to Western powers but does not guarantee that human rights will be maintained or respected, especially in the country's peripheral areas, where the flow of information is much easier to control. The Indonesian military has shown in the past that it is vehemently resolved to direct the dissemination of information regarding its conduct as it killed five Australian journalists covering the invasion of East Timor in 1975 (Star-Bulletin 2007), while the ongoing ban of all foreign media and censoring of domestic news services in that territory show that the rights allotted to the citizenry do not include freedom of speech or press. Although the killing of journalists has not recently taken place in West Papua such staunch determination is apparent in contemporary West Papua and many others, including activists, have paid with their lives.

Incidents like the September 2004 murder of Munir Said Thalib, the human rights campaigner, who was an outspoken critic of the military's oppressive tactics in West Papua and Aceh, show that the reform of the central government is far from complete. Thalib's orange juice was laced with arsenic by an off duty airline pilot on a flight to Singapore and ultimately the Netherlands, where he was to pursue a doctorate in international law and human rights at Utrecht University. Unlike many instances in West Papua in the past, this high profile case has been investigated with two conspirators finally sentenced to 20 years apiece; however, many questions linger about connections between the schemers and the national intelligence agency, which is believed to have ordered the assassination ("Pilot" 2005). Such tactics to maintain the

integrity of the state may never come to an end as their cessation only leads to outspoken nationalism and secessionism in West Papua. This highlights the fact that Indonesian sovereignty in West Papua is not based on the consent of the governed. “Jakarta does not significantly depend on the consent and cooperation of West Papuans to maintain the occupation, but on the diplomatic, military and economic support of international elites. In turn, these elite allies depend on key social groups to carry out their policies in support of Indonesia’s occupation” (McLeod 2002, v). Rather than concede defeat to inferior elements, as well as lose access to exceedingly vast reserves of resources, Indonesia will continue to keep its claim on West Papua by any means necessary. As Swiss political philosopher Jean Jacques Rousseau said: “To yield to physical force is an act of prudent necessity, not of will” (Hughes 2003). As long as the people of West Papua are forced into integration with the Republic of Indonesia, there will be resistance, even though it may not always be violent.

While this chapter by no means claims to be an exhaustive review of West Papua since its forced integration into Indonesia, it easily shows that inclusion into Indonesia has done much more for the greater state than for the West Papuan territory and its peoples. As coercion was necessary to bring the arrangement to pass, it will continue to be required to make the relationship last. A true and binding referendum regarding West New Guinea’s political future is needed to allow the people the previously withheld opportunity for self-determination. Such a prospect would lead the people to vote in favor of the formation of their own, independent, state, or possibly even to withdraw from the global political system.

Chapter 4

Independence, Free Association, or Something Else?

Although there has been much discussion regarding the possibility of creating a free and politically independent West Papuan state by means of decolonization, there has been far too little said as to what must be done to bring such an arrangement about and what such an entity might actually look like. I will begin by outlining a few of the steps necessary to redress the tremendous shortcomings of the 1969 referendum, the most important of which is the need for dialog both within the Indonesian state between West Papuan and central government leaders, as well discussion in larger, global, forums, particularly the United Nations. This chapter will then outline some of the possible challenges that might face West Papua, should an independent state be constructed, after which I will touch on other possibilities, besides the institution of a state model of government and authority, looking briefly at options for free-association and then at non-state options. Throughout this discussion I will examine how indigenous utterances of ‘merdeka’ might be satisfied by each of these options.

National Dialog

Attempts at creating a national dialog within Indonesia have never fully materialized into meaningful discussions for a peaceful future or an introspective look by the government as to what drives indigenous grievances against that state. The first attempt to engage in such a dialog was made by President Habibie, the first president elected after the fall of Suharto. President Habibie had promised to arrange talks with West Papuan leaders but failed to follow through, so in February of 1999, 100 representatives of four major West Papuan activist groups preempted the President and journeyed to Jakarta where they met with the Chief Executive and other

officials at the presidential palace. The delegation, led by Theys Eluay and Tom Beanal, demanded immediate independence with a UN supervised interim government established no later than March of the same year. After hearing the demands as read by Tom Beanal, head of LEMASA, the Amungme people's association, "Habibie was so shocked and worried by the audacious demands that he actually burst into tears" (Elmslie 2002, 255-256). The imminent independence of East Timor coupled with the explosive demands for West Papuan self-governance frightened the leader as he was faced with the possible disintegration of the state. Even considering such depositions would bring great shame upon the leader and would effectively end his political career. After regaining his composure the President responded with a reply in three parts, aimed to at least temporarily deflect the bold demands for independence. Habibie first quoted from the Christian Bible saying "...forgive them because they know not what they are doing," after which he told the representatives, "I am not a robot." The President concluded by encouraging the delegation to "Go home and think about it..." (Wewo 1999, 4). The West Papuan representatives had seen a window opening in the Papuan Spring and acted quickly, but possibly with too much haste.

Indeed, the window for such open dialog closed quickly, although subsequent offers for talks have been made, any and all possibilities for independence have been repeatedly and explicitly rejected outright. In 2006, faced with increasing violent uprisings in Indonesia's portion of New Guinea, President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono offered talks focused on the province's implementation of special autonomy but also stated, "The sovereignty of Indonesia over Papua is final... There is no dialogue on the Papuan independence, no dialogue for the so-called historical review – but we are prepared to have a dialogue on the implementation of regional autonomy" (Collins 2006).

Reviewing the history of the debate over a national dialog it seems that neither side is truly interested in what the other has to say. The national government reaffirms sovereignty and treats political disgruntlement as an economic malady, mistakenly thinking that unequal dispersion of wealth is the primary factor behind West Papuan discontent. West Papuan leaders, on the other hand, want a forum where they can air their grievances and desires for an independent state without fear of violent or punitive reprisals and see that the only way for such assurance is for the international community, led by the UN, to monitor a new referendum. Without such supervision West Papuan leaders fear that the ongoing cycle of broken promises will only continue as the Indonesian paradigm has never changed, despite the government's talk of special autonomy. Although international bodies of governments, including the Pacific Islands Forum and the United Nations, have voiced support for special autonomy initiatives in West Papua, the unyielding stances of both sides has created an impasse. Realizing the potential for international pressure to aid in breaking the stalemate West Papuans have long sought out help from outside sources but with less than overwhelming results as Indonesia's political clout has held would-be overseas supporters at bay. This is especially true in the modern age when the threat of terrorism reigns supreme in international political discourses. As Indonesia is home to the more Muslims than any other state and has itself experienced the dread of terrorist attacks, the government's assertions that the unity of the state is imperative to national security holds major sway in international political venues.

International Dialog

Support from the international community, including NGO's and other organizations, as well as national governments, is one of the key ways that issues regarding West Papuan desires

for rectification of history can be realized. As the internal struggle in West Papua has not posed a serious threat due to fragmentation and lack of resources, “An independent state... would be likely to result from political pressure on Jakarta, rather than a military victory by OPM” (Osborne 1987, xv). Realizing this, the delegation that directly demanded independence from President Habibie also called for “an international dialogue between the government of the Republic of Indonesia, the people of West Papua, and the United Nations,” should no reachable solution be found (Elmslie 2002, 256). The UN is an especially important setting for the rectification of history and the restoration of indigenous rights as it was the site where Indonesian recolonization of West Papua was finalized.

While the realpolitik of international affairs has led leaders of some states, like Papua New Guinea to refrain from criticizing Indonesia’s handling of affairs in West Papua, pressure from outside sources has led to major policy shifts in Indonesia in the past. Jim Elmslie points out that Australian support for the inclusion of independence in East Timor’s referendum helped to create a reverberating wave of policy change to, “where it seemed *obvious* that East Timor should be independent” (253, original emphasis). Jakarta quickly dropped earlier-held rationale that insisted that independence for the former Portuguese colony would tear the state apart and instead, began to cite high administrative costs, indigenous desires, lack of UN support, and ethnic and religious differences as reasons why Indonesia ought to allow the territory the option for self-government, (ibid.). Although there were other factors at play, such a direct stance from closely neighboring and/or allied states does have a strong impact on the way that Indonesia conducts its affairs.

Unfortunately, it is too often the case that governments take up advocacy of such issues long after the general population has supported such ideas. In April 2006 the Australian polling

group Newspoll conducted a survey in which 77 percent of Australians said they would be in favor of West Papuan self-determination including the option of independence. Six percent were against and the remaining 17 percent were either undecided or did not know (“New Poll” 2006). Slow reactions from national governments to popular opinion follow safe lines of diplomacy as “Countries do not risk their diplomatic ties with the ‘old state’ by a formal recognition to the supposed ‘new state.’ Most external parties, especially countries, would prefer to see a peace resolution to the secessionist conflicts” (Wardhani 2004, 9).

Popular opinion is overshadowed by previously adopted government positions when determining foreign policy. In Australia’s case successive governments have adhered to the ‘Barwick doctrine’ since the mid-1970s which objects to the creation of small states within Australia’s vicinity. Simply stated the Barwick doctrine stems from a 1975 letter from Australia’s then chief justice Garfield Barwick to Governor-General Sir John Kerr. Approval of the letter’s opinions led Kerr to dismiss the government of Prime Minister Gough Whitlam. The views contained in the letter were subsequently adopted by the conservative parties that benefitted from Whitlam’s sacking. Along with Barwick’s view that “governments are responsible to both houses of Federal Parliament,” (Cassin 2003) came the idea that “the emergence of small states in the eastern archipelago [was not] in Australia’s interest” (Chauvel 2005a, 119). Knowing of Australia’s reticence at having small and ‘unstable’ neighbors Indonesia regularly re-articulates its sovereignty over, and handling of, West Papua is strictly an internal matter that should not be questioned by other states. Thus stated, foreign governmental support for a renewed plebiscite or other supportive stances would be perceived by Jakarta as an affront to Indonesian sovereignty. Dr. Peter King points out, “the problem with constantly expressing support for Indonesian integrity is that such statements are construed in Jakarta as a

blank cheque to carry out oppression of the would-be un-integrated.” King solidifies this point by quoting the current President of Indonesia Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono who, while previously serving as Coordinating Minister for Political and Security Affairs, said, “Any separatist movement must be crushed, and we have the international support to maintain our territorial integrity” (King 2004, 152).

In seeking to gather support for their cause West Papuan leaders have often sought a circle of support from within the Pacific region, although African nations have also been tapped as enclaves of endorsement based on principles of African solidarity. Leaning towards the Pacific is consistent with history given that the Netherlands was one of the original conveners of the South Pacific Commission (now the Secretariat of the Pacific Community or SPC) and that many Pacific Island states and territories have supported, in one form or another, West Papuan aspirations for independence. Nauru and Vanuatu helped West Papuan representatives attend the 2000 Pacific Islands Forum meeting held in Kiribati (Bhakti and Chauvel 2004, 49) and American Samoa’s representative to the United States Congress Eni Faleomavaega has been an outspoken advocate for West Papua both in the US House of Representatives, as well as at his posts as senior Member of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs and as Chairman on the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific, and the Global Environment. In 2002 New Zealand, through Foreign Minister Phil Goff, offered to mediate between the Indonesian national government and West Papuan groups. Jakarta rejected the proposal from Wellington, “but a similar offer made by the government of Vanuatu in mid-2004 elicited some interest” (Watson 2005, 485) although nothing ever eventuated. On several occasions West Papuan leaders have lobbied the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) to grant observer status to West Papuan representatives. Vanuatu has long been the only government to openly support West Papuan independence, going

so far as to allow for the creation of an OPM office in Port Vila. The capital city will also be the site for two other major events in April 2008, but as they are contemporaneous with the writing of this thesis, their final significance will not be known until a later time.

In late April the Pacific's sleeping political giant, the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG), is set to open its new Port Vila Secretariat offices. Comprised of the governments of PNG, Solomon Islands, Fiji, and Vanuatu, the MSG is expected to grant observer status to New Caledonia and West Papua. "A common foreign policy platform is likely to be developed at the MSG HQ from now on and then presented to the Pacific Islands Forum" (Bohane 2008). While the MSG as a whole, with the exception of Vanuatu – which has occasionally faltered, has resisted prior attempts by John Ondawame and other West Papuan representatives to be given access to the MSG this turn of events, should they eventuate as media outlets have suggested, could encourage other Pacific states to establish more pro-West Papuan policies, while creating a strong and united front of resistance to the intrusion of Indonesian hegemony into the region. If the MSG proceeds with its plans as speculated then the Group may become one of the most important forces in Pacific regional politics. "Although the MSG has been around for 20 years, it seems only now to developing its teeth" (Bohane 2008).

As the MSG has received most of its financial backing from China, it is possible that this relationship could garner support for West Papua from the world's most populous country. China is often seen as looking to Pacific states for support of its sovereignty over Taiwan, as well as opportunities for trade (Wesley-Smith 2007, 8-9). However, China has also recently received copious amounts of international criticism due to its oppressive policies in Tibet and would be less likely to speak out against similar practices in Indonesia.

In the beginning of April 2008 Port Vila, with some hesitation from the national leadership, hosted the largest ever meeting of West Papuan leaders who engaged in discussion aimed at overcoming factionalism and to single out a visible leader, as there has been no obvious head since the assassination of Theys Eluay. The event was covered by Ben Bohane, a well known photo-journalist and longtime advocate for West Papua. Bohane's report was published by Pacific Magazine's online Daily News. "Part of the Vanuatu conference seems to be an attempt to bridge the divide and bring all groups back under the OPM banner. It is being seen as the most significant meeting of West Papuans since the OPM was formed in 1964" (Bohane 2008). Bohane further quotes Paula Makabory, a human rights worker now living in Australia for reasons of personal safety who said, "The key to this summit is unity so all Papuans can come together under one roof, one umbrella and achieve our goals. Our people at home don't care who is the leader, they just want us to unite and be more effective" (Bohane 2008). Such unity within the independence movement would be unprecedented and might create greater leverage in reopening the proposed national dialog. Although the fractured, informal, and anti-organizational traits of the independence movement has counter-intuitively worked as a strength by not allowing state forces to eliminate the entire group (see Kirksey 2002, 96), such characteristics are not conducive to deliberation or litigation with the structures of states and multi-state organizations which are firmly based in principles of bureaucracy, order and transparent chains-of-authority.

While actions to unify the independence movement under the leadership of known individuals will create visible targets for suppression, those likely to fall in the crosshairs will also be the subjects of greater media scrutiny, despite the state's best efforts at silencing the journalists and news outlets. Bhakti and Chauvel show that the atmosphere created by the

terrorist attacks of both 11 September 2001 on the United States as well as the Bali bombing of 12 October 2002 has allowed Indonesia to garner support for taking a stronger, more repressive, stance against 'separatists' in West Papua. The Bali bombing was carried out by elements of Jemaah Islamiah and is especially relevant as the 202 casualties included 88 Australian citizens, 24 Britons, seven Americans, and many more foreign nationals. International support for Indonesia to act in the interests of security dissipates though when incidents of murder or other violent occurrences perpetrated by the state or known terror groups such as Jemaah Islamiah and Laskar Jihad take place without prosecution (Bhakti and Chauvel 2004, 48-49). Knowledge that international scrutiny may implicate apparatuses of Indonesia's government or military forces is one of the main driving factors behind the blanket ban on foreign media within West Papua and the close monitoring of local journalism.

In a separate article Ben Bohane cites OPM leader John Koknak who claims, "there are more than a dozen jihad training camps across West Papua, many of them close the border with PNG and Australia. Koknak says that his warnings have gone unheeded as authorities in PNG and Australia "prefer to trust the Generals in Jakarta" (Bohane 2007). If such camps do exist and are supported, or even tolerated, by Jakarta, then Western governments, whose foreign policies have been warming towards Indonesia in the past few years, should hesitate to continue to support programs for joint armed forces training or sales of even the most dilapidated military equipment. Unfortunately, besides Bohane's investigation, little is publicly known regarding the presence of these terror groups, while the United States has recently reestablished joint military training and the Russian Federation has engaged in the sales of surplus military equipment (McDonald 2007, "Russia Signs" 2007).

Besides the terrorist groups already mentioned, several pro-Indonesian militia groups, similar to those still troubling East Timor, do exist in West Papua and their activities have been documented. These groups have engaged in violent activities in the past and are prepared to rise up in favor of the Republic should West Papuan independence aspirations near fruition (see Elmslie 2002, 253). Fears of violent and protracted retaliation like those in East Timor combined with the knowledge that Indonesia will not budge on its West Papua claims unless severe pressure is levied by the foreign states have focused the call for international dialog to the main political forum of the greater international community – the United Nations.

Support by the UN has long been sought by West Papuan activists as the organization was responsible for the handover to Indonesia and is seen as the main site where self-government can be retaken. As mentioned above, the delegation of West Papuans that demanded independence from President Habibie in February 2009 listed international dialog with Indonesia, West Papua, and the UN as the only acceptable alternative to immediate independence, (Elmslie 2002, 256). Although the UN has not formally responded to West Papuan attempts to table reconsideration of the acceptance of the Act of Free Choice the recently approved Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples holds many keys that could be useful in asserting the need for redress of this topic and many other issues. For nearly half a century West Papuan activists and leaders have been demanding a redress of the circumstances that led to Indonesian sovereignty. The landmark Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, for which Indonesia voted in favor, now outlines these demands as indigenous rights.

The Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Several portions of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples have the potential to bring great change to both West Papua and indigenous peoples the world over if fairly implemented. Key elements of the declaration include: rights to self-government or autonomy and protection against forced integration, respect of traditional systems of land ownership, the right to practice and revitalize culture, religion, and medicine, as well as the imperative that states provide redress for previously committed wrongs. The vagueness of the wording is telling of the difficulties in passing the declaration, but clauses throughout the document seem to stress that redress is to be interpreted as compensation for damages rather than restoration of lands. Passed by the General Assembly after many years of debate, the declaration maintains the UN's state-prefering program as evidenced by Article 6 which maintains that "Every indigenous individual has the right to a nationality" (United Nations General Assembly Resolution 61/295 2007, 4). Article 46 further reiterates the organization's goal to uphold the supremacy of existing states and their boundaries as it pronounces the rights outlined in the declaration are to be coterminous with the existing state and that the tenets of the declaration are not to be "construed as authorizing or encouraging any action which would dismember or impair, totally or in part, the territorial integrity or political unity of sovereign and independent States" (11).

Articles Three, Four, Five and Eight outline indigenous rights to sovereignty, self-government, and autonomy, although these rights are guaranteed within the framework of the greater existing state rather than means by which territories or groups might create new and separate political entities. According to the document though, indigenous peoples are to be allowed to govern over local and internal matters (Article Four) as well as to "maintain their own political, economic, cultural, social, and legal institutions as well as to participate – if they so

choose – in the affairs of the state” (Article Five) (4). Several portions of the document, including the articles just mentioned, note the importance of forming institutions representative of the indigenous people and Article 18 notes that “representatives [are to be] chosen by themselves in accordance with their own procedures” (6). Thus, indigenous modes of selecting authorities, such as the Amungme system of Menagawan selection mentioned in the introduction, are to be allowed to continue in local government. As article 36 says that, “Indigenous peoples, in particular those divided by international borders, have the right to maintain and develop contacts, relations and cooperation” (10) such sovereign indigenous organizations could have the potential to become international entities if recognized by both governing states. Indigenous interstate organizations could be created amongst the Asmat and many other peoples in New Guinea as well as throughout Africa, Asia, and the Americas where traditional boundaries are not reflected by contemporary geo-political border lines.

Article 8 declares that “Indigenous peoples and individuals have the right not to be subjected to forced assimilation or destruction of culture.” While the forced political integration that brought West New Guinea under Indonesia has been a major point of contention, this article seems to be directed towards issues of acculturation through compulsory means. The second portion of the eighth article further addresses the imperative for rectification by requiring states to provide effective mechanisms for prevention of, and redress for, “actions that have deprived peoples of their “integrity as distinct peoples,” as well as acts that have dispossessed them of “lands, territories or resources.” Article Eight furthers this by stating that “Any form of forced assimilation or integration” is to be redressed by the state (4). The means by which ‘effective mechanisms’ of redress might be implemented are left unsaid but, besides decreasing the ability of government control, official recognition by states that wrongs have been committed might fuel

discontent, aspirations for independence, or other forms of political dissent. For this reason states might be reticent to enact the principles of the declaration. Such concerns likely prompted the United States, Canada, New Zealand, and Australia to vote against the declaration in the General Assembly.

Several other portions of the declaration are also dedicated to protections of culture including the “right to practice and revitalize customs and traditions” as well as to maintain and protect historical and archaeological sites (Article 11) (5). Article 13 further covers cultural rights allowing for indigenous peoples to “revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures, and to designate and retain their own names for communities, places and persons.” Article 14 continues the theme of cultural perpetuation by allowing for indigenous societies to establish their own school systems and administer education in their own languages and by their own methods (*ibid.*). Articles 25 and 31 of the declaration also cover aspects of cultural and spiritual rights that are to be granted to indigenous peoples and societies. Although it provides numerous protections, the declaration lacks specific measures to be undertaken if these imperatives are not upheld by the sovereign state.

Article 40 of the declaration states that “Indigenous peoples have the right to access to and prompt decision through just and fair procedures for the resolution of conflicts and disputes with States or other parties, as well as to effective remedies for all infringements of their individual and collective rights” (10). One of the major weaknesses of the declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is that it does not provide for alternative assistive measures when states are unwilling to fulfill the duties assigned by the declaration. A great lack of faith in the Indonesian state to impartially fulfill such responsibilities has led West Papuan leaders to call for

the UN itself to oversee actions of redress by means of a renewed plebiscite; however, the declaration's emphasis on the responsibility of the state to provide the means and mechanisms for rectification and the UN's reticence to get involved in 'internal affairs' upholds the organization's state-centered agenda and format. Such decisions are in harmony with the precedent set in previous resolutions and declarations which are in opposition to "partial or total disruption of national unity and the territorial integrity of a country" (United Nations General Assembly, Resolution 1514, 1960, 67).

A major challenge to be faced when decolonizing West Papua, besides convincing Indonesia, the UN, and the rest of the international community that decolonization is necessary, is to find or create appropriate modes by which a territory-wide referendum can be carried out. Important here is the need to identify appropriate modes of governance to be offered on the ballot. The following regarding how and which forms a referendum and possible self-governance in West Papua might take are meant by way of suggestion only. Insistence upon their fulfillment by the author or any others outside of the indigenous population of West Papua could constitute yet another form of colonialism in the Pacific region.

Political Independence

Although often put forth as the best option for decolonization, the idea of political independence itself is a problematic one. Although the option for full self-governance has often been treated by many as a sort of panacea, fit to cure the ills of colonialism, or a metaphorical silver bullet, fashioned to slay figurative werewolves of injustice, domination, and exploitation; most newly decolonized independent states have been faced with numerous and severe difficulties from the beginning. An independent government in West Papua may not fully satisfy

the desires voiced by 'merdeka' and so may be subject to any number of these challenges.

Although a plethora of potential crises exist, this portion will address only a few, looking at general themes of identity and conditions in neighboring states.

While the creation of states based upon the identity of the nation was originally a Western ideal, several scholars have argued that a cohesive West Papuan nation has coalesced between groups and peoples over the years in response to Indonesian colonialism. David Webster has labeled the West Papuan community a 'notion-state,' also stating that, "It seems clear that in the minds of most West Papuans the imagined community of nation is already in place, that they are already a notional people, separate from Indonesia, and that no amount of reform on the part of the Indonesian state will alter this," (Webster 2002, 527). "This is not meant to suggest the Papuan nationalism is now a fixed and eternal identity," as this nationalism may depend on its construction of the Other to survive (527). Individual and group identities are flexible and can be activated or demobilized based on factors of necessity, oppression, or other needs. It is therefore entirely possible that the great ethnic diversity found in West Papua could lead to formation of differing identities if the primary Other (Indonesia), the resistance of which has seemingly galvanized the contemporary nation, were to be removed. An independent state would already face many typical challenges of emerging post-colonial state and these would only be compounded if local identities began to assert themselves as separate from that of the national body politic. Dissonant identities that label the national leadership, or certain cultural or ethnic groups within the newly formed state, as Other could eventually perceive them as just as equally foreign or oppressive as the Indonesians. Such identities might then reconfigure their interpretation of merdeka, to be used against the new government, just as West Papuans currently

resist Indonesia by using the phrase that bonded Indonesian freedom-fighters together against the Dutch.

Group identities seeking self-determination have historically been based on terms of primordialism and non-primordialism. Premdas defines as primordialism as similarities or differences in language, color, and cultural values (Premdas 1977, 70). Non-primordial reasons for the creation of group identity leading to desires for self-determination could be: shared history or social, political, or economic views and desires. West Papuan resistance is based both in primordialism, with all three principles being asserted to justify their right to self-determination, as well as in non-primordial terms. The non-primordial differences generally cited by West Papuans to not be integrated into Indonesia include the fact that West Papuans in general did not support or participate in Indonesia's war for independence and that they were promised their own state by the Dutch but were cheated at the Act of Free Choice by the Indonesians. In an independent West Papua, the potential for shifting paradigms of identity under an independent state outside of Indonesia would be ever present, as competing loyalties and identities might threaten the supremacy of the Western-based government. Nationalist, ethno-nationalist, religious, and other competing identities outside of the mechanisms of the state are not uncommon to the region and have previously manifested themselves in the nearby states of Papua New Guinea and East Timor.

Papua New Guinea has been faced with many alternate preferences outside of the given state structure since before independence in 1975. Three of the largest challenges to the authority of the PNG government have come from the Papua Besena group in the Australian territory of Papua, the Paliau movement (also known as Makasol or Wind Nation) in Manus Province, and the factions on Bougainville that eventuated into the largest and most protracted

conflict in the Oceanic region since World War II (see Wanek 1996, Premdas 1977). Even Indonesia's President Suharto felt urged to voice concerns over these movements as he worried that they were influenced by communists, (Premdas 1977, 82). In the case of Papua Besena challenges to the legitimacy of the state have come in response to the colonial policies of Australia, which consolidated the two formerly separate territories of Papua and New Guinea, (64). In Bougainville perceptions of internal colonialism by the new state as natural resource extraction benefitted the state and migrant communities greater than it helped the local peoples of Bougainville. Provinces, individually as well as in groups, have made many other threats to secede with one of the most recent occurring in 1994 as "the premiers of Manus, New Ireland, West New Britain and East New Britain prepared a constitution and a flag for the declaration of greater autonomy or independence of their provinces (with 500,000 people) as the Federated Melanesian Republic," (Crocombe 2001, 444). Clearly the authority of Port Moresby has not been universally accepted throughout the many archipelagoes that make up PNG. An independent West Papuan state might face similar challenges to its legitimacy, especially if the leadership of the state facilitates for unequal benefits from economic dealings (especially extractive practices), is unable to provide promised services, does not meet the expectations of constituencies, or overreaches beyond its powers. Newly formed governments in multi-ethnic states, especially in a place like West Papua where there is such great variation in levels of development, must tread carefully along very fine, often undefined, lines in order to satisfy citizens.

The case of East Timor (also properly known as Timor-Leste) is particularly relevant as it shares a history of forced integration with West Papua and is the only state to have gained independence from Indonesia. It should also be noted that both events were subject to extreme

violence. The many apparent similarities between West Papua and East Timor have led many activists to exclaim that ‘West Papua is the next East Timor.’

Since Indonesia invaded East Timor in 1975 the former Portuguese territory, which coincidentally also consists of half of an island, was plagued with violent oppression – much of which was aimed towards political dissidents, although many other civilians were also caught in the crossfire. As mentioned above, Indonesia reluctantly, then eagerly, allowed for political independence in East Timor, but only after a period of sustained international pressure with leverage even being exerted by Australia, the only Western country to openly support Indonesian sovereignty in East Timor (Elmslie 2002, 252). The face of political violence merely changed in the months both preceding and immediately following the ballot as armed militias, clandestinely supported by the Indonesian military, “pursued a ruthless scorched earth policy,” (Dunne and Wheeler 2001, 805). Before the United Nations or individual states could effectively react some 200,000 refugees fled to the mountains and thousands were killed (Bertrand 2004, 142). Australian eventually led an international intervention, dubbed ‘Operation Stabilize,’ and the mission is generally regarded as a success in its dual roles to restore security and provide humanitarian services.

Although the history and dynamics of the East Timor and West Papuan movements differ on many planes, one shared commonality between the two of them is the potential for extreme violence from pro-Indonesian militias. Two main factions have emerged to advance the national government’s charge to “eradicate what it calls the ‘Papuan separatist movement,’” (Scott and Tebay 2005, 606). Leaders of Laskar Jihad have confirmed the group’s establishment in West Papua in order to assist the government’s paramilitary forces and Eurico Guterres, the infamous militia commander from East Timor organized the *Front Pembela Merah Putih* (Red and White

Defender's Front) in the West Papuan town of Timika. Although the groups have not realized their full potential for violence, they are prepared to carry out the military's "dirty work," should it be necessary, and have created an overall atmosphere of fear, apprehension, and intimidation (606-607). The violence surrounding the vote which led to independence and exit of the Indonesian armed forces from East Timor was well noted by West Papuans and is another key reason why leaders demand that the UN not only monitor a new referendum but dispatch a contingency of peace-keeping forces as well.

Despite the overall success declared by international intervention forces in Timor-Leste, the fledgling state still faces urgent security issues as evidenced by the nearly simultaneous attacks on President Jose Ramos-Horta and former President and current Prime Minister Xanana Gusmao on 11 February 2008. Prime Minister Gusmao was spared injury but President Ramos-Horta was severely wounded, taking two bullets to the chest. The President was placed on life support systems and transferred to a hospital in Darwin Australia for treatment, although he returned to the capital city of Dili 69 days after he was attacked (Murdoch). The February 2008 attacks on the President of East Timor were not carried out by such a militant group but were led by native Timorese Alfredo Reinado. Reinado was motivated by a deep dissatisfaction with the new government, especially after government troops fired on a group of striking soldiers in 2006 (Doherty).

The presence of new factions employing methods of violent opposition to the state signals that political decolonization is no guarantee for peace or prosperity. With such a large number of varying ethnic and linguistic social groups, an independent West Papua could easily be drawn into a number of potentially dangerous conflicts, not the least of which could be sparked by the exploitation of natural resources, disagreements over traditional boundaries, pro-

Indonesian sentiments – especially from transmigrant settlers and militias, or identities formed in resistance to the new government.

Free Association

Free association is another potential future option for West Papua that has received a relatively small amount of attention or discussion. Under the auspices of free association, West Papuans could potentially exercise full self-government while still retaining constitutional connections to Indonesia allowing for the provision of certain, prearranged services. As discussed in chapter one, most of the freely associated states in Oceania rely on a metropolitan state, either the US or New Zealand, to provide financial support, defense services, and foreign representation when the associated state requires. Theoretically, free association for West Papua could follow either of the models currently used by the US and New Zealand, or could strike a path of its own to create a new system of associated self-governance.

The most readily apparent difficulty in establishing a compact of free association is the fact that such inter-governmental contracts are creations of bilateral negotiations. Indonesia has already proved a difficult bargaining partner and has defaulted on countless promises to West Papuans both in the past and at present. Therefore, a paradigm shift would have to occur in Jakarta before an agreement acceptable to both sides could be litigated. Even if Jakarta were to make such a commitment, it is still questionable whether free association would be beneficial to West Papua.

Compacts of Free Association are usually created for many reasons. New Zealand wanted to disband its colonial system but in an effort to “emerge from the process with a good reputation both internationally and at home,” was determined to “go to great lengths to avoid any

appearance of twisting the arms of Island peoples to accept decolonization,” (Bertram 1987, 22-23). The United States on the other hand has demonstrated a strong overreaching resolve to retain the former members of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (comprised of what is now Palau, Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands) in free association for strategic purposes, (Roff 1991, 66). In cases of states freely associated with both New Zealand and the US, citizens have easy access to the metropolitan

In the established colonial relationship of West Papua, the resources of the peripheral eastern-most province feed the core of the Indonesian state, centered in Jakarta on the island of Java. Under the current circumstances West Papuans gain little from their citizenship with Indonesia as opportunities for education, health care, and development are not easily available to the general populace. Unless drastic measures were taken by Indonesia to provide civil services, a continuance of relationships with Indonesia, even in free association, would likely benefit the indigenous West Papuan population but very little, on the other hand, the complete exit of Indonesia would allow indigenes access to their own lands and resources from which they had previously been exiled. If the commonly accepted forms of decolonization, full integration, complete independence, and free association, were rejected by the West Papuans at a territorial referendum, the question then remains, “so what instead?” (Wewo 1999, 41).

Something Else?

This thesis has previously outlined the many definitions espoused to utterances of ‘merdeka’ and shown that many people, particularly those relegated to the fringes of political discussions, desire more than a mere divorcement from Indonesia but independence from foreign-prescribed systems of government and bureaucracy. This does not necessarily mean a

complete abandonment of the state system, although that may also be desired by some. Either way, alternative options must be considered. It is the purpose of this section to propose alternative forms of government including: other forms of free association, non-state options, and syncretic governments blending customary and Western modes of authority.

Geoff Bertram, whose suggestion for the possibility of alternative options to commonly accepted modes of decolonization has greatly shaped this thesis, is one of the only academics to suggest potential forms that such non-traditional processes could end. Bertram's first suggestion that the "perpetuation of 'colonial' status, perhaps under another name" has been indirectly dismissed by West Papuans by the rejection of special autonomy while his second proposed alternative, the "voluntary switching by a dependent territory from one suzerain state to another" (Bertram 1987, 20), is, at least in the case of West Papua, farfetched in terms of practicability. Other sovereign states such as Australia would be more than reticent to accept a new territory, even under the terms of free association. The realization of a unified state covering the entire island of New Guinea, as per earlier plans drawn up by Dutch and Australian officials, is now also a highly unlikely solution as barriers of language and differences between well established governmental systems look to be unsurpassable. Such a creation would require two referendums, which if passed, would require the new state to essentially start from scratch. Even if the peoples of Papua New Guinea and West Papua were to agree to the formation of a single government entity, this option would require a vast amount of international backing and the very discussion of any form of government outside of that prescribed by Indonesia, without Jakarta's express approval, would be extremely unlikely.

A more workable form of government that would be easily accepted and recognizable by other states might be found in a blending of both traditional and state power structures. The next

few paragraphs outline the possible forms that a state government might take, while looking at varying degrees of the centralized authority. While these suggestions are purely hypothetical and do not even begin to touch upon the complex challenges that would arise should their implementation ever actually be realized, the main point is to create a system that allows for the peoples of West Papua to be, or at least feel, like they are in control of their own lands, destinies, and fates.

Creating a system that would satisfy the demands of such an alternative configuration would not be easy as there are great variations of customary modes of authority throughout West Papua. “The next challenge for Papuans is to formalize these aspirations and translate them into a genre that can be understood by the international community; to create a social and legal order that combines indigenous protocols of oration with written legislation,” (Kirksey 2002, 97). This would essentially entail the creation of a central state apparatus heavily influenced by a body, or bodies, of customary leaders. Such an idea is not new to the Pacific and inspiration on how to formalize the relationships between a bureaucratic state and indigenous systems might be found in models of the Great Council of Chiefs in Fiji or New Caledonia’s Customary Senate. In fact, such a structure already exists in West Papua under the current form of special autonomy which created the Papuan Presidium Council. Unfortunately, this body had become largely symbolic and devoid of any real power as the partial devolution of authority from the provincial legislature that was supposed to accompany the special autonomy package never occurred. The Presidium has now been marginalized to the status of a mere ‘cultural’ institution, just as West Papuan national symbols, at least those that have not been re-banned, are also relegated to traditional status.

As previously mentioned, the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples allows for the creation of sovereign or autonomous governing bodies by customary means. The potential for the creation of indigenous governing bodies goes beyond the Presidium. Individual social groups could become autonomous units, with the Presidium, or some other body, acting as a secretariat, congress, or regional forum for West Papuan groups to meet. An empowered customary body could provide checks and balances to the independent government by presenting the voices of indigenous social groups. Methods for choosing representatives would be left open to individual groups, choosing them by locally appropriate means as outlined in Article 18 of the declaration. The institutionalization of a power structure combining multiple traditions would require the formal recognition of customary groups by government mechanisms. Furthermore, representatives would need financial support and accommodations while attending proceedings, a burden which could not easily be borne by all groups. The idea for the formalization and bureaucratization of indigenous traditions is in direct contrast to some of the ideals surrounding merdeka, particularly if the scheme were forced upon those who did not desire to participate. One possible saving grace here would be the option for affiliation by affinity, whereby groups could associate or disassociate themselves with the greater state structure and its customary appendages.

One indigenous person suggests a different possible means whereby the power of the state might be decentralized. Obtained from a secondary source, the unnamed interlocutor outlines how “each of the approximately 250 indigenous groups in West Papua could become incorporated as a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO). In this hypothetical nation there would be loose guidelines laid out by a national parliament, but the authority to negotiate directly

with transnational corporations and foreign governments, for example, would be devolved to each tribal NGO,” (Kirksey 2002, 97).

I have modified the idea slightly further, in a system that would allow for almost complete local control of resources and lands. Keeping with the tenets of the Declaration on the Right of Indigenous Peoples that allows for the creation of sovereign or autonomous units, groups or confederations could be recognized as individual governmental entities that could then contract for the provision of desired services by the central government’s departments or ministries. Rather than NGOs, individual traditional social groups would be individually recognized by the central authority or could join with neighbors into larger confederations based on affinity or other strategic factors. Confederate or non-aligned communities would then be able to choose to accept certain offered government services, for example education, while opting out of others, such as overly invasive forms of natural resource extraction. Reality dictates that such government services would be accompanied by the cost required to provide them; therefore communities desiring services would have to find ways to cover at least part of the expense. Groups that choose to engage in commercial extractive practices would also need to require that those involved in the removal of resources create minimal impacts on neighboring communities, thus mining operations in the highlands are not to send untreated tailings downriver unless agreements have been made and terms for reparations set forth. Communities would also have to choose not to engage with the government, exercising the ability to opt out completely – a right not extended to them in the past. While this system may not be entirely realistic as it would require an organized and recognizable small central government with access to the entire territory and necessitate that groups, even in rural areas, make strong demands of commercial operators in extractive practices, it is a hypothetical basis for future possibilities.

Further complicating its organization is the previously mentioned desire that indigenes are trying to shake off government bureaucracy, however such a format of empowered bureaucracy might be acceptable.

In examining the indigenous notions of merdeka we have come to know that many use the term not as a means to express desires for the political independence of a new state but for the abandonment of Western state models and foreign methods of bureaucracy. Many factors complicate the realization of not forming a state as part of decolonization, not the least of which would come from the very agencies and states whose assistance would be required to terminate Indonesia's reign, as they would support precedential models for state-building in post-colonial territories. Self-described 'Papuan Tribesman,' Wiwa Wewo, a member of the Lani people, completely rejects the statist program of decolonization in his pamphlet *Just Leave Us Alone*. While Wewo admits that the creation of an independent West Papuan state may reduce suffering there, he maintains that "To grant West Papua independence is not the solution that will bring peace in New Guinea," (Wewo 1999, 40). Wewo's letter further points out what he sees as the destructive nature of globalization on tribal peoples and individually identifies churches, governments, aid organizations, and multinational corporations as the greatest enemies of indigenes the world over. Instead of decolonization resulting in the creation of a new government, Wewo proposes that all foreign entities leave West Papua and allow the people to live in ways that are familiar to them. In answering the question "so what instead?" which typically follows his proposition, Wewo answers "nothing," stating further that "nothing is typical to tribal people," (41). Wewo lived in the United Kingdom at the time of publication and found inspiration in the lyrics of a tune by Paul McCartney and John Lennon, who urged us to 'Let it Be.' He then penned his own suggestion:

If I am primitive, let me be primitive

If I am animist, let me be animist

If I am un-contacted/un-evangelised, let me be so

If I am poor, let me be poor

If I am starving, let me be starving

If I am naked, let me be naked

If I am in the jungle, let me be there

If I am illiterate, let me be so

If I don't know English, leave me knowing nothing about it

If I am not a Christian, let me be so

If I do not eat rice, do not drink medicine, that is fine for me

If I cannot drive, it is absolutely acceptable for me (41).

Wiwa Wewo provides a voice rarely heard as discussions on the future of West Papua are dominated by foreign academics and indigenous elites who favor a recurrence of the status quo by the formation of a democratic West Papuan state. Being located outside of orthodox discussions supporting Indonesian sovereignty over West Papua and heterodox opinions advocating for a free state, voices such as Wewo's are usually drowned out and relegated to spheres where alternatives to the predominant discourse remain undiscussed, (Kirksey 2002, 5). As heterodox opinions are rarely publicly voiced within West Papua, ideas such as those put forth by Wewo are even scarcer, particularly in English language sources which have been the primary basis for this study. If the threat of harsh reprisals to dissent were to be removed then further research would prove that preferences for a non-state form of decolonization are not

atypical, especially amongst people in rural settings, as many West Papuans simply desire to be left alone.

Tragically, the idea for the creation of a non-state entity resembles a hope bordering on romanticism. Corporations and states have acted nefariously and with impunity when faced with opportunities for easy access to profit-producing locales and in the case of West Papua, the abundance of natural resources may well indeed be a curse. A small government or non-government entity could potentially become prey for predatory capitalist ventures if not protected by outside sources. After examining the history of incorporation into Indonesia one cannot logically expect the level of benevolent altruism that would be required to keep such interested parties out to be freely offered. Nowadays even aid money is not given freely as “aid donors and international institutions such as the United Nations, World Bank, International Monetary Fund, Asian Development Bank, and European Union have the ability to impose a significant degree of influence through the conditions attached to their aid” (Kabutaulaka 2005, 299). Donors want to see something in return, be it transparent and ‘good’ or ‘stable’ governance or allowance of access to resources, especially in areas where bounties of the earth are plentiful.

Conclusion

This thesis reviews the common expectations of decolonization and the history of West Papua to demonstrate two main points. First of all, decolonization in West Papua was never completed. Secondly, the statist nature of the decolonization agenda does not allow indigenes to explore other options. In West Papua desires for independence, as voiced through utterances of ‘merdeka,’ would be best realized by the creation of a system outside of the bureaucratic world system of states. This desire challenges the long-held state building agenda that originated in the West and spread across the globe as European, and eventually American, capitalist endeavors and civilizing and christianizing missions became world-wide pursuits. Rejection of the superiority of Western and Weberian systems further questions the relevance of the assumed universal definition of ‘progress.’

The decolonization agenda, created by the United Nations and outlined in various resolutions, creates options for colonies to emerge from beneath the veil of colonialism as integrated provinces, independent states, or states in free association with their former suzerain. These options are statist in nature as they require that indigenous peoples continue to ‘progress’ along a preconceived linear continuum by incorporating into the global system either through dissolution into existing state structures, or the creation of new independent states. Even if indigenous peoples were to concur in their desires to form an unorthodox non-state political entity, they would still be required to engage in democratic processes in order for the outside world to validate their referendum. The presence of a large population of Indonesian migrant settlers further complicates the issue, as they have come to dominate urban society and international expectations demand that they be included in a referendum dictating the future of lands that are not theirs.

The forced integration of West Papua, explored in chapters 2 and 3, amounts to a continuing case of internal colonialism. The relationship was allowed as Cold War politics played a greater role in determining the fate of the West Papuan peoples than the severely deficient Act of Free Choice, in which indigenous representatives were coerced into supporting Indonesian sovereignty. As an integrated colony West Papua has become a military zone where semi-autonomous paramilitary forces duel for dominance and capital in order to supplement their budgets and ensure the continuation of their power. Furthermore, the exploitation of natural resources, especially the development of land for the benefits of Indonesian transmigrants, has displaced indigenes, relegating them to the edges of cities and towns. Those who openly resist Indonesian supremacy and sovereignty risk their lives. Untold numbers of casualties have not been officially reported.

The main vehicle for resistance has been the loosely organized Organisasi Papua Merdeka, which has now lasted some 45 years. The presence of Indonesians in West Papua, even before that country's creation and takeover of West New Guinea, has created a sense of West Papuan nationalism among many indigenes, thus making the statement "We are all OPM" a common answer to researchers trying to gauge the strength of the resistance movement. Although the OPM had previously resisted, although not exclusively, by the use of force in acts of violence, the movement as a whole has disassociated itself from such tactics and is now attempting to employ a more diplomatic approach in an age where violent struggles are easily deemed as terroristic, regardless of their merits. The current diplomatic approach seeks to create both national and international dialogs regarding West Papua's future and leaders continue to call upon individual states and the UN for international help in resolving the ongoing conflict.

The implementation of special autonomy in West Papua was supposed to allow for a large measure of self-government while also guaranteeing that the province receives greater economic benefits from mining and other extractive practices. The national leadership in Jakarta has again proven untrustworthy, as almost all of the tenets of the law have been unofficially retracted or simply ignored. International powers still support the special autonomy however, as it is easier to act on what is written on papers than question what is being implemented on the ground. While the initial draft of the special autonomy law could have eventually led to full independence, the failure to follow through with the tenets of the watered-down version show the fragility of Indonesia's grasp on the West New Guinea territory, as well as that of the state as a whole.

Although discussions about possible futures for West Papua remain entirely speculative they give a glimpse into what could be. Independence was originally the preferred method of decolonization and is still at times treated as a guaranteed cure for overcoming the legacy of colonialism. Difficulties in the recently independent neighboring states of East Timor and Papua New Guinea show that full self-governance is not the easiest solution. Armed elements still rebel against the government in East Timor, which is especially relevant as it is the only state to successfully repel the Indonesian state after a violent and forced induction into the national entity. In Papua New Guinea there have been several movements against the state, one of which – the Bougainville crisis – erupted into a full-scale war that lasted some 10 years. Not only have challenges against the legitimacy of the state been levied but the country's urban areas have been seemingly plagued with general law and order problems.

The unlikely fourth option that allows for indigenes to think outside of the bureaucratic structures of the state might allow for West Papuans to mix Weberian principles of government

and traditional modes of authority. This could result in a variety of decentralized authoritative bodies covering regions, confederations, or other groups of peoples. Such syncretic government systems would still employ a basic and identifiable central shape so as to be recognizable to foreign administrations while still empowering local entities in overseeing customary lands and laws. Some indigenes however, would prefer for foreign powers, including Indonesia, to simply leave without enforcing the implementation of a new state-based order. Kirksey believes that this view is widespread but has been buried under the dominating discourses of integration and independence.

To realize utterances for merdeka West Papuans must be given the opportunity to decolonize. In order for this to occur efforts for dialog should be supported both within the Indonesian state, as well internationally, particularly within the confines of the United Nations. Continued attempts to pacify West Papua's indigenous population will not reduce indigenes' desires for decolonization. An atmosphere of insurmountable impasses has developed during the few attempts at dialog, necessitating that international powers assist in resolving the dispute, despite protests from Jakarta. West Papuan leaders and activists have long been calling for the Act of Free Choice to be revisited so that a new ballot for self-determination can take place. Advocates for such an act must remember that true self-determination cannot come about if terms are dictated by outside interests or expectations. Therefore, a properly administered vote must be void of the constrictive and intimidating circumstances of the 1969 ballot and allow indigenous West Papuans to voice their desires for integration, independence, free association, or some other form of government.

Although the alternatives to the norms of decolonization have been relegated to places outside of the primary discussions on how to best decolonize West Papua, in this thesis I have

attempted to explore only a few of the many possibilities that such alternatives could bring. Furthermore, none of these options discusses the future of the constantly growing transmigrant communities; even though at least a portion of them would likely remain where they are should Indonesian internal colonialism finally come to an end. These ideas, unrefined as they are, are meant to suggest what could be and to encourage further research and discussion for the future of West Papua.

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