

Policy Studies 13

Plural Society in Peril: Migration, Economic Change, and the Papua Conflict

Rodd McGibbon



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List of Acronyms

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BBM	Bugis, Butonese, and Makasarese—shorthand for ethnic groups from South Sulawesi
BIN	Badan Intelijen Negara (State Intelligence Agency)
DPR	Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat (national legislature)
DPDR	Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah (local legislature)
FORERI	Forum Rekonsiliasi Rakyat Irian Jaya (Forum for the Reconciliation of Irian Jaya Society)
GKI	Gereja Kristen Injili (main Protestant church in Papua)
IFES	International Foundation for Election Systems
IKT	Toraja Family Association
IMF	International Monetary Fund
KKSS	South Sulawesi Family Association
MPR	Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat (People's Consultative Assembly)
MRP	Majelis Rakyat Papua (Papuan People's Assembly)
NGO	nongovernmental organization
NKRI	Negara Kesatuan Republik Indonesia (Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia)

NU	Nadhlatul Ulama
OPM	Organisasi Papua Merdeka (Free Papua Organization)
PDP	Presidium Dewan Papua (Papuan Presidium Council)
PNG	Papua New Guinea
TNI	Tentara Nasional Indonesia (Indonesian Defense Force)
UN	United Nations
YAPIS	Yayasan Pendidikan Islam (Islamic Educational Foundation)
YPMD	Yayasan Pengembangan Masyarakat Desa Irian Jaya (Foundation for Community Village Development in Irian Jaya)

Executive Summary

This study examines the ways in which large-scale migration and rapid economic change have resulted in separatist and ethnic conflict in Papua. Through a wide-ranging historical overview, this study outlines Papua's experience of socioeconomic change. In the first part of the discussion, I examine Papua's history of contact with the colonial and postcolonial state and the demographic shifts that resulted in an evolving plural society. The second part of the study draws on statistical data to describe the basic features of contemporary society. It identifies the main fault lines of class, ethnicity, tribalism, and religion along which conflict has surfaced in recent years.

The main argument advanced here is that rapid modernization and demographic change have resulted in the displacement and dislocation of Papua's indigenous population, fueling Papuan resentment and persistent demands for independence. Better-educated settlers have dominated the growing market economy and, in the process, sidelined Papuans from the resulting economic benefits. Large-scale flows of migration into the province have also sharpened Papuans' sense of shared identity. Together these processes of marginalization and mass migration have given rise to a collective sense among Papuans that they are facing a serious threat to their demographic and cultural survival.

This study supplements other research on Papua that has focused on the territory's troubled decolonization process in the 1960s and the emer-

gence of a Papuan political identity. While acknowledging the importance of these processes, I show how socioeconomic change—especially mass migration—represents a key element in explaining the contemporary conflict in Papua. If the earlier experiences of decolonization were constitutive of a distinct political identity, the alienating impact of Indonesian rule has galvanized Papuan opposition to the state while sharpening ethnic boundaries between Papuans and outsiders.

The study analyzes recent census data to show how hundreds of thousands of migrants from other parts of Indonesia have resettled in the territory since 1970 either through official transmigration programs or as unsponsored economic migrants. The rapid social change resulting from these processes has been experienced by Papua's indigenous people in terms of economic dislocation, growing pressure on resources, environmental degradation, and, above all, a sense of being overwhelmed by the influx of migrants.

The state's promotion of rapid socioeconomic change in Papua has been based on a dual strategy of exploiting the rich resources of the outer islands while promoting mobility from labor-surplus regions. This strategy has resulted in a major movement of labor into the outer islands. It has also encouraged the development of large resource projects as well as the entry of smaller commercial interests into the extractive industry in Papua. This resource mobilization strategy has had interlocking economic and security objectives. Not only is it meant to boost national development, but such policies have sought to stimulate economic interactions across ethnic and regional lines and thereby promote a sense of belonging to a single nation. Movements of labor—both official transmigration and unsponsored migration—are intended to mix people together and dilute primordial ethnic affiliations seen as a threat to the unity of the state.

Far from enhancing national integration, however, the government's policy of modernization has spurred local resistance. The resource mobilization strategy was translated on the ground into what many Papuans saw as a resource grab by outsiders. The security forces' role in protecting resource companies against local demands for traditional rights has become a deep source of resentment. Belying the assimilationist aspirations of the Indonesian government, modernization has sharpened ethnic divisions in Papua and undermined the territory's integration into the state. In fact the growth in Papuan resentment has given rise, not only to a sense of ethnic discrimination by the state, but to a specific set of griev-

ances related to indigenous rights and the encroachment of external forces on traditional lands and resources. Papuan leaders argue that the government has pursued a deliberate policy of populating the province with migrants in order to dilute Papua's indigenous culture and overwhelm its people. These criticisms have been at the core of Papuan agitation for independence internationally as well as the mobilization of pro-independence support domestically.

But rapid social change has not only fueled Papuan nationalist mobilization. It has given rise to ethnic and tribal tensions in the province as well. Large-scale migration and rapid economic growth have been accompanied by increasing competition for land and resources between settlers and local communities, heightening ethnic divisions in Papua. Not only has Papuan/settler conflict surfaced, but divisions within the Papuan community itself have been sharpened as internal migration and local competition over economic opportunity have exacerbated traditional tribal rivalries.

Recent state policies have deepened such ethnic and tribal tensions. In fact, key elements within the state have exploited communal and tribal sentiments by adopting a divide-and-rule strategy to weaken Papuan resistance to resource exploitation and central government rule. The most controversial element of this strategy has been the attempt to create new provinces—a measure that has set off a scramble for resources and competition over new government positions with tribal overtones. In fact, both the Suharto regime and post-Suharto governments have pursued highly divisive policies in Papua that have themselves been a major source of conflict. Such divisive forces have contributed to persistent social conflict in Papua.

Now there is a threat that social conflict could trigger a widespread outbreak of communal and ethnic conflict as in other regions of Eastern Indonesia. So far Papua has proved relatively resistant to efforts to widen the conflict. It remains unclear, however, whether further inflows of settlers will overwhelm the mechanisms for social management of ethnic relations that have so far kept conflict from spiraling out of control.

This study concludes with a set of recommendations. The most pressing task before the government, I conclude, is to improve basic welfare and public services for the vast majority of Papuans who live in isolated communities. Without an improvement in basic education in remote areas, Papuans will continue to be marginalized from the economy, exacerbating local resentment and alienation. Furthermore, the government should

abandon plans to resume a large-scale transmigration program to Papua and commit to consulting with the provincial government and local leaders in developing a comprehensive population policy for Papua. This policy should take into account the deleterious effect that mass migration has had on the indigenous people.

Plural Society in Peril: Migration, Economic Change, and the Papua Conflict

A popular stereotype of Papua, Indonesia's easternmost province, centers on the image of a changeless land of isolated tribes caught in the Stone Age. While echoing age-old dreams of exploration and the conquest of unknown lands, this National Geographic image obscures the social and political processes of change that have shaped contemporary Papua. The coastal and lowland peoples of Papua have long had interactions with outsiders—encounters charted in the voyages of seafarers, slave traders, and missionaries to the territory during the precolonial age. Such contacts were extended from the middle of the twentieth century when European missionaries and explorers began to make inroads into the interior. The intensification of Dutch colonial rule over the province and mass conversions to Christianity in the twentieth century, particularly in the coastal areas, resulted in lasting social, economic, and political changes in Papuan society.

The transformations produced by these contacts, however, were to be overshadowed by the impact of Indonesian rule on the territory beginning in 1963. By the 1970s, Papua was undergoing a far-reaching process of socioeconomic change that dwarfed anything in its previous history. The modernizing Indonesian state promoted policies that resulted in an expansion of urban settlements, strong economic growth in both mining and nonmining sectors, and an influx of migrants,

*By the 1970s, Papua
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reaching process of
socioeconomic change*

particularly from Java and Eastern Indonesia. Migration has had a profound impact on the demographic composition of the province and its ethnic mix. East Asian capitalism—more than European Christianity and colonialism—transformed the economic base and social composition of the territory.

The government has defended these transformations as necessary to modernizing Papua's traditional society, developing its economy, and integrating the territory into the nation-state. In terms of growth and trade figures, Papua's economic performance during the decades of the New Order was impressive. And since 1998, in the wake of the collapse of the Suharto regime, economic and social change has continued largely unabated. The special autonomy law for Papua, enacted in 2001, has given Papua an enormous increase in provincial revenues, spurring continued economic growth.

These changes, however, have had a highly unsettling effect on Papua's indigenous population. This study charts the main socioeconomic changes that have occurred in Papua and traces the evolution of tribal, ethnic, and class cleavages. The main argument advanced here is that rapid modernization and demographic change have resulted in the displacement and dislocation of Papua's indigenous population, fueling Papuan resentment and the demand for independence. Better-educated settlers have dominated the growing market economy and, in the process, sidelined Papuans from the resulting economic benefits. Large-scale flows of migration into the province have also sharpened Papuans' sense of shared ethnic and cultural identity. Together these processes of marginalization and identity formation have given rise to a collective sense among Papuans that they are being overwhelmed in their own lands.

In addressing these themes, this study highlights how rapid socioeconomic change has deepened ethnic grievances underpinning recent demands for independence. In the post-World War II period, Dutch colonial policy in Papua was explicitly based on creating a native class of administrators that could take over once independence was granted to the territory. President Sukarno, however, launched a nationalist campaign to reclaim the territory as part of Indonesia. At the height of the Cold War, Sukarno's agitation proved successful. The United States pressured the Dutch into agreeing to transfer the territory under United Nations Transitional Authority. Under the agreement, an Act of Free Choice was held in 1969 to determine the territory's political status. In what was wide-

ly regarded as a breach of Papua's right to self-determination, 1,025 hand-picked Papuan leaders voted unanimously to support integration with Indonesia. These events not only resulted in a deep sense of betrayal among Papua's Dutch-educated classes but created an evolving sense of political identity in the territory.

While the territory's troubled history of decolonization is a key element in the emergence of Papuan nationalism, this study focuses on how socioeconomic change has contributed to Papuan resentment and ethnic divisions. In particular, it charts the main socioeconomic and demographic shifts in Papua that have been translated by Papuan intellectuals and activists into a critique of Indonesian government policy based on a notion of ethnic disadvantage. This critique has evolved into a specific discourse about indigenous rights centering on the notion that Papua's indigenous population is facing cultural extinction. These ideas, spurred by rapid change and displacement, have been at the core of an evolving Papuan nationalist discourse that has resulted in growing agitation for independence internationally and mobilization of pro-independence support domestically. Thus the call for Papuan independence is not only couched in terms of self-determination and the betrayal of Papuans' right to sovereignty. It also draws on a broad discourse on indigenous rights and the central claim that Jakarta's policies threaten the survival of Papua's indigenous peoples. A key element of this discourse is an account of the encroachment on traditional land rights by the forces of the modern state and economy.

Another key source of grievance has been the systematic human rights violations perpetrated by the armed forces as well as claims of institutionalized racism from Indonesian officials toward Papuans. While these themes are central to any understanding of the Papua conflict, the systematic rights violations by the Indonesian state have been a dominant theme in writings on Papua. This analysis, therefore, focuses on the consequences of socioeconomic change. The arguments advanced here are hardly novel. Commentaries on Papua have often noted the unsettling impact of migration and rapid economic change on the indigenous population. But rarely are such commentaries backed up by strong empirical data. Furthermore, accounts of contemporary Papua tend to discuss migration and rapid economic change in terms of their impact on rising indigenous resentment toward the Indonesian state, largely neglecting the other consequences of rapid socioeconomic change, such as its impact on

the internal dynamics of Papuan and settler communities.

In seeking to address these gaps, this study presents a historical sociology of the Papuan conflict. Its focus is both historical and empirical. In the first part of the study, I trace Papua's history of contact with the colonial and postcolonial state and the demographic shifts that have resulted in the evolution of a plural society. The second part of the study draws on statistical data to describe the basic features of contemporary society. This approach has the merit of producing a multilayered picture of conflict in Papua. It not only illustrates how rapid social change has brought about growing indigenous resentment toward the state but also sheds light on contemporary ethnic relations and tensions between Papuans and non-Papuans. Thus I examine how large-scale migration has triggered growing competition for land and resources between settlers and local communities. The historical perspective adopted here illustrates how ethnic relations were initially mediated through the colonial state, a theme critical to understanding the contemporary dynamics of ethnicity in Papua.

At the same time, however, this study's close examination of contemporary ethnic and religious relations reveals mitigating factors in the rise of communal conflict in the province: the demographic makeup of settler and Papuan communities, the role of local leaders in urging restraint among their followers, the peace efforts of NGOs and church organizations, and the nonviolent strategy adopted by the pro-independence movement. Taken together these factors add up to an array of cross-communal linkages that have so far made Papuan society relatively resistant to efforts

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munal violence*

to widen ethnic and religious conflict. As we shall see, however, it is unclear how long Papuan society will be able to contain an outbreak of large-scale communal violence in the face of efforts to foment conflict.

Another important theme relates to the divisions *within* communal groups, particularly those in the Papuan population. The data reveal a remarkable level of diversity within both the settler and the Papuan communities. Intracommunal tensions represent an important fault line of conflict often obscured in the focus on Papuan challenges to Indonesian rule. The remarkable tribal diversity of Papuan society has in fact long been the source of traditional rivalries. Extensive migration of tribes within the province from traditional lands to centers of economic growth has

resulted in persistent intra-Papuan conflict. State policies have also tended to heighten these rivalries and provoke growing tensions within the Papuan community. Not only have the armed forces sought to exploit tribal differences in seeking to impose their control over the province, but the government's redrawing of administrative boundaries has set off a scramble for resources and competition over new government positions that has often had tribal overtones.

Finally, this study examines the class structure of contemporary Papuan society—especially the relationship between an ethnically stratified workforce and recent conflict in the province. I review recent statistical data to illustrate the remarkable level of settler dominance of the cash economy. The vast majority of Papuans remain at the margins of the modern economy due to educational disparities between Papuan and settler communities. These patterns of exclusion can also be related to differences between the entrepreneurial culture of settler groups and the persistence of traditional exchange relations among Papuan communities. The ensuing dominance of the economy by settlers has given rise to a strong sense of ethnic disadvantage among Papuans that figures prominently in recent Papuan nationalist discourse. In the heavily populated interior, where the sense of isolation and disadvantage is most strongly felt, resistance to Indonesian rule has been strongest.

The other salient element of the class structure has been the expansion of a Papuan bureaucratic elite since the late 1990s following calls for affirmative action. New opportunities for Papuans have expanded dramatically, not only as a result of the policy of promoting Papuans into senior positions, but also because the government has redrawn administrative boundaries and doubled the number of district governments. These developments, combined with new revenues flowing into the province under the special autonomy law, have raised the stakes among Papuans and intensified competition for access to state resources—adding yet another dimension to the conflict in the territory.

Social, economic, and demographic data on Papua, however, are often difficult to obtain. Not only are challenges posed by Papua's forbidding terrain and the scattered nature of local communities, but fieldworkers have encountered major problems each time a census has been carried out, leading to significant gaps in data collection. The 1961 survey conducted by the Dutch colonial administration was cut short by the transfer of the administration to a UN transitional authority.¹ The 1971 census by the

Indonesian government, which had exercised sovereignty over Papua for less than two years, was limited to urban areas. Fieldwork for the 2000 census was undertaken at the height of pro-independence mobilization and census takers encountered much suspicion in local communities. Indeed in some areas locals refused to provide census information. These problems, however, are not insurmountable. Sufficient data are available to illustrate certain broad trends in Papua that pertain to demographic change and socioeconomic development. The 2000 population census, notwithstanding its gaps, includes ethnic and tribal data for the first time—providing us with a wealth of new information on the territory’s ethnic composition.²

Colonialism, Christianity, and Papua’s Plural Society

Let us begin with a brief account of the colonial period. The last decades of Dutch rule were particularly important not only in the evolution of Papua’s plural society but also in setting the basic patterns through which Papuans have been incorporated into the state. It was a period, moreover, in which migration into the province, mediated through the state and trading networks, gave rise to ethnic relations between locals and outsiders that continue to shape contemporary society and its main fault lines of conflict.

Papua began appearing on European maps in the sixteenth century. The Sultanate of Tidore, in contemporary North Maluku, claimed parts of the territory in the precolonial period when seafarers and slave traders from the sultanate made regular voyages to coastal Papua. These contacts were reciprocated as Papuans from Biak and other coastal regions traveled

Early Dutch colonialism in Papua, however, made the lightest of imprints

to Tidore and other parts of the Malukus in search of prized Chinese porcelain and other goods for trade (Rutherford 2003: 16). The Dutch East Indies Company had made agreements with Tidore throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to ensure that Papua remained a bulwark against the Spanish and

English (ibid.). The company had no interest in developing the region: control was a way of discouraging other European trading interests from making contact. By 1828, Dutch colonial officials had claimed sovereignty over Papua through an agreement with Tidore. Early Dutch colonialism in Papua, however, made the lightest of imprints. As Danilyn Rutherford notes: “From the day that the Netherlands claimed [Papua] . . . Dutch pol-

icy makers tried to create, at the lowest possible price, an adequate impression of Dutch authority” (p. 182). In asserting sovereignty, the Dutch aimed to deny their colonial rivals a foothold in the territory. Colonial officials viewed Papua as an economic backwater whose vast resources were located in remote and inaccessible regions. With strategic denial the main justification for colonial rule, the Dutch exercised only notional control over the territory throughout the nineteenth century. Papua was at the outer limits of the state. Colonial government was limited to a few select outposts on the coast.³

In the early decades of the twentieth century, however, the forces of Christianity and colonialism began to extend into coastal Papuan society. Dutch Protestant missions had been established in coastal areas in the last half of the nineteenth century. After decades of mixed results, the missions found success in the early decades of the twentieth century as mass conversions to Christianity occurred in coastal communities. By 1935, Protestant missionaries were claiming that 50,000 people had been converted, while Catholic missionaries, concentrated in the south of the province, claimed over 7,000 converts (Garnaut and Manning 1974: 10). These conversions were part of a complex process in which Papuan coastal societies were being increasingly exposed to the outside world by technological change—particularly in the form of steamships and increased trade in feathers and other goods the territory had to offer.

The growth of Christian missions in coastal Papua went hand in hand with the expansion of the colonial government in the same regions. In fact, the mass conversions that swept the region in the early twentieth century followed the establishment of a permanent government presence in coastal Papua (Rutherford 2003: 30). By 1907, it was internal Dutch policy to plan for greater involvement in the territory (p. 185). By 1931, virtually all coastal communities had churches and subsidized schools, and colonial law was being asserted in many of these areas (*ibid.*). As the colonial administration expanded, the justification for colonial rule was extended beyond the strategic denial that had underpinned early Dutch claims to sovereignty. Across the archipelago the colonial state had adopted an “ethical policy” designed to improve the natives’ welfare—a policy that dovetailed with the civilizing mission of Christian proselytizers in Papua. Furthermore, Dutch control over Papua became linked in Holland to proposals being put forward by Dutch imperialists to establish a settlement of Eurasians and Dutch in the province (Penders 2002: 100).⁴

The changes brought about by the intensification of colonial rule accelerated in the 1930s with the growth in commercial activities as coastal communities became integrated into the cash economy. A Dutch resources company (NNGPM) began to drill for oil off the Sorong coast while a Japanese cotton-producing company (NKK) set up operations in the northwestern part of the territory. These developments were to have a significant impact on coastal communities. Rutherford (2003: 186, 191) has noted how Biaks were the prime recruits for the Dutch oil fields and Japanese plantations, leading to an “exodus of young Biaks for wage labor.” While these developments represented the arrival of a modern market economy in Papua, the external forces of Western colonialism, Christianity, and capitalism remained limited in their geographic reach. Before the 1950s, in fact, Papua’s vast interior remained largely unaffected by the profound changes taking place in northern coastal communities. Papua’s forbidding terrain frustrated attempts to penetrate the interior. Indeed it was not until the late 1930s that the first European expedition discovered the Baliem Valley, a fertile region of thriving tribal communities engaged in crop production in Papua’s highlands. Papua’s fertile conditions sustained large populations scattered across the territory’s vast landmass and spawned a remarkable world of linguistic and cultural diversity. The sheer diversity of Papua’s indigenous peoples is one of the most salient aspects of contemporary social and political life in the territory.

The large population settlements in the interior, however, had little contact with Europeans prior to the 1950s. Although the colonial government set up official posts, it was the Christian missions that represented the principal agents of change. And Christianity was not all that they brought. The missionaries built settlements across the territory, and their contributions to Papuans’ health and education paved the way for their remarkable proselytizing success. By 1950, in fact, Dutch colonial authorities estimated there were 160,000 Papuan Christians (Government of Netherlands 1951: 11).

Dutch dreams of colonial expansion, however, were tempered by fiscal pressures in the metropolitan center where the overriding concern was to maximize wealth extraction from the colonies while minimizing costs. In fact, while government posts were expanded in coastal Papua throughout the first half of the twentieth century, colonial administration was exercised indirectly. By the 1930s, fewer than 200 Europeans lived in Papua, only 15 of whom were civil servants (Schoorl 2001). The Dutch administration was

staffed almost exclusively by the *orang amber*,⁵ non-Papuan settlers drawn mainly from Christian communities in the Maluku and North Sulawesi (Penders 2002: 89). Mission teachers were often from these regions, as well, with instruction usually undertaken in Malay (Garnaut and Manning 1974: 10). As was the case throughout the Dutch East Indies, ethnic Chinese traders played a crucial role in commerce in Papua. They acted as middlemen in selling Chinese porcelain and other precious items used as brides-wealth. The Chinese also traded in birds of paradise and other commodities from the territory.

The features of Dutch colonial rule described here were to have an enduring influence on the evolution of Papuan society in at least two ways. First, the uneven impact of Dutch rule created a divide between the north coast and the interior and southern parts of Papua. The former not only participated administratively in a wider colonial world but had for centuries been integrated into the regional economy of Eastern Indonesia; tribes in Papua's highland and in the south, by contrast, had experienced little contact with other ethnic groups from the Indonesian archipelago or European colonists.⁶ Second, the indirect rule exercised by the Dutch relied on a flow of Eastern Indonesians into Papua as functionaries of the colonial state. In many other parts of the Dutch East Indies, the Dutch ruled through local chiefs or aristocratic classes that kept local custom intact and deepened traditional power structures. In Papua, however, the colonial administration did not elevate local leaders. The colonial government chose instead to staff the administration with teachers, professionals, and officials drawn from Eastern Indonesia. Similarly, the missions in Papua employed teachers and church workers from Christian ethnic groups such as the Toraja or the Minahasa in Sulawesi.

This distinctive form of indirect rule created flows of educated Eastern Indonesians into Papua—a key to understanding Papua's contemporary society. This system also established a pattern of ethnic relations in which the indigenous population was subjected to colonial control while migrants made up the ruling apparatus. For many Papuans, their first experience of the alienating colonial state was with unsympathetic low-ranking officials (Chauvel 2003: 13; Osborne 1985: 19). Moreover, local

Dutch dreams of colonial expansion...were tempered by fiscal pressures in the metropolitan center

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antipathy toward these officials deepened during World War II as many became functionaries of the harsh Japanese occupation (Penders 2002: 135). These dynamics underscore the colonial roots of troubled ethnic relations in contemporary Papua.

Before turning to the evolution of Papuan society under the late colonial state, the impact of World War II merits comment. Allied efforts to halt the southern advance of Japanese troops turned the territory into a key battleground. Hollandia (modern-day Jayapura) became a base first for the Japanese and then the Allies who turned the town into an important staging post. In the fierce fighting between the Japanese and the Allies many thousands of Papuans lost their lives. The war anticipated not only the geopolitical forces that were to shape the territory's political future, but the total lack of Papuan influence over these forces. The war also spurred the growth of Papua's developing capitalist economy. During the war, 140,000 Allied troops were stationed in Papua (Garnaut and Manning 1974: 12). Supply needs for military bases and personnel offered new employment and trading opportunities for Papuans on a scale never seen before (*ibid.*). Many Papuans became temporary wage laborers. Commodities and consumer goods were introduced. Infrastructure was built, including 240 kilometers of roads and bridges, representing a dramatic improvement in the province's transportation. The most lasting impact of the war was the construction of airstrips across the territory by both the Japanese and the Allies. To this day, air travel remains the principal form of long-distance transport within Papua and the state, and commercial, and missionary airplanes that cover the province are the linchpin of the economy.

The Plural Society Interrupted: From Dutch to Indonesian Rule

The years from 1944 to 1969 are crucial to understanding Papua's contemporary conflict. It was during this period that a distinctly Papuan political identity was formed. But this period is also important for understanding the evolution of a plural society in Papua as the flows of people, particularly from Eastern Indonesia, were disrupted by the political turmoil created by decolonization. The relative isolation of Papua following World War II limited the impact of Indonesia's "nationalist revolution" to several coastal regions in Papua only. When Papua was transferred to Indonesia in the 1960s, Dutch efforts at fostering an independent Papuan elite and Papua's lack of connection with Indonesia's nationalist struggle

posed serious challenges for an Indonesian government wishing to integrate the territory into the state. The challenge of national integration, shaped by this past, plagues the government to this day.

In fact, the gathering momentum of Indonesia's independence struggle following World War II prompted the Dutch to move quickly to secure its administration in Papua. Netherlands New Guinea (as the territory was then known) became its own separate administrative regency in 1946. The formal reestablishment of the colonial government was declared in late 1949. The new regency embarked on ambitious development initiatives to improve the people's welfare while extending and intensifying colonial administration. With additional funds at its discretion, the colonial government dramatically increased the services and functions it performed, opening new administrative posts throughout the territory including the central highlands and the Bird's Head region (Government of Netherlands 1960: b).

The new focus on local development required a much larger colonial presence. By 1950, the number of Europeans living in Papua had dramatically increased to approximately 8,500 people (Garnaut and Manning 1974: 13). By 1961, this figure had nearly doubled to 15,000 people (Osborne 1985: 19). This shift in Dutch colonial policy toward Papua was driven by a desire to maintain a colonial foothold. As the Dutch encountered fierce resistance to their attempts to reinstate colonial rule over the archipelago, they increasingly came to see Papua as a potential haven for the Dutch, Eurasians, and other local supporters.

The key element of the colonial government's development focus was the expansion of education and promotion of Papuans into the bureaucracy. As early as 1950, the Dutch were making "vigorous efforts . . . to absorb Papuans in the administration," although it was recognized that this policy would need time (Government of Netherlands 1951: 17–18). Under the reforming Dutch resident, J.P.K. van Eechoud, intense efforts to promote Papuanization of the civil service were undertaken. The aim of these policies was to create a pan-Papuan political leadership to counter Indonesia's territorial claims over the territory. Van Eechoud's ultimate goal was to ready the territory for independence after a period of preparation under Dutch control. Although this vision was never realized, the development of a layer of educated Papuans recruited into the colonial administration did bear results. By 1950, Papuans were being employed as police, clerks, district assistant officials, and chauffeurs (Government of

Netherlands 1951: 18). The recruitment of Papuans soon accelerated. Their numbers in the civil service grew from 1,290 in 1956 to 2,192 by 1960, holding mainly lower-ranking positions (Penders 2002: 392).

These policies were related to the changing strategy of Dutch colonial rule and the shift away from relying on Eastern Indonesians as intermediaries of the state. After World War II, many Indonesians from the Malukus, Sulawesi, and Java left Papua, many going to Ambon, after the Dutch made it clear that sympathizers of Indonesia's nationalist cause were no longer welcome (Aditjondro 1986: 12–13). The Dutch, moreover, announced plans to educate increased numbers of Papuans. The colonial administration also reduced economic migration to Papua (Penders 2002: 13). In Sorong's oil fields, Papuans were recruited to fill positions that had been occupied by settlers. By 1960, Papuans employed as wage earners, while still a small group, had increased: over 9,000 were working in government service and nearly 7,000 in the private sector (Government of Netherlands 1960: xxxixa).

These policies essentially interrupted the flows between coastal Papua and the rest of the Indonesian archipelago. Crucially these measures isolated Papua from the nationalist "revolution" taking place in Java and elsewhere in the archipelago.⁷ The gap in perceptions between Indonesian national leaders and the Papuan political elite during this period remains a crucial element in the tensions that characterize contemporary relations between Jakarta and Papua. (See Chauvel and Bhakti 2004.)

The expansion of educational and employment opportunities for Papuans favored coastal communities who had enjoyed a longer history of

Papua's emerging nationalist elite was drawn heavily from the coastal graduates of Dutch-supplied education

contact and superior education. In 1947, Dr. J. V. de Bruyn, the Dutch official who governed Biak, claimed that the islanders were the "most cultivated Papuans in the Netherlands New Guinea . . . among whom illiteracy was relatively scarce and even among men under 35 completely absent" (cited in Rutherford 2003: 118). The development of a Papuan elite was based on decades of missionary education in coastal

Papuan communities (Chauvel 2003: 19). Not surprisingly, it was Papuans from the coastal regions of Biak, Serui, and Jayapura who tended to monopolize the new educational opportunities that appeared from 1945 to 1962. Papua's emerging nationalist elite was drawn heavily from

the coastal graduates of Dutch-supplied education.

These policies produced a broad dichotomy within the Papuan community: on the one hand were coastal peoples advantaged from the new educational opportunities; on the other were those in the highlands and the south who remained largely untouched by either colonial administration or modern education. According to the 1961 census the Papuan population totaled 717,000, with the wage labor force numbering 19,000 (Osborne 1985: 19). The vast majority of Papuans remained engaged in subsistence agriculture or a hunting and gathering lifestyle. Thus during the late colonial period a small state-employed elite emerged who had access to Western education; the vast majority of Papuans, however, made their living from subsistence agriculture. In addition to local Papuans, there were still some Eastern Indonesians employed in either the civil service or other modern sectors of the economy. By 1959, official figures indicated that 14,000 migrants from Indonesia were living in Papua, of whom 8,000 were from the Maluku (Bachtiar 1963). While highly visible, migrants constituted less than 2 percent of the population.

While Dutch policies heightened expectations that Papua would soon become independent, geopolitical forces were at play that would determine the status of the province. With Sukarno mounting a nationalist campaign to reclaim Papua, provoking concerns in Washington that the Soviet Union would exploit the conflict, the United States became a key mediator in the dispute. After concerted diplomatic efforts, the United States finally pressured the Dutch into transferring control of Papua to Indonesia under a UN transitional authority following the New York agreement of 1962.

The early years of Indonesian rule from 1963 to 1969 were dominated by political preparations for the Act of Free Choice. Like the Dutch, the Indonesian government continued to discourage migrants from other parts of Indonesia. Concerned with security in the prelude to the Act of Free Choice, the government severely restricted the movement of people into the territory. Indeed Aditjondro (1986: 13) has described a "political quarantine" on Papua. It was not until the 1970s, after the Act of Free Choice had officially integrated Papua into the Indonesian state, that migratory flows between Papua and Eastern Indonesia would be reestablished. In fact, government policy from 1970 onward not only reestablished these flows but increased them to levels unmatched in Papuan history. The one exception to this pattern was the influx of Indonesian civil

servants into the territory during the mid-1960s, mainly from Java. The transfer of Javanese officials was partly a response to the exodus of educated Papuans abroad before Indonesia assumed control of the territory. This policy, however, also reflected Jakarta's suspicions regarding Papuans' loyalty to the new state. This de-Papuanization of the bureaucracy, and the sentiment behind it, created deep resentment among educated Papuans.

The early period of Indonesian rule was also characterized by faltering development efforts. Dutch plans to accelerate development before departing had dramatically raised expectations in Papua. Incoming civil servants saw as their overriding priority the need to ensure local acceptance of Indonesian rule before the Act of Free Choice. But the early years of Indonesian rule produced few successes in winning over local communities. The behavior of the security forces, acting like an occupying army, alienated many Papuans. Furthermore, the overtly racist attitudes that Papuans encountered in their contact with the new officials reinforced their experience of colonial rule. The early years of Indonesian rule merely perpetuated this earlier history. Other obstacles faced Papua's new rulers—Sukarno's profligate mismanagement of the national economy for one. The declining state budget was compounded by Sukarno's hostile attitude to foreign donors, which meant that the government had few funds to boost development in Papua. The growing inflation rate throughout the early 1960s also had a deleterious effect on the Papuan economy (Chauvel and Bhakti 2004). In the early years of Indonesian rule, local communities experienced worsening economic conditions, an inauspicious start to Indonesian rule over the province.

In sum, therefore, the main political developments between 1944 and 1969 have important implications for the present conflict in Papua. Not

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only did the decolonization process deny Papuans their basic right to self-determination, producing a political grievance around which subsequent Papuan nationalist discourse has been articulated, but the marginalization of isolated Papuan tribes can be traced to the policies of the late colonial state. Indeed, the creation of a coastal Papuan elite and the uneven spread of colonial rule engendered a strong sense among Papua's isolated communities of being left behind. As we shall see, these grievances would be magnified and deepened by the subsequent policies of the Indonesian state.

Modernization and Resistance: The Impact of the New Order

With the incorporation of Papua into Indonesia, the government turned its focus to economic development, but faced a difficult challenge in integrating Papua into the state. The government addressed this challenge through a strategy of modernization—a strategy that not only resulted in dramatic socioeconomic change in Papua but sparked considerable resistance as well.

The anticommunist regime of President Suharto took power in the mid-1960s with strong Western backing. The new regime, known as the New Order, immediately reordered Indonesia's national priorities. Relations with the West and Indonesia's Southeast Asian neighbors were quickly repaired as Suharto abandoned his predecessor's foreign adventurism. He also moved to reconstruct the national economy through pro-market policies. With a group of prominent U.S.-trained economists determining economic policy, the government promoted rapid capitalist development that registered phenomenal growth rates. The government's policies encouraged a large inflow of foreign assistance and investment into the country. Much of this investment, particularly in the early years of the New Order, was concentrated in the resources sector.

The government's modernization strategy was designed to maximize national development through exploiting the rich natural resources of the outer islands and plentiful supply of labor in Java.⁸ These ambitious economic objectives required not only new infrastructure but also skilled labor, especially from Java. With these policies the government reestablished the long-standing links between Papua and the rest of Indonesia that had largely been broken during the 1950s and 1960s. With the Act of Free Choice completed, the government sought to increase the flow of goods and people into Papua. By 1970, the government was actively promoting a movement of traders, farmers, wage laborers, and professionals into Papua that would dwarf the migratory flows of the past.

The key element of the government's policies in Papua was the exploitation of the province's resource base. The Dutch had considered Papua an economic backwater with resources locked up in remote inac-

These ambitious economic objectives required not only new infrastructure but also skilled labor, especially from Java

cessible regions.⁹ With technological advances available to foreign companies in the late 1960s, however, these obstacles could be overcome and the province's resources exploited. The negotiation of the Freeport McMoran contract in 1967 marked a watershed, not only in the history of Indonesia's relations with foreign capital, but also in the government's development policies toward Papua. Having discovered large gold and copper deposits in Papua's remote highlands, Freeport was to become Indonesia's largest single taxpayer. Operating the largest combined gold and copper mine in the world, Freeport sent millions of dollars to the central government in royalties and taxation revenues.

It was not only policymakers whose dreams of prosperity were triggered by the prospect of exploiting Papua's natural resources. As a result of the resources boom Papua became known as a frontier society. This image derived partly from Sukarno's nationalist campaign to reclaim Papua from the Dutch in the late 1950s in order to make Indonesia complete. As mining at Freeport fueled reports of Papua's wealth, the territory's economic growth attracted migrants throughout the province. Traders and wage laborers, drawn mainly from the entrepreneurial ethnic groups of South Sulawesi, together with settlers sponsored through the official transmigration program, became the main agents of the government's strategy of boosting economic development through trade and migration. This strategy was reflected in the government's building of markets across Indonesia, including Papua, as a way to spur economic activity (Aditjondro 1986: 28).

The government's success in promoting economic expansion into Papua reached its peak, however, with the official "Go East" strategy in the early 1990s. In Biak, for instance, the Go East campaign was translated into an ambitious plan of building roads, constructing an international airport, opening a resort-style hotel, and promoting foreign tourism (Rutherford 2003: 139). Much of this ambitious vision was actually realized prior to Indonesia's devastating economic crisis in 1997–98.

The modernization strategy not only had economic objectives, however, but was also intended to address the challenge of national integration. Economics and security were interlocking goals of the regime. Echoing ideas fashionable in Western social science at the time, New Order officials claimed that the path to modernization led through various stages from backwardness to development—what they regularly referred to as "takeoff" (*tinggal landas*). By promoting rapid socioeconomic change, government officials sought to speed the transition from tradi-

tional societies (which they saw as being based on divisive “primordial” identities of ethnicity and religion) to a modern nation-state (Moertopo 1974: 24). Thus modernization not only sought to improve the people’s welfare but aimed also to restore “national resilience” by bolstering the country’s economic base and bringing Indonesians together through trade and migration.

Achieving these objectives in Papua, however, proved elusive. Far from enhancing national integration, the modernization strategy galvanized local resistance. The New Order’s resource mobilization strategy was translated on the ground into what many Papuans saw as a resource grab by outsiders. The security forces’ role in protecting resource companies against claims from traditional landowners generated strong resentment in indigenous Papuan communities. At the heart of this conflict was the complaint that indigenous landownership was being trampled on by both the government and resource companies.¹⁰ The most militant expression of local resentment was the Free Papua Organization (OPM), which first appeared in the mid-1960s. In reality the OPM was less a unified organization than a diffuse cluster of local armed groups that survived as a symbolic challenge to Indonesian rule. By the mid-1970s, this scattered resistance had become a popular revolt spreading across the politically volatile highland regions (Osborne 1985). Such resistance, however, was dealt with harshly by Jakarta. Not only was physical resistance crushed by military means, but any expression of protest against the government’s policies was also suppressed. Any Papuan who dared criticize government policy risked being labeled a member of the OPM and therefore an enemy of the state.

With government ruling through such coercive means, it was not until the demise of the New Order regime in May 1998 that Papuans could publicly express their deep alienation toward the state. Soon Papuans were exercising new political freedoms and voicing a wide range of grievances accumulated over decades. In a public opinion survey taken in January and July 1999, Papuans registered the lowest satisfaction rates toward public institutions of any region in Indonesia (TAF 1999: 151–71). Popular disaffection was reflected as well in the rise of a pro-independence movement across the province.

Papuan intellectuals took advantage of this period of political openness by developing a far-reaching critique of Indonesian government policy.¹¹ This critique sought to explain the unsettling changes promoted by the New Order in terms of a deliberate and systematic policy of state discrim-

ination.¹² One of the key intellectuals mounting such arguments was the late Michael Rumbiak (2002), who had studied demographic patterns in Papua and concluded that the government was engaged in a policy of “depopulation.” Rumbiak argued that Jakarta’s promotion of mass migra-

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tion was diluting the indigenous population and that Papuans were, consequently, facing extinction. Local human rights campaigners, moreover, found a systematic pattern of rights violations by the security forces toward indigenous peoples. Papuan intellectuals such as John Rumbiak and Benny Giay described these abuses as a systematic

policy to destroy Papuan resistance and wipe out indigenous culture. For many Papuans, the assassination of the pro-independence leader Theys Eluay by Indonesian special forces in 2001 became emblematic of the government’s “genocidal” intentions in Papua through security operations and depopulation.

One of the most insistent themes reflected in these critiques was the growing threat not only to Papuans’ demographic viability but to their traditional lifestyles. The recognition of traditional land rights (*hak ulayat*) has long been a key demand of Papua’s indigenous leaders.¹³ Papuans claim a special attachment to the land as its original custodians (*orang asli*) and insist that their rights as the traditional landowners be recognized.

By invoking indigenous rights in their struggle against the Indonesian state, Papuan leaders have drawn on international efforts to protect indigenous people. In 1994, for example, the United Nations announced the UN Decade of Indigenous Peoples. These efforts were prompted by growing international concerns that indigenous peoples around the world were threatened by the modern state and economy. While such institutions evolved slowly, they provided a platform indigenous peoples could use to press their cause on an international stage. From a more political perspective, spokesmen from the OPM throughout the 1980s and 1990s (and the PDP more recently) have also made submissions to these various bodies to advance their political struggle. In 1999, for instance, the pro-independence leader Tom Beanal appeared before the UN Commission on Human Rights to highlight the threat to the indigenous people of Papua:

Millions of hectares of Papuan lands have been plundered by the Indonesian government and handed over to foreign companies and

transmigrants. Our forests, mountains, sago gardens, indigenous lands, sacred places, all the natural resources are being plundered, squeezed, crushed and then annihilated. The indigenous people who are the traditional owners of the lands are becoming squatters . . . because their ancestral lands are being used by government and companies.¹⁴

To recap, then, I have focused on the main assumptions of the government's promotion of rapid modernization since the 1970s and the local resistance such policies have provoked in Papua. This resistance has developed into a critique of government policy in terms of ethnic discrimination and indigenous rights—ideas that have not only been central to an emerging discourse on human rights but have also stimulated pro-independence mobilization.

Population Movement into Papua: 1970–2000

By the early 1970s, the government had embarked on ambitious development plans for Papua. The first five-year development plan, launched in 1969, resulted in concerted efforts to boost economic performance with the aid of a large United Nations assistance program. From the 1970s, the Papuan economy began to grow at an impressive rate. The reach of the state was extended throughout Papua with growing government expenditures and a larger military presence. Rapid urbanization, particularly along the north coast, occurred and the cash economy expanded into new areas. New consumer goods were introduced, too, largely through Eastern Indonesian trading networks and petty merchants.

Of all the changes that were to make an impact, however, it was the influx of thousands of migrants that transformed the social and demographic makeup of the province. Papua became a new frontier for many Indonesians who were attracted to the economic opportunities. Settler communities began to dominate the modern sector of the economy. Essentially the rapidly growing economy pitted new settler communities in competition with local Papuan tribes. The latter, particularly those living in the highlands, continued to pursue a subsistence lifestyle and had little exposure to the trappings of modernity. Not surprisingly, settlers were better prepared to take advantage of the new opportunities.

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Papua following the Act of Free Choice in 1969—a move that resulted in a sudden influx of new migrants. The new policy had an immediate effect. Shipping figures showed a twofold increase in migrants to Papua from 5,000 in 1971 to 10,000 in 1972 (Garnaut and Manning 1974: 39). Population growth exceeded 3 percent annually over a three-decade period, resulting in a near tripling of the total population. (Tripling the population of the United Kingdom to its present total, by contrast, has taken 100 years.) Compared to the figures for Indonesia, the levels of population growth in Papua were nearly double the national average. The economic crisis in Indonesia in 1997–98 did little to stem the flow of migrants. By February 2004 the total population for the province was 2,352,518.¹⁵

Such large population movements soon put pressure on land and spurred competition over resources. Transmigration settlements and ambitious resource projects became the subject of controversy due to land disputes with local communities who claimed traditional ownership. Development was highly centralized through five-year national plans. It was also regulated by national laws in forestry, agriculture, mining, and transmigration—laws that took little account of the unique systems of customary law (*adat*) and communal landownership (*hak ulayat*) that were central to social organization in Papua. The New Order's centralized planning process not only proved unresponsive to local needs but undermined traditional ways of life, intensifying the clash between modernity and tradition. Taken together the effects from such large inflows of migrants were to result in widespread displacement and dislocation of Papuans from their traditional lifestyles. These pressures have not only been translated into contemporary conflict between indigenous and Papuan communities but have also generated pro-independence mobilization.

Transmigration

With funding from the World Bank, the Indonesian government embarked on a controversial transmigration program transferring hundreds of thousands of people from densely populated regions to outer islands like Papua. The program was also funded through Indonesia's burgeoning oil and gas revenues. While one of the initial aims of transmigration was to relieve population pressures on Java, family planning had a greater impact on slowing population growth. Thus Jakarta promoted transmigration less for population control than for economic and cultural reasons: it would improve the welfare of the transmigrants; it would boost

economic development in recipient regions; and it would accelerate assimilation and acculturation among ethnic groups and strengthen the unity of the Indonesian nation.

The transmigration program in Papua was initially limited as Jakarta concentrated its efforts on Sumatra as the primary destination. The number of migrants to Papua in the 1960s was small. Transmigrant numbers increased modestly in 1971, with the government settling 260 families, bringing the total to 2,500 by 1974 (Arndt 1986: 167). But with a territory covering over 22 percent of Indonesia's landmass with only 1 percent of its population, Papua would eventually become a prime destination in the national transmigration program. With the supply of available land running out in Sumatra in the 1980s, the government began to consider Eastern Indonesia as a recipient for new transmigrants. By the mid-1990s, Eastern Indonesia was taking 10 percent of all transmigrants, the majority going to Papua (Hugo 1997: 83).

In the early 1980s, the government was designing even more ambitious plans for transmigration that, if realized, would have resulted in the province being inundated with a wave of new migrants. Oil price rises in 1979/80 brought enormous foreign exchange revenues to the government, fuelling the government's ambitious targets which were set initially at one million people and later revised downwards to 700,000 over a five-year period (Arndt 1986: 163; Manning and Rumbiak 1989: 98). This would have increased the transmigration program over 10 fold from previous levels. Emboldened by the economic success it was having and flushed with oil and gas revenues, the government was set on doubling Papua's population within five years. The ambition of these plans amounted to a bold, and for many troubling, attempt at social engineering. The government's plan envisioned a fundamental transformation of the territory populated by Melanesians largely engaged in hunting and gathering or subsistence agriculture to a potpourri of Indonesian ethnic groups of rice-growers, traders, and wage laborers.

The government, however, never came close to realizing these plans. By the mid-1980s, the government had to drastically revise downwards these targets. One of the most pressing issues was the difficulty of finding suitable land in the outer islands. The scarcity of land intensified competition for resources, resulting in rising tensions between the new settlers and local communities. In Papua, local conflicts grew, as land pressures provoked growing local anger and discontent with the central govern-

ment's policies. While land was plentiful in Papua, much of it was unsuitable for agricultural settlement. The complex clan based system of land ownership in Papua also represented an obstacle for the government in acquiring land for new settlements without provoking controversy and resistance. Sumule (2002) has extrapolated from the index of land acquirement for transmigrants which approximates 2.15 hectares per family head. He concluded that over 160,000 hectares of arable land had been appropriated, the equivalent of three times the harvested area of sweet potato for the entire province in 2000, the main staple for Papuans.

Despite the government's goals of promoting transmigration as a way of boosting economic development in the region while enhancing national unity, it was becoming increasingly apparent by the 1990s that neither objective had been achieved. On the economic side, Arndt claims that the large swathes of jungle and swamp cleared for transmigration sites involved a substantial investment in roads and other infrastructure. But far from bringing prosperity to local communities, transmigration triggered local conflicts over land and resources. As Manning and Rumbiak (1989) have concluded, most Papuans close to the transmigration settlements "have yet to derive significant economic benefits either through trade and wage labour or through adoption of new farming practices." As for the goal of enhancing national unity, transmigration represented more of a force for destabilization than for national integration. Far from resulting in assimilation and acculturation, mass migration sharpened ethnic identities. Mass migration gave Papuans a greater sense of separate ethnic identity based on shared Melanesian roots. The process of identity formation was reinforced by the economic dominance of settler communities.

The transmigration program has in fact driven Papuan discontent vis-à-vis Indonesian rule. Papuan intellectuals, students, and independence

The transmigration program has in fact driven Papuan discontent vis-à-vis Indonesian rule

leaders claim that the program was an attempt to colonize the territory and overwhelm its people. By the late 1980s, the government and foreign donors were compelled to reevaluate transmigration amid growing local opposition. But the reduction in transmigration numbers to Papua lasted only a few short years, and by the mid-

1990s transmigration was averaging 15,000 settlers per year, exceeding previous levels.¹⁶ By 2000, at the height of pro-independence sentiment, the provincial government responded to growing popular demands by

calling on Jakarta to suspend plans to send further transmigrants to Papua.¹⁷ In fact since 1998, the government has significantly reduced the program to negligible levels, although the influx of unsponsored migrants has remained at high levels in recent years.

Unsponsored Migration

While transmigration resulted in a large settlement of migrants in Papua (over 220,000 people between 1970 and 2000), 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.

Many of the new migrants came from Sulawesi, and to a lesser extent, from other areas of Eastern Indonesia as improved transport links and strong economic growth attracted new settlements in the province. The percentage of overall migrants from South Sulawesi grew rapidly in the 1980s and 1990s, illustrating that the charge regularly leveled at the government—that it was pursuing a policy of Javanization—obscured more fundamental shifts. By the late 1980s, with a sharp decline in Javanese migrants, Papuan leaders and intellectuals were expressing concern about the influx of the so-called BBM—the Bugis, Butonese, and Makasarese—shorthand for ethnic groups coming from South Sulawesi. According to popular stereotypes of Sulawesi migrants, they were aggressive traders who did not adapt to the local culture and used “deceptive means” in commercial transactions with locals (Aditjondro 1986: 1). The sudden influx of Sulawesi migrants into the province, particularly concentrated in petty trade, construction, and transport, meant that they came into direct contact and competition with Papuans. Sulawesi traders and wage laborers were in essence the foot soldiers for Indonesian frontier capitalism, introducing new consumer goods from other parts of Indonesia that were enjoyed not just by migrants and urban dwellers but by Papuans in rural areas. Thus migration represented a pillar of Indonesia’s modernizing strat-

egy; while transmigration settlements were designed to bolster Indonesian “resilience” in Papua, particularly in the border regions, it was unsponsored migrants who had the most far-reaching impact in boosting economic growth and people flows.

A key force accelerating migration from Sulawesi from the 1960s onward was the economic fallout from the Darul Islam rebellion, which had a deleterious impact on the province’s economy, producing an outflow of economic migrants. This outflow prompted the provincial government to try unsuccessfully to stem the flow by restricting migration. According to estimates, from 1977 to 1983 some 31,000 migrants from South Sulawesi settled in Papua. These numbers, however, were to be dwarfed by subsequent migration flows that resulted in hundreds of thousands of migrants from Sulawesi settling in Papua by 2000.

A driving force behind this migration was the honeypot effect of Papua’s rich resource base, which had attracted prominent resource companies. Impressive economic growth, extending beyond the resources sector, also resulted in new opportunities attracting people to the province. Average per capita incomes in Papua were far higher than elsewhere in Indonesia, even after taking into account the high cost of living. In 2002, according to Freeport sources, average wages in the Timika region were seventeen times higher than the national average. Furthermore, the government had long recognized Papua’s special needs and committed additional resources to develop the province. Both Papua and East Timor received additional funds and both provinces ranked highest in terms of per capita income.¹⁸

There were two other pull factors: the improvement in transport links and the perception that a less competitive environment offered greater economic opportunities for migrants. Continuing improvements in sea and air transport throughout the 1980s and 1990s opened more links between Papua and the rest of Indonesia. The emergence of a more competitive domestic airline market in the 1990s meant that air travel became more affordable and reduced the province’s sense of isolation. Perhaps the greatest factor in attracting new migrants was the perception that Papua—rich in natural resources and underdeveloped in human resources—had less competition and more opportunities for economic advancement compared to the home provinces of new migrants. With only a tiny elite possessing the skills and education to compete, Papuans lagged behind migrants in the labor market. For many Papuans, this fact was symbolized by the way

Papuan women traders were forced to the sidelines of the marketplaces and often had to sell their goods on the footpath—a potent image of Papuan disadvantage throughout the province's urban settlements.

Ethnicity

The migration patterns described here altered the basic ethnic and religious composition of the territory's population. This demographic shift in the course of just three decades was testament to the transformative forces unleashed by Indonesia's modernizing state. While state-sponsored migration was an important element in this transformation, the spontaneous flows induced by the expansion of capitalism had an even greater impact. The changes produced by these forces, however, belied the expectations of Indonesian officials who equated socioeconomic change with the development of civic attachments to the state that would eclipse ethnic and religious identities.

Mass migration to Papua actually had the opposite effect: sharpening ethnic distinctions between Papua's indigenous communities and the rapidly growing settler population. Prior to 1970, the basic contours of a Papuan political identity had been formed during the territory's troubled decolonization process. This identity, however, was largely an elite phenomenon. It was mass migration and rapid socioeconomic change after 1970 that really sharpened ethnic boundaries as Papuans and settlers came into constant competition over resources and land. Huge disparities in economic participation and access to public services were especially important in reinforcing ethnic differences and the notion of Papuan disadvantage.

The rapidly growing economy, however, did not only trigger migration from outside the province. It also resulted in internal movements of Papuans from their traditional lands to centers of economic growth. This process of Papuan migration exacerbated tensions within the indigenous community and added yet another layer to the evolving conflict in the province. Internal divisions within indigenous communities, deriving primarily from tribal cleavages, have triggered local conflicts, undermined aspirations for Papuan unity, and weakened the prospect of collective action so critical to sustaining the pro-independence movement.

The impact of mass migration on the province's ethnic mix was dramatic. In 1971, settlers comprised just 4 percent of the population; by 2000, this figure had increased to over 35 percent. These changes were most dramatically evidenced in Papua's towns where, by the year 2000, set-

tlers outnumbered Papuans: in 1980, settlers made up 30 percent of the total urban population; just two decades later, they comprised 66 percent of town dwellers. The rapid influx of settlers into urban areas raised concerns among indigenous leaders that Papuans were being

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excluded from the benefits of the modern urban economy. Data on the indigenous Papuan community underscored these concerns. The 2000 population census indicated that Papuans remained heavily rural in composition—over 86 percent lived in rural areas. The vast majority of the indigenous population was

engaged in agriculture. In the rapid growth centers along the north coast (Jayapura, Biak-Numfor, Manokwari, Sorong), Papuans represented a minority. In the town of Sorong, for instance, Papuans comprised less than 29 percent of the population. From the total population of Papuans, in fact, only 10 percent lived in rapid-growth centers along the north coast and Timika. The greatest concentration of Papuans was in the province's most remote areas: over 53 percent of Papuans lived in the central highlands and the south.

With the majority of Papuans living in remote areas, major disparities were evident in the quality of public services enjoyed by settlers versus Papuans. Key social indicators of health and education were particularly alarming—indicating a large gap between Papuans and the rest of Indonesia. Papuans had the worst rates of illiteracy in Indonesia: 40 percent of the people living in rural Papua were illiterate. Moreover, Papua had the lowest ranking by over 10 percentage points on a number of different educational indexes (BPS 2001a). Health statistics, too, reflected the disadvantage suffered by Papuans living in remote areas. Papuans were reported to have the lowest life expectancy in all Indonesia at just 40 years.¹⁹ Infant mortality rates for the entire province (Papuans and non-Papuans combined) were the seventh highest in Indonesia and far above the national average (BPS 2001a). These statistics reflected a systematic failure of the state to provide basic services in health and education to the territory's most remote communities—surely reason to see such neglect as an ethnic form of state discrimination. The fact that a small Papuan elite in the coastal areas enjoyed superior education and other public services underscored the disadvantage suffered by the vast majority of Papuans.

Ethnic Violence: Between Incitement and Containment

How have these demographic patterns and social grievances translated into violence? Tensions between Papuans and settlers have been common throughout the territory since large inflows of settlers began in the 1970s. In 1984, for instance, the Hamadi marketplace in the capital of Jayapura was the scene of deadly riots accompanied by heightened political tension and an exodus of refugees into Papua New Guinea (Aditjondro 1986). In recent years, clashes between Papuans and settlers have resulted in the burning of marketplaces: in Abepura in 1996, Entrop in 1999 and 2000, and Sentani in 2000. The most deadly of these conflicts occurred in October 2000, in the central highlands town of Wamena, sparked by the security forces' attempts to lower Papuan independence flags. The incident triggered a confrontation between locals and the security forces and, in the ensuing unrest, local tribes turned their anger on migrant traders in the marketplace. Armed only with bows and arrows, tribal warriors exacted considerable loss of life. By the end of the fighting over 30 people were reportedly killed and hundreds of migrants had fled the area.

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While each of these incidents had its own trigger all were characterized by rising tensions in the markets between Papuans and settlers over perceived inequalities and unfair treatment (Akmad and Pujo Semedi 2003: 243). A common pattern of violence can be discerned in these local conflicts: typically they involve Papuan and Sulawesi traders. In other parts of Indonesia, large "Chinese conglomerates" represent a source of popular criticism; in Papua, it is migrants from Sulawesi who have borne the brunt of rising ethnic tensions. Indeed, migrants from Sulawesi have not only been conspicuous as established capitalists but have competed with Papuans as wage laborers and petty traders. In recent years, for instance, Papuan discontent has been exacerbated by growing competition in the trade of *pinang* (betel nut) as Sulawesi traders have entered the market. Chewing the mildly addictive nut is a common custom in Papuan society, and the trade has traditionally been the preserve of local traders. The encroachment of Bugis and other migrants into the *pinang* trade has created a new source of tension, sparking demands that the government restrict migrants from dominating the sector.²⁰

While such conflicts are based on economic grievances, political devel-

opments, too, have spurred the rising tension between Papuans and non-Papuans. With the collapse of the New Order in 1998, Papuans could now organize and articulate their grievances. These political developments, however, added to strains on ethnic relations in Papua. In fact, Papua's rising pro-independence movement formed the political backdrop against which the marketplace clashes erupted. The emergence of the Papuan Task Force (Satgas Papua), a paramilitary organization affiliated with the independence movement, signaled the growing political assertion by Papuans. Migrants complained, at least privately, of a dramatic increase in cases of extortion and intimidation. Ethnic chauvinism emerged, as well, for the appearance of the Papuan Task Force provoked the rise of pro-integration paramilitary groups such as the Red and White Task Force (Satgas Merah Putih). Soon there were reports that settler communities were beginning to arm themselves, reportedly at the behest of the police chief.²¹

Within this volatile environment, the military has become a key force for destabilization in the province. The role of the security forces in the economy, for instance, has not only created deep-seated local resentment but triggered periodic clashes between security forces and local communities. The security forces have an array of financial interests in the Papuan economy, particularly in resource extraction, ranging from direct participation in logging to protection of resource companies (ICG 2002). Indeed the security forces have regularly clashed with local communities trying to defend their land and resources against encroachment from military-backed businesses. As the International Crisis Group has shown, the security forces are a source of conflict "because of cultural insensitivity toward Papuan civilians, a tendency toward aggressive behavior and a predatory role in the economy" (*ibid.*, p. 2). These factors have all played a role, for instance, in the violence that erupted between the mobile police (Brimob) and local communities in the Wasior region in 2001—now the subject of an official investigation by the National Human Rights Commission.

Another source of conflict has been the military's support of paramilitary groups in the province—echoing its history in East Timor of exploiting internal ethnic and political cleavages to divide and rule. Persistent reports of militias being established and undertaking training activities have surfaced since at least 2001 (England 2002; Elsham 2002a, 2002b). Local Papuan leaders expressed concern over the arrival of volunteers in Sorong and Fak-Fak from Laskar Jihad, a militant Islamic organization. The formation of a militia group known as Barisan Merah Putih (Red and

White Front) in Wamena, Fak-Fak and possibly other areas has also heightened community anxieties. Serious concerns emerged that the military was seeking to destabilize Papua by pitting pro-integration groups against Papuan independence supporters. Although there is no conclusive evidence that the Laskar Jihad's move into Papua was done at the behest of the military, elements of the TNI clearly supported the militia's emergence in neighboring Ambon where the introduction of jihadist forces had dramatically expanded the conflict (Schulze 2002).²²

Whatever its relationship to Laskar Jihad in Papua, the military's promotion of other militia groups in Papua was beyond contention. In the Wamena area, for instance, the military had been cultivating minority Papuan Muslims from Walesi village since the 1970s and organized them into the Barisan Merah Putih to counter pro-independence groups.²³ In 2003, human rights groups obtained an inventory, put together by the local military command, of volunteers it was planning to train. Again in 2003, after a suspicious raid on the TNI armory in Wamena, the local command used recruits from Walesi in their raids on villages to try to retrieve the weapons, heightening communal tensions in Wamena.²⁴

In fact, a variety of civilian auxiliaries have been used to reinforce the regular army throughout Indonesia's history. Underscoring the extent to which the use of militias and other paramilitaries has become a routine security practice, President Megawati publicly supported their role in defending the unitary state.²⁵ During the New Order period, the military developed an extensive capacity in covert operations and counterintelligence in which paramilitaries and criminal elements were often used. Mobilizing such groups to act on their behalf, TNI officers were able to intimidate so-called enemies of the state in provinces such as Aceh or Papua or to destabilize conditions in order to justify tightened security measures and repressive actions. Indeed, one of the key aims of the military under the New Order was to actively disorganize civil society and spark internal conflicts as a way of weakening opposition to the state. The use of such tactics, through engineering local conflict, has remained a persistent feature of the military's strategy in contemporary Papua (Timmer 2004).

The use of such divide-and-rule tactics became clear in late 2003 with reports that Eurico Guterres, a notorious convicted militia leader from East Timor, sought permission from the local government in Timika

The use of such divide-and-rule tactics became clear in late 2003

to establish a militia presence in Papua.²⁶ The local government and police, however, rejected Guterres's request following a community outcry. Perhaps the most revealing theme of the Guterres controversy was the strength of community opposition to these tactics. Indeed, whatever the level of coordination among interests seeking to destabilize the province, the attempt to develop militia groups in Papua has not met with the same success it enjoyed in East Timor.

The mixed results of such efforts highlight the resilience of the province against attempts to engineer conflict in Papua. In fact, the province has not experienced the scale of violence and communal unrest that has plagued neighboring regions, namely the Maluku. One reason for this may be the waning momentum of the independence movement. By the last quarter of 2000, independence leaders were finding it increasingly difficult to maintain mass support as independence seemed as distant as ever and the military was increasingly adopting repressive measures. As the independence movement demobilized, ethnic grievances and political demands began to weaken, resulting in an easing of ethnic tensions, particularly after the Wamena incident.

The other main factor in mitigating ethnic tensions was the efforts of institutions and leaders to bridge the communal divide and defuse the dangerous mix of large demographic shifts and divisive political trends. Papuans and settlers alike participated in civic institutions common throughout Indonesia: social organizations, churches, Islamic organizations, political parties, the scouting movement, schools, and universities. These everyday interactions tended to blur communal differences and counter the political, economic, and demographic trends that divided communities. Furthermore, provincial authorities and religious leaders sought to manage ethnic tensions in the province. Mechanisms of social control developed under the New Order, most notably the regional leadership councils (*Muspida*), regularly brought together government leaders, the security forces, and religious leaders to forestall ethnic conflict. With the appointment of the reformist police chief Made Pastika in 2000, the police, too, attempted to check the outbreak of ethnic conflict in Papua. Following days of political and tribal unrest in Timika in September 2003 (after Pastika was no longer in Papua), the police maintained their constructive role and were praised by local leaders for their restraint and professionalism in handling the riots.

Another factor keeping communal tensions in check was the explicit

strategy of non-violence adopted by the Papuan Presidium Council (PDP). The PDP has even recruited settlers to its cause and the organization is open to all ethnic and religious minorities. Migrants are formally included as one of the key “pillars” of the PDP. Thus, political leaders in Papua have tended to desist from exploiting ethnic differences. The absence of such “ethnic entrepreneurs” indicates that, while the mass conditions for large-scale ethnic conflict exists in Papua, the restraint shown by political and ethnic leaders have helped prevent an outbreak of violence across the province.

Divisions Among Papuans

If rapid socioeconomic change was accompanied by ethnic tensions between Papuans and non-Papuans, it also sharpened divisions among Papuans themselves. The tribe represented a key source of identification for Papuans. The historical evolution of small, scattered societies in the territory that spoke their own separate languages gave rise to a remarkable level of tribal and linguistic diversity that persists today. According to the 2000 census, 312 tribes exist in Papua from a total indigenous population of less than 1.5 million people. The largest tribes in Papua are the Lani and Dani/Ndani, inhabiting the densely populated regions of the interior and its fertile valleys, and the Biaks, who inhabit the coastal region of Biak-Numfor. These three broad tribal groupings each comprise approximately 150,000 people—double the population of the next largest tribes. The seven largest tribes have a combined population that amounts to 80 percent of the total indigenous population. The remaining 20 percent are divided into some 300 tribal groups of which two-thirds have a population of less than 1,000 people. To make matters even more complex, each tribe is organized into subtribes, clans, and subclans.

***rapid socioeconomic
change...also sharpened
divisions among
Papuans themselves***

This extreme level of social diversity manifests itself in a tendency toward political and social fragmentation—a serious obstacle to Papuan unity and the collective action needed to challenge Indonesian rule. Traditional rivalries among neighboring tribes have long shaped relations among Papuans; struggles over land, brides, and ritual warfare have been playing themselves out for centuries. While mass migration from outside the province heightened Papuans’ sense of a shared ethnic identity in

opposition to settler communities, growing competition over resources also fueled traditional rivalries. In other words: migration and capitalist development have brought Papuans together while simultaneously dividing them.

These divisions have been magnified by migration and urbanization within Papua itself. Along with rapid economic growth, there has been a corresponding movement of Papuans in search of economic opportunities. The 2000 population census shows large numbers of Papuans living outside their tribal homelands—challenging the notion of a static indigenous population. As with the settler community, the movement of Papuan tribal groups into new areas has provoked tension. This movement has been both urban and rural. The populous Dani tribe, for instance, has fanned out across the province. Over the course of the twentieth century, the Western Dani had been increasingly driven westward out of the Baliem Valley as population growth increased pressures on land. In recent decades, the movements of Dani have accelerated and they now make up large population concentrations in urban and rural areas across the central highlands. Similarly, coastal people from Biak and Serui have migrated throughout the urban centers of the province and often dominate government jobs and the professions, including church and community organizations.

Facing an inflow not only of settlers but also of other Papuan tribes, many traditional landowners express growing resentment that they have no access to government services and their natural resources are being exploited by outsiders. Some tribes claim to have been excluded from economic development in favor of their rivals. In the Bird's Head region, for instance, spokesmen for the Moi tribe claim to have been left behind in the development process by other tribes that have proved more adept at exploiting the modern economy. In Manokwari, the majority Arfak tribe claims that opportunities are going to minority tribal groups. In the Moni lands of highland Nabire, intertribal tensions sharpened following the widespread migration of Danis into the region.

It is the mining town of Timika, however, that represents the most striking example of how the movement of Papuan tribes has resulted in tension and conflict. The two landowning tribes of the region, the lowland Kamoro and the highland Amungme, have experienced dramatic social change since the early 1970s as a result of the operation of the Freeport mine. Human rights and environmental groups have highlighted the dislocating impact of rapid socioeconomic changes on both tribes—including claims of the expro-

priation of land without adequate compensation, environmental dislocation caused by mining operations, and human rights violations perpetrated by Indonesian security forces tasked with protecting the mine (Abrash 2001). Indeed the growth of Timika is a classic mining town story. In the late 1960s, the area was a rural settlement with few links to the outside world. In just over three and half decades, Freeport sources estimate, Timika's population has grown to 150,000 people. The mine's operations created an economic boom attracting migrants from across Indonesia. But it was not only migrants from outside Papua who settled in Timika; other Papuans flocked to the region as well. Tribal groups from areas contiguous to the mining site—the Ekagi, Moni, Dani, Nduga, and Damal—were attracted in large numbers to the booming economy around the mine and together with the Amungme and Kamoro made up the seven main tribes in the region. By the time Freeport had discovered an even more lucrative deposit of gold at the Grasberg site in the late 1980s, the region had become a potpourri of Indonesian ethnic groups and Papuan tribes.

The combination of dramatic population growth and increased economic opportunity has sparked intense competition among ethnic and tribal groups. When this rivalry was overlaid by growing resentment from traditional landowners complaining of marginalization and rights violations by the Indonesian military, a volatile mix of ethnic and tribal tension began to simmer in Timika. A consultant's report commissioned for Freeport in 1997, based on extensive social research, concluded:

*a volatile mix of ethnic
and tribal tension began
to simmer in Timika*

There is a wide cultural, social, institutional and technological gap between the original inhabitants and the newcomers. Economic development, industrial activity, infrastructure and urbanization have encroached upon the land, traditions, and lifestyles of the local people. All of these factors as well as widening economic disparities between groups create resentment. This resentment erupts into violence.
[LABAT-Anderson 1997]

The mention of violence in this passage is a specific reference to an outbreak of mass rioting that convulsed Timika town for three days in 1996. While speculation was widespread that the armed forces may have engineered the riots, signs of growing Papuan resentment toward Freeport, particularly from the traditional landowning tribes, were evident in the

prelude to the unrest. Freeport reacted immediately to the riots by offering a range of concessions including a fund allocating 1 percent of the company's gross annual revenues for Papuan social and community development. Official announcement of the fund immediately set off a scramble to get access to the funds by Papuan tribal groups. The most assertive claims came from the five neighboring tribes whose leaders had been deeply involved in the riots. These tribal leaders made insistent demands that Freeport "give them their money." The Indonesian government, hoping to prevent more unrest, pressed Freeport to release the funds. Amid intense pressure from the government and tribal leaders, Freeport was forced to hastily disperse large sums of money. But the LABAT-Anderson audit (1997: 3-1-3) concluded that the manner in which the funds were dispersed sharpened tensions among Papuan tribes. While the funds were distributed equally among the seven main tribes, no preference was given to the traditional landowners. Ultimately the funds became a patronage vehicle for a small group of Papuans, mostly non-Amungme and non-Kamoro, and led to further violence. In fact, clashes between the Amungme and Dani tribes claimed eleven lives in the first half of 1997 alone according to NGO sources (ICG 2002: 20). The fallout from these tensions has continued, and in 2003 Timika once again became the scene of deadly rioting.

The divisions within the Papuan population, accompanied by the strong tendency toward social and political fragmentation, have in fact been exploited by the Indonesian state. Divide and rule has been a successful strategy to exploit internal divisions among Papuans and to weaken local unity. The military has acquired a reputation for recruiting from disadvantaged tribal groups as civilian auxiliaries and local intelligence sources. The recent government policy of subdividing the province into three should also be seen as an effort to exploit regional and tribal cleavages. But beyond the microdivisions of tribe and clan described here is a broader split between coastal versus interior and rural versus urban settlements. These larger divisions began in the colonial period when Christian missions and the colonial government promoted educational opportunities for Papuans that favored the coastal tribes. The socioeconomic changes from the 1970s reinforced this basic cleavage and intensified the sense of disadvantage in the densely populated areas of the interior. To the extent there were opportunities for upwardly mobile Papuans in government service or the private sector, these opportunities tended to be enjoyed dis-

proportionately by Biaks and others from the coastal regions. The predominance of Sorong-based tribes in the provincial government under the administration of Jaap Solossa became another source of contention.

A public opinion survey conducted by the International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES) confirmed the divided perceptions and experiences among Papua's tribal groups (IFES 2003). According to the survey, coastal tribes such as those in Biak and Sentani registered far more positive responses to questions about access to government services and economic opportunity. Tribes in remote areas, by contrast, were far less likely to acknowledge improvements in health, education, and other basic services in recent years. They were also less likely to be able to afford education. The Marind and Asmat tribes of the south registered the most negative responses: they enjoyed virtually no access to public services. Papua's leading international human rights campaigner, John Rumbiak (2001), has addressed the risks of perpetuating regional and tribal divisions among Papuans:

Because Papua itself is politically fragmented it will be like Africa—which ethnic group will dominate? Lots of blood will flow. At the moment, coastal Papuans have more education and they would take over. But that would make highland Papuans unhappy, leading to war. For 32 years we have experienced divide-and-rule among these 250 tribes. I can sense those feelings among Papuan independence activists. These are dangerous signals. We must . . . liberate ourselves from such feelings, move beyond our own ethnic group.

Settler Dynamics

If the Papuan population was characterized by a dazzling array of tribal groups, the diversity of settler communities similarly underscored the plural nature of the territory. The 2000 census collected information on ethnic backgrounds of settlers for the first time. According to this information, the settler population in Papua comprised 38 percent Javanese, 25 percent from Sulawesi, 7 percent from Ambon and the Kai Islands, and 30 percent from a range of other ethnic groups. Migrants from Java and Sulawesi made up over 50 percent of the migrant population; the remaining proportion was made up of ethnic groups from as far afield as North Sumatra. A large population of Bataks from North Sumatra, for instance, had settled mainly in Papua's northern towns and Timika.

A small but highly influential community of ethnic Chinese Indonesians have had a long history of settlement in Papua reportedly

going back centuries. As in other parts of the Dutch East Indies, the Chinese have been middlemen in trade between local communities and external networks of commerce. One of the most visible Chinese communities in Papua is located in the coastal region of Serui where many Chinese traders have married with locals. The Serui Chinese have become known by the local colloquialism “Perancis,” short for Peranakan Cina (Sino-Indonesian) and Serui (Athwa 2004: 232). According to 1995 official data, there were 1,831 Chinese Indonesians in Papua concentrated in the economic centers of Sorong (500), Jayapura (440) and Fak-Fak district, which at that time included Timika (600) (BPS 1996). These small numbers are one reason why the contemporary Chinese Indonesian community is less conspicuous than elsewhere in Indonesia. The other reason is that the Chinese community has tended to assimilate far more into Papuan society than in some other parts of Indonesia. Certainly Papua has not had the same history of anti-Chinese violence experienced in other regions of Indonesia.

Another small but influential ethnic group in Papua is the Kai Islanders. Large numbers of Kai were recruited by the Dutch to fill positions as state functionaries, mainly as low-ranking officials and schoolteachers. In contemporary Papua, a significant group of Kai Islanders has concentrated in Fak-Fak but they are also spread out, in smaller numbers, in the province’s main towns. With many coming from an educated background, Kai Islanders (and others from the neighboring islands of the Maluku) have developed a conspicuous presence in various NGOs, churches, and the professions. This presence has been a source of latent tension, particularly in the nongovernmental sector. Given Papuans’ marginalization from the private sector, many have tried to find employment not only in government but in the churches and NGOs. Some Papuan activists have criticized the leading role played by Kais in these institutions, even citing the historical role they played in perpetuating Dutch colonialism in Papua.²⁷ These criticisms in fact reflect some of the distinctly uncivil sentiments that have arisen among civil society organizations in Papua. The tensions between the Kai and Papuans have surfaced most clearly in Merauke, where Kai Islanders have headed NGO efforts to push for good governance, including exposing corruption in the local government. This campaign has brought them into direct confrontation with the Papua officials who now dominate the local government. According to church and NGO sources in Merauke, Kai activists were forced to find

refuge in the local church in mid-2004 after indigenous youths, instructed by the local *bupati*, threatened to burn down their premises and demanded that they leave the region immediately.²⁸

Like the ethnic groups cited earlier, other migrants have spread throughout the territory, particularly in urban settlements. Settler communities dominate the towns of the north coast and Timika. In Sorong town, for instance, migrants comprise over 70 percent of the total population. These figures, however, tend to obscure the fact that migrant settlements extend well beyond the towns. In fact, out of the total settler community in Papua nearly half reside in rural areas. This even spread of ethnic groups has overlaid the tribal diversity of Papuans, creating a mosaic of ethnicities and tribes across the territory.

This diversity within the settler community may explain why ethnic mobilization in Papua has not matched the intensity of communal politics in some other parts of Indonesia. In the neighboring Maluku, for instance, polarization has taken place along religious lines as Islamic and Christian communities compete for economic and bureaucratic power. In Papua, clusters of ethnic groups have concentrated in particular areas—a large Ambonese population in Sorong town, a concentration of Javanese in the southern district of Merauke, and the Kai and the Chinese elsewhere. These concentrations have roots going back to the Dutch colonial period. The most homogeneous regions in Papua are the highland districts of the interior—Paniai, Puncak Jaya, and Jayawijaya—where between 93 and 97 percent of the total population is composed of Papuans. But in all other districts one finds a mix of ethnic groups rather than two evenly matched rival communities. In the high-growth northern towns and Timika, in particular, an array of ethnic groups has settled.

If the sheer diversity among settlers and Papuans was one factor preventing ethnic polarization, the efforts of key ethnic leaders in managing tensions between Papuans and settlers were another. In this respect, the churches have been critical. The two largest ethnic associations in Papua, the South Sulawesi Family Association (KKSS) and the Toraja Family Association (IKT) have also played an important role in the managing of ethnic relations. When friction between communities surfaced, KKSS and IKT leaders joined with indigenous leaders to urge restraint. The KKSS

*ethnic mobilization in
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communal politics*

chairman in Papua, Tamsul Makkawaru, has described how the association developed cooperative relations with traditional tribal leaders and chiefs while also contributing to church building and other social activities.²⁹ Such overtures were motivated less by altruism than by enlightened self-interest since organizations like KKSS were dominated by successful traders. Tamsul claims that KKSS in Papua represents over 360,000 people and stresses that his priority is to maintain political stability and good ethnic relations. Far from being “conflict entrepreneurs,” therefore, leaders of the settler community have had few reasons to politicize ethnic differences in light of the economic success they have experienced. On the contrary, KKSS leaders and patrons, who represent some of the migrant community’s most successful businessmen, have urged new migrants to adapt to local cultures and reduce ethnic tensions.³⁰

To the extent that ethnic elites are able to assert leadership, their authority derives not only from their exalted status but also from the vertical links that exist in many migrant communities. Migration often strengthens ethnic bonds as new migrants tend to build ethnic enclaves. Leaders of the settler community wield their authority to ensure the maintenance of social relations and the conditions for capital accumulation. The large ethnic associations in Papua have represented the interests of established capital, providing not only vertical links to wage labor but also a mechanism through which capital can control labor. Aditjondro (1986: 51) notes that KKSS formulated a blacklist of 100 troublemakers from their own community for forced repatriation back to South Sulawesi—a measure designed to act as a deterrent for others. Similarly, KKSS leaders have discouraged their own youths from adopting old traditions of “pay-back” or using aggressive tactics in commerce that alienate Papuan traders. As one KKSS leader declared: “We have customs from South Sulawesi that are best not brought here” (p. 51). He added: “Maybe exposure to other traders particularly from Java could teach our own how to be more refined” (p. 56). While these mechanisms of social control have been important, one must be careful not to exaggerate the reach of such organizations, particularly among transient migrants, nor to idealize their commitment to defending harmonious social relations.

Religion

Mass migration and economic change have sharpened not only ethnic cleavages but also religious differences. In fact, indigenous leaders claim

that the government is attempting to Islamize the mainly Christian province. Before 1971, over 90 percent of the total population was Christian. The flow of migrants into the province from the 1970s has resulted in large numbers of Muslims settling in Papua—nearly 500,000 people by 2000. By this time Muslims comprise 25 percent of the total population, Christians 74 percent, other religious groups less than 0.5 percent. The Islamic and Christian populations in Papua tend to split along ethnic lines: over 96 percent of Papuans are Christians whereas nearly 66 percent of those from settler groups are Muslim. Moreover, the most controversial migration inflows were related to the early influx of Javanese migrants in the 1970s and 1980s followed by large numbers of economic migrants from South Sulawesi in the 1990s. These large influxes were almost entirely Muslim in composition, especially in the urban centers where Muslims tend to make up at least half the population.

With these inflows, the physical landscape of Papua's towns has changed as Muslim traders dominate the markets and Islamic influences have become increasingly visible. In fact, by the mid-1990s a large increase in mosque construction was recorded by the provincial department of religion (Athwa 2004: 102). Proselytizing by Muslim preachers is also on the rise, as it is for Christian missions. Prompted by the predominance of Christian educational foundations, Muslim leaders in the province established Yayasan Pendidikan Islam (Yapis) in 1968 to boost efforts to build Islamic schools in Papua. Mass Islamic organizations like Muhammadiyah and Nadhlatul Ulama (NU) are active in Papua, too, servicing Muslim transmigrants, Muslim civil servants, and Muslim traders and wage laborers. Muhammadiyah, devoted to education and other social activities, was established in the province in the late 1960s. Muhammadiyah had traditionally worked closely with NU, and in Papua the two have cooperated in jointly managing Yapis (p. 110). In addition to these large social organizations, smaller Islamic foundations and proselytizing groups have also been active, including the Kalimantan-based Hidayatullah and Pondok Pesantren Karya Pembangunan (p. 111).

While the growth of Islam in Papua following migratory inflows has prompted some general local concerns of Islamization, it was religious violence in the neighboring islands of the Maluku in 1999 and 2000 that

Mass migration and economic change have sharpened not only ethnic cleavages but also religious differences

gave rise to specific fears that conflict might spill into Papua. Community leaders were concerned that, in light of Papua's religious and ethnic mix, the province was vulnerable to an outbreak of conflict. Certainly the movement of Laskar Jihad into the province heightened these fears. By 2004, however, anxieties about communal relations had eased with reports indicating that the Islamic militias had disbanded or had at least become inactive. Nevertheless, religious leaders remain concerned.

The relative absence of religious violence can be traced to the demographic composition of religious communities. While religion tends to follow ethnic lines, the correspondence is not absolute. In fact, significant religious minorities of Muslims and Christians exist within the Papuan and settler populations. The Papuan community, for instance, includes a small Muslim minority comprising approximately 4 percent of the total population. This minority is more prominent

Islam is not traditionally viewed as an alien religion in Papua

than its numbers might suggest, however, as Papuan Muslims tend to concentrate in the Bird's Head region—in Kokas, Kaimana, Sorong, Raja Ampat, and Fak-Fak—where Islamic communities have existed for centuries. Islam, brought to

Papua by Muslim traders from the Malukus in the precolonial period, was actively embraced by local communities in the Bird's Head region. Some of these traders remained and established Islamic communities, elevating themselves as "rajas" owing to their links to the outside world and their mastery of the Malay language that opened access to external trade (Athwa 2004: 58). Thus Islam is not traditionally viewed as an alien religion in Papua. In more recent times, indigenous communities have been converted to Islam in Wamena, Merauke, Bintuni Bay, and Serui (*ibid.*, p. 100). The leaders of indigenous Muslim communities have become prominent figures in the province's social and political affairs. The chairman of the Provincial Council of Islamic Scholars in 2001, for instance, a Papuan Muslim, was one of the leaders urging restraint following religious tensions. Similarly, the secretary-general of the PDP was a well-known Papuan Muslim from the Fak-Fak region, Thaha Al Hamid, a key architect of the PDP's strategy of nonviolence.

Among settler communities, a significant Christian minority is evident, making up over one-third of the total population of settlers. One of the most striking features of this group is the extent to which Christian migrants have spread throughout the territory, representing a significant

minority in almost all districts. As with Papuan Muslims, many of the Christian settlers are notable leaders. Christians from the Maluku and North Sulawesi are prominent members of the provincial and local governments. Another element moderating religious relations in Papua is the government's practice of appointing mainly non-Muslim officers, often from Eastern Indonesia or North Sumatra, to senior posts in the military and police force in Papua. And the church itself has played a crucial role in bringing the Christian settler minority together with the Papuan majority in ways that mitigate religious tensions. The main Protestant church in Papua, the GKI, is proudly multiethnic and has bridged the ethnic divide separating Papuans and settlers in other social settings such as the marketplace. The GKI, a member of the national association of Protestant churches, promotes interaction between Papuans and migrants from other parts of Indonesia. Other major churches are pluralist in their composition and outlook as well. In fact, since large-scale settlement in the province, migrants have been discouraged from setting up their own churches. Papuan leaders have suggested that the New Order government prohibited the establishment of separate churches as a deliberate strategy to promote pluralism and break down ethnic cleavages.

These features of communal relations in Papua underscore the extent to which religious and ethnic differences blur—particularly at the elite level. In fact, many *adat* leaders and religious preachers define their role explicitly in terms of promoting good communal relations. The IFES (2003) public opinion survey illustrates the legitimacy accorded to religious leaders in exercising a mediating role between communities. Even the PDP, whose secretary-general is a prominent Papuan Muslim, has taken on a conflict-resolution role. Indeed, with its growing political marginalization, the PDP increasingly defines its main role as keeping communal and political tensions in check against efforts by the military to foment conflict in Papua.³¹ Viewed in this light, many of the so-called ethnic institutions often seen as responsible for creating religious division in fact represent key mechanisms for managing communal conflict.

Another salient issue is the division within religious communities themselves, particularly within the Christian community. In fact, the usual focus on the Christian/Islam divide tends to obscure the diversity of Christian churches in the province. Christians in Papua are divided into an array of denominations—reinforcing the remarkable diversity of Papua's plural society. In the south of the province, where German

Catholic missionaries have been most active, Catholics make up a near majority according to the 2000 census. On the north coast and in the interior, Protestant churches predominate, reflecting the influence of the Dutch reformist churches in the early decades of the twentieth century. On the north coast, in Biak Numfor, Protestants make up 83 percent of the population. In Manokwari, where the first missionaries settled in Papua, Protestants comprise 64 percent of the total population. In the interior of Jayawijaya, 84 percent of the people are Protestants, although pockets of majority Catholics can be identified as in Wamena town.

One of the major limitations of the 2000 census is that the category of “Protestant churches” does not disaggregate by denomination—masking the enormous diversity within the Christian community. According to one church source, there were 41 separate Christian denominations in Papua in 2003.³² Despite this diversity, sectarian disputes have been kept largely in check in Papua—notwithstanding the growth of new charismatic and evangelical churches with a proselytizing agenda. According to the Ministry for Religious Affairs, there was a 78 percent increase of registered “religious leaders” from Christian denominations from 1994 to 1998, a figure far in excess of the increase in Islamic preachers in the territory during the same period (BPS 2001b). This growth of proselytizing in Christian denominations, particularly the evangelical churches, suggests that Christian communities may have stepped up their religious activities as a reaction to large-scale migration of Muslims into the province.

Economic Classes

One of the key themes running through this study has been the strong sense of Papuan disadvantage created by economic marginalization. Here I examine the contemporary class structure in Papua to shed light on this process of marginalization.

The Economy and Class Dynamics

Before the 1970s, Papua’s economic structure was highly fragmented. Garnaut and Manning’s (1974) seminal study of the province in the early 1970s highlights the initial impact of modernization, particularly along the north coast. The picture they present depicts a province on the verge of sweeping socioeconomic change but still hampered by a lack of economic links not only between Papua and the rest of Indonesia but within Papua itself. The lack of basic transport and communication links, while rapidly improving, had proved to be a major impediment to integration

into the Indonesian economy and to trade and population mobility.

Over a decade later, Manning and Rumbiak (1989) revisited many of these issues and concluded that major changes had indeed taken place in the Papuan economy. Transport links with the rest of Indonesia had improved, and Papua had become increasingly integrated into the national economy. Between 1973 and 1990, the economy had grown at an impressive average rate of 6.3 percent, half of which was in the nonmining sector. The growing economy had also become more diversified and was no longer based solely on resources. The major impetus for this growth was the expansion in the public budget and new opportunities opened up by the closer integration into the national economy (Manning and Rumbiak 1989: 80). The resources sector remained important, however, representing the main source of foreign investment.

This trend of high economic growth continued throughout the 1990s boosted by three main factors: strong population growth; continued high levels of public expenditure; and the growing diversification of the Papuan economy. The discovery of large deposits of gold and copper by Freeport in the underground mine of Grasberg in 1988 far exceeded the original Ertzberg discovery. The Grasberg find reignited visions of Papua as a frontier economy and demonstrated the continued attractiveness of large-scale resource projects in the province. In 2002, Freeport paid \$243 million in taxes to the central government and \$20 million in royalties. The launching of the Tangguh natural gas project in 2002 by British Petroleum ensured that the resources sector would continue to play a central role in the economy. The economic prospects for the province were further boosted by the passing of the special autonomy law under which increased government revenues were allocated to the province. Provincial revenues totaled about Rp 700 billion in 2001, an increase of 50 percent over the previous year. By 2002, revenues had increased by nearly an additional 300 percent to Rp 1.95 trillion.³³

This growing economy has given rise to an ethnically differentiated labor force in the province. By examining statistical data from the 2000 population census, it is possible to build a picture of Papua's class composition and its correspondence to ethnic divisions. This helps to explain the patterns of participation and exclusion in the modern economy—a persistent theme of this study. What stands out above all else in these data is the large percentage of Papuans who remain engaged in agriculture (81.5 percent), with 70 percent growing food crops. Less than 3 percent of the

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not been realized*

Papuan workforce is employed in the growth parts of the economy (industry, trade, services, transportation). These figures illustrate that the goal of Indonesia's modernization strategy—producing social mobility through transferring Papuans into the modern workforce—has simply not been realized. The vast majority of Papuans remain engaged in food crop agriculture—out of 600,000 Papuans in the agricultural sector, over 500,000 tend food crops. In contrast, the majority of settler communities engaged in the agriculture sector—mainly transmigrants—have grown a range of produce for local and national markets including rice, soybeans, and maize (Arndt 1986). In the high-growth sectors of the economy, settler participation has far outstripped the low rates for Papuans. In the industrial sector, for instance, settlers have dominated. Given the province's tiny manufacturing base, the industrial sector is still made up primarily of mining and other resource projects.

The resources sector remains just a modest source of employment. Just over 30,000 people were employed in the sector in 2000, less than 3 percent of the entire workforce. The meager employment opportunities in the sector reflect the enclave nature of large resource projects. Of the total employees in the sector in 2000, fewer than 10,000 were Papuans. Although Papuan leaders have demanded increased employment opportunities for indigenous Papuans, expectations that large numbers of Papuans can be absorbed into mining and resource extraction projects are wildly unrealistic. This combination of unrealistic expectations and the high visibility and enclave nature of resource projects has bred deep resentment on the part of local communities toward resource companies.

In the trade and transport sectors, the predominance of settlers has been striking: settlers made up nearly 90 and 75 percent of the labor force respectively in 2000. Their stranglehold in these growth sectors can be traced to the 1980s when ethnic Sulawesi economic migrants began to move into the province in large numbers. Aditjondro (1986) has charted the different waves of migration from Sulawesi and the evolution of their economic interests. Early migrants from Sulawesi began as wage laborers in the ports or as petty traders integrated into Eastern Indonesian networks. Penetrating deep into Papua's jungles, Torajans were active in the logging and sawmill industries. Sulawesi migrants entered the transportation sector as well. The more successful migrants branched out as contractors

or opened businesses in a range of sectors. The first commercial taxi company in Jayapura was owned by a successful Bugis trader; automobile repair shops are owned by Torajans (Aditjondro 1986: 17).

Many of the early migrants from South Sulawesi who had arrived in Papua with few resources were able to accumulate capital, eventually building up large business groups.³⁴ Such was the entrepreneurial success of the Bugis, Makasarese, and other migrant traders that by the mid-1980s, the national daily *Kompas* was remarking that these traders “could even compete with Chinese in the markets and other urban centers of trade” (cited in Aditjondro 1986: 3). The development of large settler businesses, however, was not only made possible by a mastery of trade and commerce. These business interests were also boosted through settlers’ access to government contracts. As the economy grew and the state continued to play a large role in the economy, many migrants sought lucrative building contracts. Prominent members of ethnic associations such as KKSS and IKT also worked in the local bureaucracy, and it was through these ethnic networks that government jobs and contracts were distributed (Aditjondro 1986: 21). Once contracts were awarded, many project managers would recruit labor from their home provinces—reinforcing the ethnic differentiation of the workforce in Papua. The use of non-Papuan labor, as we have seen, had its origins in Dutch colonial times when migrants from Eastern Indonesia staffed the lower echelons of the Dutch bureaucracy and were brought in as wage labor in the resources sector. Decades later the vast majority of Papuans continue to be underrepresented in the wage labor force.

To summarize, therefore, the large-scale migration of recent decades has not only created continued flows of migrant wage laborers but has also resulted in the growth of settler capital in Papua. Indeed, ethnic Sulawesians have joined Indonesian Chinese as the key capital-owning classes in Papua. The settler community views the private sector as a means to social mobility; indigenous Papuans, by contrast, tend to look to the state as their main path to advancement (reinforced in recent years by the Papuanization of the local bureaucracy). While Papuan political elites have enjoyed the benefits of affirmative action policies, the vast majority of indigenous people have remained at the margins of the modern economy. The statistics of the labor force in Papua, therefore, show the persistence of a large Papuan agrarian population essentially tied to the land as small titleholders producing basic agricultural products for domestic consumption with surplus sold at local markets.

Explaining Class Disparities

What accounts for the disparities between settlers and Papuans in the modern labor force? Why have Papuans been so thoroughly excluded from the key growth areas of the economy and remain mired in the subsistence agricultural sector? Here I offer two explanations. The first relates to the cultural clash between settlers and Papuans, triggering uneven competition between them in trade and the labor market. Aditjondro (1986: 7), for instance, has highlighted the cultural values that facilitated the evolu-

Why have Papuans been so thoroughly excluded from the key growth areas of the economy?

tion of the Bugis and Makasarese as Eastern Indonesia's most prominent entrepreneurial groups. The ease with which migrants from Sulawesi sold their own land as a commodity to be exchanged to accumulate capital can be contrasted to the concept of custodianship that Papuans attach to the land. Dominant cultural values of settler communities, in other words, have promoted capital accumulation and free enterprise. Indeed, as one leader of the Bugis community has explained, traders from Sulawesi tend to differ from other ethnic groups in putting the profits they make back into their businesses rather than repatriating money to their home province.³⁵

In contrast to the entrepreneurial culture of ethnic Sulawesi traders, Papua's indigenous people embrace cultural values not always compatible with modern capitalist relations. The economic notion of land and natural resources as commodities is a largely alien concept in the customary belief systems of indigenous Papuans. Similarly, the diverse communities of Papuan society are dominated by an exchange culture, reflecting beliefs common throughout Melanesia, in which the process of exchange performs a central social function in establishing and maintaining reciprocal obligations within the community. In traditional Papuan societies, exchanging pigs or other commodities is central in resolving conflicts, forming clan and family alliances, securing marriage rights, and so on. In such belief systems, there is little benefit in accumulating capital. Social prestige and advance come with exchanging goods, not accruing capital. In other words: Papuans' customary beliefs give rise to an economy of exchange relations that serves as the basis for social interaction which is largely incompatible with a capitalist mode of accumulation. Unless Papuans reconcile traditional beliefs with modern necessities, it is difficult

to see how indigenous economic mobility will occur in Papua. Efforts to promote capital accumulation among Papuan traders, through creation of small kiosks, for example, have met with little success. The retention of strong clan and kinship relations involving monetary obligations has largely militated against such initiatives.

Of course this clash of cultural values has resulted not just in Papuan marginalization but also in growing conflicts between settler traders and indigenous communities. Akmad and Pujo Semedi (2003), for instance, have shown how ethnic tensions result from the uneven terms of petty trade and the clash of cultures that one finds throughout contemporary Papua.³⁶ Their careful study of marketplaces in the Jayapura region shows how Papuan traders are caught within a “dual economy” that puts them at a major disadvantage in economic relations. Thus many Papuan traders have retained their traditional subsistence lifestyle, selling the surplus from garden crops grown primarily for domestic consumption. At the same time, these traders have had to compete with settlers in the marketplace who are strongly capitalist in orientation. Not surprisingly, the settlers’ competitive manner has stamped them as “aggressive” in the eyes of many Papuans. The trading practices of Makasarese traders, in particular, have provoked strong criticism from Papuan activists who claim that local traders have become the victims of “deceptive” trading practices by migrants.³⁷ Such perceptions and stereotypes have triggered ethnic tensions and periodic conflict.

The second main impediment that accounts for low Papuan participation in modern economic activities is their lack of education and vocational skills. Papuans are simply unable to compete with settlers in the rapid-growth sectors of the economy owing to an enormous gap in education and skill levels. Over 80 percent of Papuans have had only an elementary education; 62 percent of whom have not even passed elementary school. At the other end of the scale, less than 1 percent of Papuans have tertiary qualifications and only 16 percent a high school diploma. These figures differ markedly from the educational levels attained by settlers. Nearly 50 percent of settlers have either tertiary education or a high school diploma. Out of the total number of graduates in Papua, 21 percent are Papuans and 79 percent are from the settler community. These stark dis-

Papuan traders are caught within a “dual economy” that puts them at a major disadvantage in economic relations

parities between the two main communities account for Papuans' low participation rates in the modern economy. In the resources sector, large companies such as Freeport and BP have sought to recruit Papuans at all levels, but their efforts have been impeded by the shallow pool of qualified Papuans. Although the government claims to be addressing the special educational needs of Papuans, the continuing gap between the communities represents a systematic failure of the state to provide basic education, particularly to the remote isolated areas where the majority of indigenous Papuans live.

With the passing of the special autonomy law, government efforts to bridge the educational gap accelerated. Under the financial provisions of the law, 30 percent of central government transfers were to be allocated for education. The provincial government also announced a number of major initiatives on education, including the governor's pledge to waive all education fees for Papuans while offering 170 government scholarships for Papuans to study outside the province.³⁸ Despite these ambitious plans, the provincial government was sharply criticized for its lack of a well-thought-out educational policy. The most serious criticism charged that the government had allocated insufficient funds to education and was in fact in breach of the special autonomy law. According to a preliminary analysis of the first provincial budget passed under the law in 2002, expenditures on education reached a mere 7 percent of the total—far short of the stipulated 30 percent.³⁹ Others criticized the provincial government's continuing preoccupation with expanding tertiary education at the expense of basic education. A number of prominent educators in the province have highlighted the shortage in vocational training for Papuans, a key gap in the educational system.⁴⁰ In the absence of a better education policy and a stronger commitment to elementary education, it is difficult to see how Papuans' participation rates in the growth sectors of the economy can be improved.

Papuanization, Partition, and Rising Tribalism

With cultural and educational factors hampering greater Papuan participation in the private sector, the local bureaucracy has remained a key source of employment and the main vehicle for indigenous social mobility. But there is a paradox: while the indigenous population has remained largely alienated from the state, displaying low levels of confidence in public institutions, educated Papuans have engaged in intense competition for

official positions. Nearly 7 percent of the Papuan workforce is engaged in the services sector, the largest portion in government employment. The civil service has been the main employer of educated Papuans since Dutch efforts in the late colonial period to recruit greater numbers of Papuans.⁴¹ During the rule of the New Order, however, non-Papuans dominated senior levels of the provincial and district administrations. Strong reservations had long circulated in Jakarta about entrusting strategic posts to Papuans and the potential threat to territorial integrity. Although a series of Papuans were appointed as governor throughout the 1990s and others were recruited into the civil service, the senior levels of the bureaucracy remained non-Papuan. These policies of exclusion fueled obvious resentment among educated Papuans.

All of this changed, however, in 1998 with the fall of Suharto and the opening of a new democratic space in which Papuans could articulate their grievances—including demands that Papuan underrepresentation in senior positions of the bureaucracy be rectified immediately. The call for Papuanization was in fact widely viewed as a social necessity. With Papuans grossly underrepresented in the private sector, greater participation of Papuans in the public sector, particularly at senior levels, was viewed as crucial to preventing wide-scale violence. The special autonomy law of 2001 contained provisions for affirmative action that formalized a process of Papuanization of the bureaucracy already under way. The rapid movement of native Papuans into senior government positions after 1998 was perhaps the most striking change in local politics since the fall of Suharto. By 2003, virtually all *bupatis* in the province were Papuans, as were the governor and vice-governor.⁴² It is also estimated that 80 percent of senior bureaucratic posts (so-called Echelon 2 and 3 positions) were Papuans. Furthermore, under Police Chief Made Pastika the police claimed to have dramatically increased the number of Papuan recruits; Pastika said that 443 out of the 600 police recruits for 2002 were Papuans.⁴³

The other major policy driving the expansion of a Papuan bureaucratic elite was the creation of new administrative units that significantly increased the number of districts and provinces. From 2001 until mid-2004, some 98 new district and municipal (*kabupaten/kota*) governments came into being—bringing the total of local governments to 428 through-

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out Indonesia. In Papua this trend was even more pronounced: the number of districts in the province doubled from 14 to 28. The government's stated aim with this policy was "to bring government closer to the people," particularly in areas that had been neglected. But in so fundamentally redrawing the country's administrative boundaries, the policy also triggered a cascade of demands from local communities for the establishment of their own districts. The policy of administrative redivision in fact encouraged tribal elites and local officials to agitate for their own governments with the aim of capturing state resources. For many Papuan leaders who saw the post-Suharto era as an opportunity to consolidate local unity, these measures echoed the divisive policies of the New Order. Some Papuan leaders claimed that the policy had a political agenda aimed at dividing the ethnic unity of provinces.

Whatever Jakarta's motives, the redrawing of administrative boundaries sparked significant conflict and competition in Papua. With vastly expanded opportunities now afforded to Papuan officials, competition among the political elite intensified. At the same time, the special autonomy law resulted in large flows of new revenues to the provincial government—raising the stakes in the competition over economic and political spoils among Papuan elites. In fact, disagreements over the distribution of special autonomy funds immediately triggered a conflict within local government ranks. Officials at the district level (*kabupaten*) charged that Jayapura had failed to distribute special autonomy funds evenly across the province. In particular, they questioned the revenue-sharing formula by which the province received 60 percent for the province with only 40 percent to be shared among the districts. Ultimately this struggle over the allocation of autonomy funds developed into a serious rift between Jayapura and the district governments, a rift that had tribal overtones. A University of Cendrawasih assessment concluded: "The implementation of special autonomy provoked primordial sentiments and regional affiliations within the regional government bureaucracy and the community" (Democratic Center 2003). These sentiments related to social inequality: Papua's better-educated tribes from coastal regions dominated the provincial government while disadvantaged tribes, mainly from the highland and interior, tended to be represented only in district governments.

Concern that Jakarta's policies were designed to trigger local conflicts in Papua was reinforced by Megawati's controversial presidential decree on January 27, 2003, that subdivided the province into three parts.

Megawati's decision predictably sparked immediate local opposition as it was widely seen as an attempt to undercut the special autonomy law by splitting the province into Irian Jaya Barat, Irian Jaya Tengah, and Papua. The government's new policy also triggered a power struggle within local government ranks. Within days of the 2003 presidential instruction, Abraham Atururi, former vice-governor of the province and retired marine general, had gone to Manokwari to install himself as governor of the new province.⁴⁴ While Atururi's appointment had not been officially recognized by Home Affairs, he reportedly had strong backing from the powerful State Intelligence Agency (BIN). The DPRD chairman, Jon Ibo, claimed that Atururi had insisted on his claim for governorship by brandishing a letter from BIN Chief Hendropriyono instructing Atururi to take up his position as governor.⁴⁵

With such backing Atururi quickly moved to assert his authority over the local bureaucracy. Crucially he received support from the district head of Manokwari, who had been dissatisfied with the redistribution of special autonomy funds to the districts. As opposition to Atururi mounted from both the provincial government and other supporters of special autonomy, the self-appointed governor tapped into deep-seated tribal and regional sentiments. Claiming that outsiders always spoke for the local tribes in Manokwari, he proclaimed that his governorship would usher in a new era in which local tribes could speak for themselves.⁴⁶ He also alluded to the spiritual significance of Manokwari as the first place where foreign missionaries had settled in Papua, bringing Christianity with them.⁴⁷ Atururi was particularly attentive in cultivating support among the majority Arfak tribe that had traditionally claimed to have been discriminated against by government policies favoring other tribes.

The use of such tribal and anti-Jayapura sentiment no doubt had its source in legitimate grievances. But Atururi's politics raised serious concerns that opportunistic local officials with their Jakarta patrons were manipulating tribal sentiment. Many religious and *adat* leaders were particularly concerned about the specter of rising tribalism and internal tensions within Papua erupting into conflict and dividing Papuans. These fears were realized as the presidential instruction set off a cascade of demands from local officials and their supporters throughout Papua. A host of Papuan leaders, with supporters in tow, made visits to Jakarta to demand the establishment of their own province. Local officials outside Jayapura saw an opening to stake their own claims to governorships linked

to the establishment of new provinces.

As demands for partition mounted, other local conflicts intensified. The attempt to establish the province of Central Irian Jaya, for instance, provoked clashes between supporters and opponents of partition. On August 22, 2003, the chairman of the Mimika District Assembly (DPRD), Andreas Anggaibak, emboldened by the success of Atururi in West Irian Jaya, declared the establishment of a new province in Timika.⁴⁸ Anggaibak had a checkered past as one of the key protagonists in the 1 percent fund controversy examined earlier. A key impetus for the declaration of the new province was hatched in a meeting in Bali in the middle of 2003 at which officials from Jakarta and Papua and DPRD members agreed to move forward.⁴⁹ This decision-making process highlighted how local officials, with backing from central government patrons, sought to exploit demands for local representation in government—in the process triggering local conflict. In fact, Anggaibak's declaration provoked a clash between pro-partition and anti-partition groups that resulted in four days of rioting throughout the city and surrounding areas. By the end of the unrest, a key tribal leader opposing the declaration claimed that 5 people had been killed, 9 women had been raped, and 95 houses and buildings had been damaged or destroyed.⁵⁰ In response to this violence, the central government was forced to postpone plans to establish Central Irian Jaya province, although elements in Jakarta and Papua continued to agitate for the establishment of a new province with its capital in Biak.

The divisive results of Papuanization and partition not only encompass rising tribal sentiment and elite competition among the Papuans. They also have serious implications for relations between Papuans and settlers. A major concern to emerge in 2004 was fear of a backlash against

the prospect emerged that settlers would once again capture key posts in provincial and local governments

Papuanization as people grow disenchanted with Papuan officials who have not lived up to expectations. Indeed the emergence of a new indigenous leadership class in Papua has resulted in elite enrichment rather than indigenous empowerment. With one provincial official estimating that 3,000 new senior-level positions were created as a result of administrative redistricting, the prospect emerged that settlers would once again capture key posts in provincial and local governments—adding to Papuan resentment and triggering more conflict. Today political leaders and offi-

cials from the settler community are positioned to compete over local government positions once again, particularly in the main towns where settlers far outnumber Papuans. Given prevailing Papuan/settler dynamics, local electoral politics is likely to become a source of contention and communal conflict in the future.

Lessons

This study has charted the rapid socioeconomic changes that have occurred in Papua since the 1970s. I have also examined the historical background against which these changes have taken place by briefly recounting Papua's history of contact with the colonial and postcolonial state and the evolution of a plural society. The main focus has been an analysis of recent data showing how hundreds of thousands of migrants from other parts of Indonesia have resettled in the territory either through official transmigration programs or as unsponsored economic migrants. Such migrant inflows have increased competition over employment, land, and resources in Papua. Indigenous people have experienced rapid social change in terms of economic dislocation, growing pressure on resources, environmental degradation, and, above all, a sense of being overwhelmed by the influx of migrants. Papuans have not played a significant role in the high-growth sectors of the economy such as trade, transport, and resources. Except for a small educated elite, the vast majority of Papuans remain on the margins of the modern economy, struggling to make the wrenching transition to modernity in the wake of the onslaught produced by the modern state and economy.

This experience of displacement and marginalization has fueled Papuan resentment and persistent calls for independence. The spread of Papuan resentment is based upon not only a sense of ethnic disadvantage but a specific set of grievances related to indigenous rights and encroachment on traditional lands and resources. Papuan leaders argue that the government has pursued a deliberate policy of populating the province with migrants in order to dilute Papua's indigenous culture and assimilate Papuans into an alien nation. While these policies have sought to subordinate tribal and ethnic identities to Indonesian national identity through a process of acculturation, the opposite effect has been the result, deepening ethnic tension and tribal affiliations. If anything the dislocation created by rapid socioeconomic change has defined Papuan ethnopolitical identity more sharply and further alienated Papuans from the state.

In making this case, however, it is important to avoid exaggerating the strength of Papuan political identity. Clearly the policies of the Indonesian state have sharpened a sense of political identity based on a common experience of marginalization and displacement. But as we have seen, rapid

Capitalism and mass migration have had paradoxical effects: they have brought Papuans together but simultaneously divided them

socioeconomic change has also divided the Papuan community among itself. Capitalism and mass migration have had paradoxical effects: they have brought Papuans together but simultaneously divided them. Thus while the inflow of thousands of migrants from outside the province heightened a shared sense of Papuan ethnic identity in opposition to settler communities, growing competition over resources provoked traditional rivalries among Papuan tribes. Some of the

most intense competition over the benefits from modernization occurred among neighboring communities. One reason for the salience of communal and tribal conflict is the fact that the state has pursued a divide-and-rule strategy to weaken Papuan resistance to resource exploitation and central government rule. Taken together these divisive forces have contributed to persistent social conflict in Papua.

The province, however, has not descended into widespread communal conflict as in other parts of Eastern Indonesia. Papua's resistance to efforts to foment widespread conflict can be traced to the mechanisms developed for managing ethnic and religious relations. This inquiry shows that Papua is endowed with an array of cross-communal linkages that have been crucial to maintaining social relations. The question remains, however, whether further inflows of settlers will overwhelm the mechanisms for social control and elite management that have so far kept tensions from being converted into widespread ethnic unrest. The divisive role of the military leads one to a rather pessimistic prognosis on this point. Furthermore, with indigenous leaders increasingly facing state repression and internal disunity, Papuan resentment is more likely to be expressed through hostility toward settlers than through nationalist mobilization, which has diminished as a viable channel to articulate grievances.

While the transmigration program has been dramatically scaled back since 1998, few signs have emerged that spontaneous migration to Papua has slowed. Provisions in the special autonomy law intended to curb migration appear largely unenforceable. Moreover, reports have emerged

throughout 2004 that some government officials have canvassed plans to boost the transmigration program once again—this time to levels that would far exceed anything Papua has experienced. It seems that the assimilationist dreams of Indonesian state officials live on. Yet the most urgent social issue facing Papua is to remedy the disadvantage suffered by isolated Papuan communities, which remains the key to constructing peaceful ethnic relations on a sustainable basis. Until this occurs, local resentment will continue to fuel discontent and this is likely to lead to continuing conflict.

Recommendations

Based on the investigation presented above and the lessons that have been drawn, this study offers a series of recommendations that are enumerated in Appendix 1 (pages 67–69). These recommendations are addressed to key parties to the conflict: namely, the central government, the provincial government, Papuan and settler community leaders, and the international community. The common theme running through these recommendations is the need for the respective parties to work towards improving governance in the province as a precondition to redressing core grievances driving the conflict.

Endnotes

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1. The census of 1961 covered the Bird's Head region, Digul, and Cendrawasih Bay, approximately 30 percent of the territory's landmass (Koentjaraningrat 1994).
2. All contemporary figures cited in this paper are taken from the 2000 population census unless otherwise indicated. The author gratefully acknowledges the assistance of research and library staff at the Badan Statistik Pusat (BPS) both in Jakarta and Jayapura.
3. The other reason for the light colonial presence was the fact that early settlers had been "doomed to failure" as they "were powerless against the tropical diseases raging on the island" that decimated the new settlements (Government of Netherlands 1960: 5).
4. Attempts to encourage Eurasians from Java to settle in Papua met with disastrous results. In an early version of transmigration, the Dutch urged Eurasians who were concentrated in the densely populated island of Java to settle in Papua and establish their own agricultural colonies. But after years of being unable to eke out a living in Papua, these settlers returned to Java completely disillusioned (Penders 2002: 100).
5. *Amber* is a Biak word meaning "foreigner." It was used primarily, but not exclusively, to refer to Eastern Indonesian settlers and Chinese traders in Papua. Rutherford (2003) illustrates how the concept of *amber* has a very complex genealogy and social function in Biak in which locals themselves aspire to becoming an *amberi* through access to modern education and the state or exposure to

the outside world. Through this process of becoming an *amberi*, Papuans can gain prestige and status by drawing on external sources of authority.

6. This is not to claim that local populations were static. Historians have charted the movement of Papuans out of the rich agricultural areas of the interior to coastal areas. Malaria had a devastating impact on coastal populations, however, which probably explains the differential between the densely populated interior and the sparser populations of the coastal areas. Historians claim that by the eighteenth century the flow of people from the highlands to the coastal regions had slowed considerably. See Koentjaraningrat (1994: 102).
7. Some coastal Papuans, however, did participate in the Indonesian nationalist struggle. This is hardly surprising given the long history of links between Papua and Eastern Indonesia. Participation in the “revolution” was reflected in the emergence of pro-Indonesian parties as well as a series of nationalist revolts that took place in Jayapura and elsewhere. The strongholds of pro-Indonesian sentiment were the coastal communities of Serui, where the Sulawesi leader Dr. Sam Ratulangi had been exiled by the Dutch. Ratulangi developed a strong local following in Serui. Chauvel’s essays (2003) provide an illuminating account of these developments.
8. For the clearest official statement outlining the modernization strategy see Moertopo (1972; 1974).
9. This view is reflected in a Government of Netherlands report (1951: 5–6) stating that Papua “is not a fertile country, moreover its potentialities for development are handicapped by its unhealthy climate, the impassibility of the territory and the lack of labor.” Over the next ten years the Dutch began to make ambitious development plans in forestry, fisheries, and above all agriculture. Despite Papua’s rich resource base and plans to carry out aerial mapping and geological surveys in 1960, mining activities remained confined to the Sorong oil fields; see Government of Netherlands report (1951: 28–29, 41–42; 1960: 20). It would take the introduction of Indonesian rule to open up the resource sector.
10. The issue of resources and the Papua conflict is addressed in more detail in a report by the International Crisis Group (2002).
11. Among others I would include in this list the following: the late Michael Rumbiak, Papua’s preeminent demographer; the human rights activist John Rumbiak, perhaps the best-known Papuan in the international community; the scholar Benny Giay, whose work represents the most systematic critique of New Order policies; the scholar Agus Alua, who has documented the contemporary debates over independence; the DPRD chairman John Ibo, the most influential critic of the central government’s policies toward Papua; and of course various pro-independence spokesmen, the most prominent being Thom Beanal and Thaha Al Hamid in addition to Willy Mendowen and Don Flassy.
12. Agus Alua, on behalf of the PDP, has done valuable work in compiling and documenting the debates that occurred in various pro-independence forums. See the various publications by Agus Alua.
13. For a succinct account of the land issue and the resentment it has created see Ballard (2002).
14. Cited in BBC World Service via www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/people.features/ihavearightto/four_b/casestudy_art2.

Accessed on October 15, 2004.

15. Official figures from Badan Pusat Statistik (BPS) cited in *Cendrawasih Pos*, March 30, 2004, p. 2.
16. Transmigration figures can be found in *Indonesian Statistics Yearbook*, Badan Statistik Pusat: Jakarta various editions.
17. See “Tunda Transmigrasi ke Papua,” *Kompas*, February 11, 2000.
18. Iskandar (1997: 221). For 1991–92, for instance, Papua received Rp 11,500 per capita while the national average was only 3,200.
19. “Irianese Life Expectancy Only 40 Years,” *Jakarta Post*, February 16, 2000.
20. Interview with YPMD staff, a long-standing community development organization run by Papuan activists, Jayapura, March 30, 2004.
21. Interview with the director of the Legal Aid Institute Papua, Demianus Wakman, Jayapura, April 22, 2002.
22. By 2003, reports of Laskar Jihad had died down; there were indications that the militant group had disbanded or had at least become dormant after the Bali bombing due to leadership and financial problems.
23. One of the key local people behind the militia in Wamena claimed that efforts to train this group were conducted with funding from the Yayasan Lembah Baliem, an organization that emerged in late New Order years under the patronage of Lt. Gen. Hendropriyono, chief of the state intelligence agency under Megawati. Confidential interview, Wamena, May 8, 2003.
24. Interview with a leader linked to the militia, Wamena, May 8, 2003.
25. See “President Endorses Civilian ‘Guards,’” *Jakarta Post*, July 2, 2003; “Megawati Calls for Civilian Militias to Curb Rebels,” *Straits Times*, July 2, 2003.
26. “Keberadaan Eurico Guterres di Timika Meresahkan,” *Sinar Harapan*, December 5, 2003.
27. Confidential interview, Jayapura, September 23, 2004.
28. Interview with the head of a church-based rights organization in Merauke, September 21, 2004.
29. Interview with Tamsul Makkawaru, chairman of the association, Jayapura, June 10, 2002.
30. Ibid.
31. Confidential interview, Jayapura, May 9, 2003.
32. Interview with Br. Theo van den Broek, Jayapura, May 8, 2003.
33. The budget figures are from a University of Cendrawasih economist, Julius Ary Mollet; interview, Jayapura, August 16, 2002.
34. Aditjondro (1986: 17) lists the ten largest companies owned by Sulawesi migrants in the mid-1980s, drawn from the 1960s generation of traders. He also recounts many of the “rags to riches” stories of these intrepid migrants.
35. Interview with Tamsul Makkawaru, Jayapura, June 10, 2002.
36. Two master’s theses from the University of Gadjah Mada in Yogyakarta present detailed research on several marketplaces in Jayapura and surrounding areas. Both studies depict an overwhelming dominance of outside traders, particularly Bugis.

See Akmad (2002) and Handro (2003).

37. Interview with YPMD staff, Jayapura, March 30, 2004.
38. Interview with Governor Drs. Jaap Solossa, Jayapura, December 2, 2002.
39. This was the figure according to a preliminary analysis by a local economist, Julius Ary Mollet; interview, Jayapura, August 16, 2002.
40. Pers. comm., Dr. Agus Sumule, February 25, 2004.
41. My account of the evolution of the civil service is based on interviews with long-standing civil servants in Papua conducted in Jayapura and Jakarta, May 9–10 and July 16, 2003, respectively.
42. Interview with senior Papuan official, Jayapura, May 9, 2003.
43. Interview with Provincial Police Chief Drs. Made P. Pastika, Jayapura, August 15, 2002.
44. *Cendrawasih Pos*, February 7, 2003.
45. Interview, Jayapura, February 21, 2003.
46. One of Atururi's key local supporters was the chairman of the Arfak youth group Ikatan Mahasiswa Arfak in Manokwari, Lazarus Indouw, who demanded that anyone rejecting Atururi as governor should leave Manokwari immediately. See *Cendrawasih Pos*, February 4, 2003.
47. Pers. comm., local NGOs monitoring the process, June 1, 2003.
48. For extensive coverage see *Media Indonesia*, September 2, 2003.
49. Kompas, August 25, 2003; *Papua Post*, August 6, 2003.
50. Interview with Lemasa Chairman Yopi Kilangan, Jayapura, October 5, 2003.

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Appendix 1: Recommendations

The central government should:

- Commit to implementing special autonomy fully and promptly, including establishing the Papuan People's Assembly (MRP).
- Abandon attempts to create the province of Central Irian Jaya and begin public consultations with Papuan stakeholders on the redefinition of administrative boundaries in the province.
- Abandon plans to resume a large-scale transmigration program to Papua and commit to consulting with the provincial government on migration as stipulated in the special autonomy law.
- Develop a comprehensive population policy for Papua, based on stakeholder consultations, that takes into account the deleterious effect that mass migration has had on the indigenous people.
- Commission a comparative study of how other countries have promoted indigenous economic mobility and addressed indigenous landownership.
- Develop a specific policy on indigenous peoples on the basis of the comparative study, one that implements international standards set under UN instruments to protect the rights of indigenous peoples.
- Renounce previous central government support for the establishment of militia groups and declare sanctions for officials supporting militia groups or other civilian paramilitaries.

- Commit to undertaking internal military reform—beginning with eliminating the role of the TNI in protecting large resource projects and its involvement in a range of commercial activities in Papua.
- Develop, through the General Elections Commission (KPU) and other institutions, a special civic education campaign in Papua that focuses on developing an informed electorate and peaceful campaigning.

Provincial and district governments should:

- Ensure that the MRP is sufficiently funded and representative of community aspirations by using democratic methods for selecting MRP candidates.
- Remain committed to special autonomy by drafting all necessary implementing regulations immediately.
- Reorient local development from large purchases of equipment and infrastructure projects to a basic needs approach.
- Reorient education policy from a focus on tertiary institutions by concentrating resources on elementary education and the establishment of technical colleges to boost a manufacturing sector.
- Prioritize public expenditure on improving service delivery to isolated communities and building government capacity to do so.
- Renegotiate the division of special autonomy funds to ensure a fairer distribution between province and district.
- Establish criteria based on standards of transparent and accountable governance before special funds are released to districts.
- Redefine the province's functions by reducing its development and service delivery role and developing a supervisory and capacity-building role to train and monitor local governments, including ensuring districts' compliance with special autonomy and good governance.
- Ensure that transparent budget processes are followed and that funding allocations to the health and education sectors are consistent with levels stipulated in the special autonomy law.
- Adopt initiatives aimed at generating employment for Papuans, particularly in the nonmining sector.

- Promote community-based resource management models for potential investors in the province.

Community leaders in Papua should:

- Ensure that MRP members take a leading role in formulating impact studies on indigenous rights as the basis for policy recommendations for local governments.
- Provide necessary research and sectoral expertise to bolster the MRP's policy review capacity.
- Continue efforts to build cross-ethnic lines of communication and elite mechanisms that manage ethnic and religious relations.
- Promote peaceful political campaigning among communities and educate the public on choosing candidates on the basis of good governance to counter tribal and ethnic mobilization and money politics.

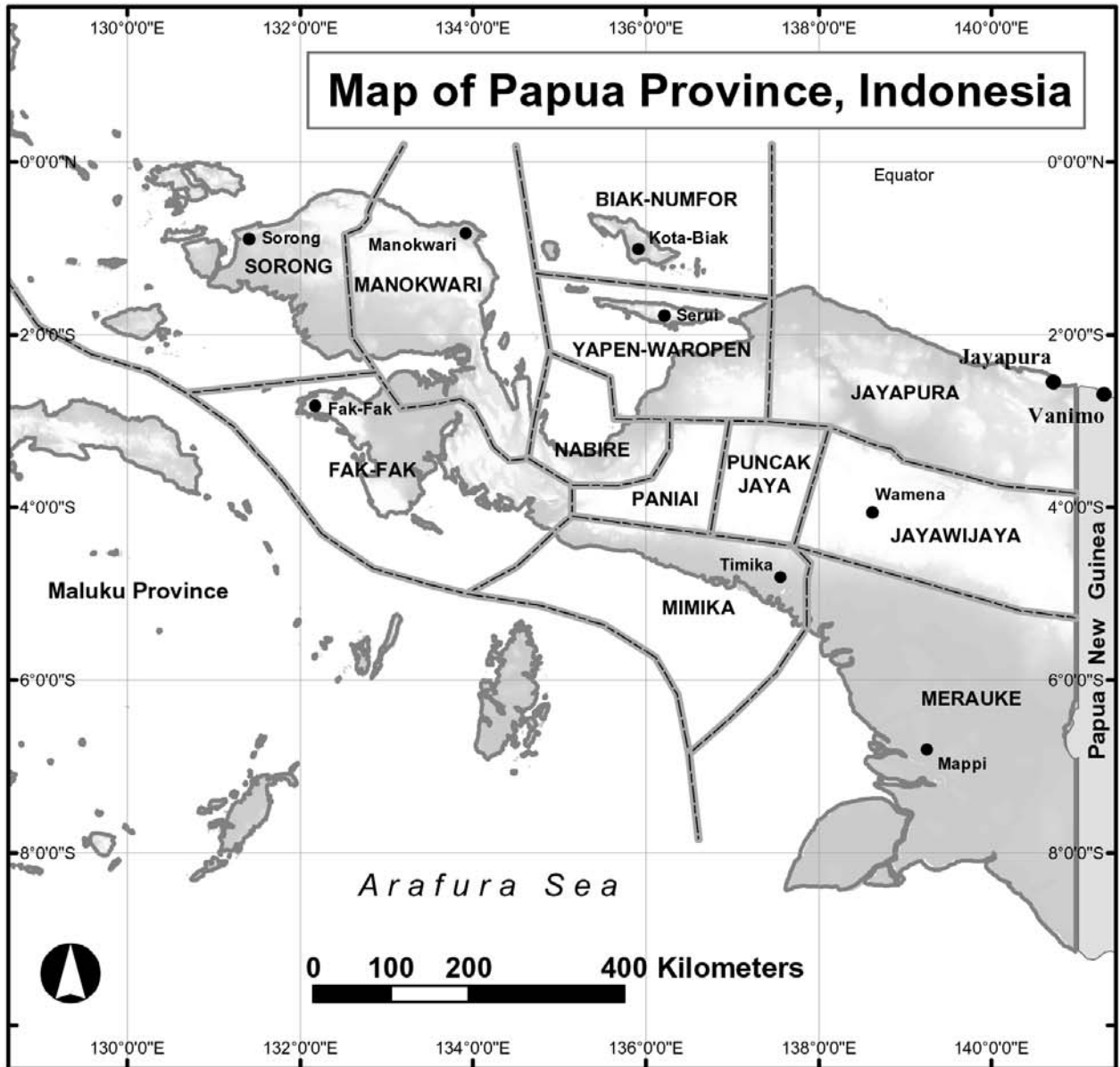
The international community should:

- Support efforts to build local government capacity in budgeting, good governance, and service delivery in the health and education sectors, particularly in remote districts.
- Support efforts to develop local media and NGOs, particularly focused on governance, to ensure emerging checks on executive authority.
- Continue to urge implementation of the special autonomy law.
- Promote community-based resource management models to the government, resource companies, and local communities.
- Support local adat associations to participate in public policymaking that impacts on indigenous peoples.
- Monitor reports on militias in the province and their links to the military and, if there is evidence of militia activity, urge the Indonesian government to prosecute militia leaders and their supporters.
- Support direct election of local government heads in Papua by assisting the General Elections Commission to develop a transparent legal framework and helping regional chapters of the commission to build capacity to administer the elections; support civic education efforts by NGOs to ensure peaceful campaigning and an informed electorate.

Background of the Papua Conflict

The Indonesian province of Papua (formerly Irian Jaya) is a territory whose political status has long been subject to debate. Western New Guinea first appeared as part of the Netherlands Indies in official documents issued in 1828 and 1848; yet neither the Dutch, nor the Tidoran sultans, whose rule over the “Papuan Islands” provided the basis for the Netherlands’ claims, exercised effective control in the territory. It wasn’t until 1898 that the Indies government established the first permanent post. This situation changed following World War II, when the Dutch retained western New Guinea after the rest of the Indies gained independence as the Republic of Indonesia. In the Round Table Agreement of 1949, a clause stipulated that the territory’s fate would be decided within a year. When bilateral talks broke down, Indonesia lobbied for the recovery of the territory, which it called West Irian, first through diplomacy then by threatening war. The Netherlands initially responded by accelerating the colony’s passage towards self-rule. Dutch officials oversaw elections for a New Guinea Council, which inaugurated a flag and regalia for a future West Papuan state on December 1, 1961. Eventually, the Netherlands yielded to American pressure and agreed to a settlement with Indonesia. The New York Agreement of 1962 called for western New Guinea’s transfer to the United Nations, then Indonesia, which was to hold an Act of Free Choice in which the territory’s inhabitants would choose between independence and integration into the republic. On May 1, 1963, Indonesia took control of the territory, and in 1969, 1022 carefully supervised (some say intimidated) individuals voted unanimously in favor of integration. An armed separatist movement waxed and waned over the first three decades of Indonesian rule, accompanied by military reprisals and widespread reports of human rights violations. After the resignation of Indonesia’s President Suharto on May 21, 1998, the independence movement took on a more inclusive, nonviolent form. At a February 26, 1999 meeting in Jakarta, a Team of 100 provincial leaders presented then President Habibie with a demand for West Papua’s independence. Back in the province, pro-independence activists convened talks that coalesced in the Papuan National Congress of May 21-June 4, 2000. The Congress resulted in a resolution confirming the leadership of the Papuan Presidium Council and directing this executive body to pursue independence through peaceful dialogue. Following the Congress, the

central government launched a crackdown involving the arrest of pro-independence leaders and the banning of the West Papuan flag. On November 11, 2001, Theys Eluay, the Presidium chairman, was found murdered; members of the Indonesian Special Forces (Kopassus) later were convicted of the crime. During the same month, the Indonesian legislature passed a bill based on a draft prepared by a group of Papuan intellectuals granting the province special autonomy and a new name. The fate of the 2001 special autonomy law (UU No. 21/2001), which provides the province with a greater share of the territory's vast natural resource earnings and calls for the founding of an indigenous upper house, came into question in January 2003, when President Megawati Sukarnoputri signed an instruction (Inpres No. 1/2003) ordering the immediate implementation of a 1999 law (UU No. 45/1999) dividing Irian Jaya into three new provinces. Between August 23 and September 7, 2003, rioting between pro-and anti-division groups in the mining town, Timika, cost five people their lives.



- Provincial Capital
- Other Towns
- ⋈ District Boundaries (pending legislation)

Note: Map boundaries and locations are approximate. Geographic features and their names do not imply official endorsement or recognition by the UN.

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Project Information

The Dynamics and Management of Internal Conflicts in Asia

Project Rationale, Purpose and Outline

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Rationale

Internal conflicts have been a prominent feature of the Asian political landscape since 1945. Asia has witnessed numerous civil wars, armed insurgencies, coups d'état, regional rebellions, and revolutions. Many have been protracted; several have far reaching domestic and international consequences. The civil war in Pakistan led to the break up of that country in 1971; separatist struggles challenge the political and territorial integrity of China, India, Indonesia, Burma, the Philippines, Thailand, and Sri Lanka; political uprisings in Thailand (1973 and 1991), the Philippines (1986), South Korea (1986), Taiwan, Bangladesh (1991), and Indonesia (1998) resulted in dramatic political change in those countries; although the political uprisings in Burma (1988) and China (1989) were suppressed, the political systems in these countries as well as in Vietnam continue to confront problems of political legitimacy that could become acute; and radical Islam poses serious challenges to stability in Pakistan, Indonesia, Malaysia, and India. In all, millions of people have been killed in the internal conflicts, and tens of millions have been displaced. And the involvement of external powers in a competitive manner (especially during the Cold War) in several of these conflicts had negative consequences for domestic and regional security.

Internal conflicts in Asia (as elsewhere) can be traced to three issues—national identity, political legitimacy (the title to rule), and distributive justice—that are often interconnected. With the bankruptcy of the socialist model and the transitions to democracy in several countries, the number of internal conflicts over the legitimacy of political system has declined in Asia. However, political legitimacy of certain governments continues to be contested from time to time and the legitimacy of the remaining communist and authoritarian systems is likely to confront challenges in due

course. The project deals with internal conflicts arising from the process of constructing national identity with specific focus on conflicts rooted in the relationship of minority communities to the nation-state. Here too many Asian states have made considerable progress in constructing national communities but several states including some major ones still confront serious problems that have degenerated into violent conflict. By affecting the political and territorial integrity of the state as well as the physical, cultural, economic, and political security of individuals and groups, these conflicts have great potential to affect domestic and international stability.

Purpose

The project investigates the dynamics and management of five key internal conflicts in Asia—Aceh and Papua in Indonesia, the Moro conflict in the southern Philippines, and the conflicts pertaining to Tibet and Xinjiang in China. Specifically it investigates the following:

1. Why (on what basis), how (in what form), and when does group differentiation and political consciousness emerge?
2. What are the specific issues of contention in such conflicts? Are these of the instrumental or cognitive type? If both, what is the relationship between them? Have the issues of contention altered over time? Are the conflicts likely to undergo further redefinition?
3. When, why, and under what circumstances can such contentions lead to violent conflict? Under what circumstances have they not led to violent conflict?
4. How can the conflicts be managed, settled, and eventually resolved? What are policy choices? Do options such as national self-determination, autonomy, federalism, electoral design, and consociationalism exhaust the list of choices available to meet the aspirations of minority communities? Are there innovative ways of thinking about identity and sovereignty that can meet the aspirations of the minority communities without creating new sovereign nation-states?
5. What is the role of the regional and international communities in the protection of minority communities?
6. How and when does a policy choice become relevant?

Design

A study group has been organized for each of the five conflicts investigated in the study. With a principal researcher each, the study groups com-

prise practitioners and scholars from the respective Asian countries including the region or province that is the focus of the conflict, the United States, and Australia. For composition of study groups please see the participants list.

All five study-groups met jointly for the first time in Washington, D.C. from September 29 through October 3, 2002. Over a period of four days, participants engaged in intensive discussion of a wide range of issues pertaining to the five conflicts investigated in the project. In addition to identifying key issues for research and publication, the meeting facilitated the development of cross country perspectives and interaction among scholars who had not previously worked together. Based on discussion at the meeting five research monograph length studies (one per conflict) and twenty policy papers (four per conflict) were commissioned.

Study groups met separately for the second meeting. The Aceh and Papua study group meetings were held in Bali on June 16–17, the southern Philippines study group met in Manila on June 23, and the Tibet and Xinjiang study groups were held in Honolulu on August 20–22, 2003. The third meeting of all study groups was held in Washington, D.C. from February 28 to March 2, 2004. These meetings reviewed recent developments relating to the conflicts, critically reviewed the first drafts of the policy papers prepared for the project, reviewed the book proposals by the principal researchers, and identified new topics for research.

Publications

The project will result in five research monographs (book length studies) and about twenty policy papers.

Research Monographs. To be authored by the principal researchers, these monographs present a book-length study of the key issues pertaining to each of the five conflicts. Subject to satisfactory peer review, the monographs will appear in the East-West Center Washington series *Asian Security*, and the East-West Center series *Contemporary Issues in the Asia Pacific*, both published by the Stanford University Press.

Policy Papers. The policy papers provide a detailed study of particular aspects of each conflict. Subject to satisfactory peer review, these 15,000- to 25,000-word essays will be published in the East-West Center Washington *Policy Studies* series, and be circulated widely to key personnel and institu-

tions in the policy and intellectual communities and the media in the respective Asian countries, United States, and other relevant countries.

Public Forums

To engage the informed public and to disseminate the findings of the project to a wide audience, public forums have been organized in conjunction with study group meetings.

Two public forums were organized in Washington, D.C. in conjunction with the first study group meeting. The first forum, cosponsored by the United States-Indonesia Society, discussed the Aceh and Papua conflicts. The second forum, cosponsored by the United States Institute of Peace, the Asia Program of the Woodrow Wilson International Center, and the Sigur Center of The George Washington University, discussed the Tibet and Xinjiang conflicts.

Public forums were also organized in Jakarta and Manila in conjunction with the second study group meetings. The Jakarta public forum on Aceh and Papua, cosponsored by the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Jakarta, and the southern Philippines public forum cosponsored by the Policy Center of the Asian Institute of Management attracted key persons from government, media, think tanks, activist groups, diplomatic community, and the public.

In conjunction with the third study group meetings, also held in Washington, D.C., three public forums were offered. The first forum, cosponsored by the United States-Indonesia Society, addressed the conflicts in Aceh and Papua. The second forum, cosponsored by the Sigur Center of The George Washington University, discussed the conflicts in Tibet and Xinjiang. A third forum was held to discuss the conflict in the southern Philippines. This forum was cosponsored by the United States Institute of Peace.

Funding Support

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About this Issue

This study examines the ways in which large-scale migration and rapid economic change have fueled separatism and ethnic conflict in Papua. It presents an analysis of recent census data showing that three quarters of a million migrants from other parts of Indonesia have resettled in the territory since 1970 either through official transmigration programs or as unsponsored economic migrants. Based on this analysis, the study illustrates how rapid modernization and demographic change have resulted in the displacement and dislocation of Papua's indigenous population, provoking Papuan resentment and demands for independence. But rapid social change has not only spurred ethnonationalist mobilization; it has also generated ethnic and tribal tensions within Papua. Growing competition for land and resources between settlers and Papuans has given rise to persistent social conflict in Papua. The threat now looms that this social conflict could trigger a larger outbreak of communal and ethnic violence as in neighboring areas. So far Papua has proved relatively resistant to efforts to foment widespread conflict. It remains unclear, however, whether the government can address the deep-seated sense of Papuan resentment leading to alienation and conflict. It could do so by reversing many of its divisive policies and redoubling its efforts to bring services to remote indigenous communities. In the absence of such initiatives, continuing inflows of migrants into the province may well overwhelm the mechanisms for social management that have so far kept conflict from spiraling out of control.

About the Author

Rodd McGibbon is a researcher and adviser on Indonesian politics and international affairs at USAID, Jakarta. He received his Ph.D. in political science and international politics from the Australian National University. He can be contacted at roddmcgibbon@hotmail.com.

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