

JAAP TIMMER

## Erring decentralization and elite politics in Papua

### *Introduction*

In this chapter, I focus on certain members of the bureaucratic elite in Papua as influential actors in determining the future of the region. Amid a wave of recently established new provinces and districts, these leaders adopt strikingly creative ways to gain both popular and central government support, all characterised by marked regional differences. The chapter begins with a substantial historical introduction describing the territory's tumultuous passage from being the last holdout of Dutch colonialism in Asia in the early 1960s, through the history of suffering (*memoria passionis*) that followed integration with Indonesia, and culminating in the Papuan Spring of 1999-2000. Contrary to some other accounts of it, that history was marked by both Papuan collaboration and resistance. Set against this background the chapter examines the strategies adopted by various Papuan elites to make the most of the opportunities offered by Special Autonomy and the redrawing of administrative boundaries (*pemekaran*), while at the same time keeping faith with the popular mistrust of a state that has failed them in so many ways.

For a number of reasons ranging from Dutch nationalism, geopolitical considerations, and self-righteous moral convictions the Netherlands Government refused to include West New Guinea in the negotiations for the independence of Indonesia in the late 1940s.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, the Government in Netherlands New Guinea initiated economic and infrastructure development as well as political emancipation of the Papuans under paternalistic guardianship. In the course of the 1950s, when tensions between the Netherlands and Indonesia grew over the status of West New Guinea, the Dutch began to guide a limited group of educated Papuans towards independence culminating in the establishment of the New Guinea Council

<sup>1</sup> Lijphart 1966; Huydecoper van Nigtevecht 1990; Penders 2002:55-177; Vlasblom 2004:124-86; Drooglever 2005:141-74.

(Nieuw-Guinea Raad) in 1961. In addition, a flag, the Bintang Kejora or Morning Star flag, was designed to be flown beside the Dutch flag and a national anthem was adopted to be played and sung during official occasions after the Netherlands national hymn.

After a twelve-year dispute that was reaching its peak with the threat of open military conflict, this policy had to be aborted. In December 1961, President Soekarno issued the Trikora (Tri Komando Rakyat or 'People's Threefold Command') for the liberation of Irian Barat (West Irian). At the heart of this massive mobilization was Operasi Mandala, an Armed Forces of the Republic of Indonesia (Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia, ABRI) campaign designed to put pressure on the Netherlands government. The United States and Australia were not willing to support the Dutch military forces.

In an international climate of decolonization and after President Soekarno's sustained pressing of Indonesia's claim to the territory, the United States sponsored negotiations between Indonesia and the Netherlands about the future of West New Guinea under the auspices of the United Nations. The resulting New York Agreement of 15 August 1962 outlined the transfer of Netherlands sovereignty over West New Guinea to an interim United Nations Temporary Executive Authority (UNTEA) from 1 October 1962 to 1 May 1963, to be followed by a second phase during which the intervening administration would hand over full administrative responsibility to Indonesia. The agreement formulated the provision that the people of Irian Barat would exercise free choice over their future relationship with Indonesia before the end of 1969.

The victory over what had now become the Province of Irian Barat was a boost to Indonesian nationalism and became portrayed as the final chapter of decolonization.<sup>2</sup> The Indonesians, ruling the new province under the banner of the Trikora mobilization, were triumphant while elements of the Papuan elite empowered by the Dutch began to complain about what they saw as a blunt Indonesian takeover. Feelings of being marginalized by Indonesian bureaucrats and immigrants from other Indonesian islands filling job and business opportunities arose mainly among urban Papuans. Some of the educated Papuan elite were arrested or sidelined as 'collaborators with the Dutch' while others continued to play a role in the administration.

A plebiscite called Pepera (Penentuan Pendapat Rakyat, 'Act of Free Choice') was held in July-August 1969 during which 1020 cautiously chosen representatives from eight regions voted overwhelmingly for integration with Indonesia.<sup>3</sup> Protest was heard, dissonant speeches delivered, desperate outcries in the form of written notes were delivered to the United Nations

<sup>2</sup> Soekarno 2000.

<sup>3</sup> *Pepera* 1972:82-3; Vlasblom 2004:479. For an account of the Pepera based on archival materials and concluding that it was a sham, see Saltford 2000.

observers, and demonstrations in Sukarnopura (former Hollandia, now Jayapura), Biak and Manokwari were dispersed swiftly by the Indonesian military. Over the following decades, the faith in self-determination as linked to the undemocratic implementation of the Pepera became a key ingredient in a variety of Papuan nationalisms.

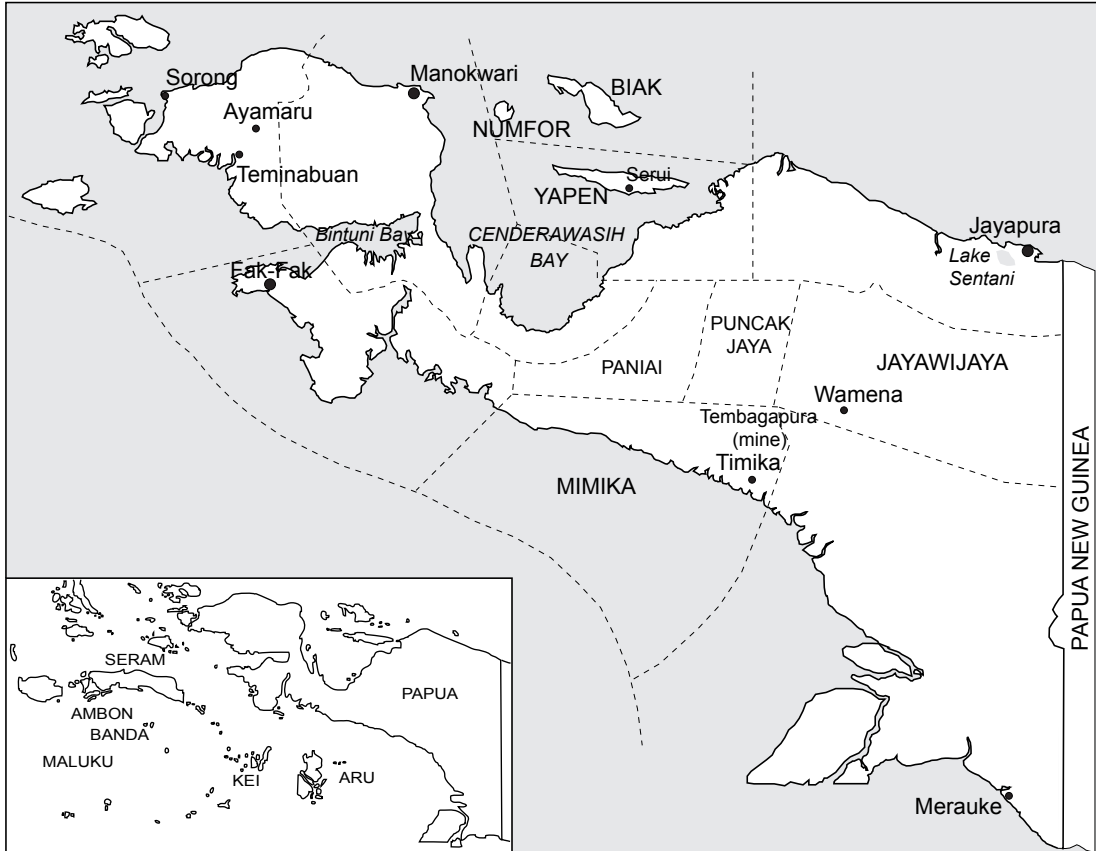
In response to the 'Indonesian occupation' of their land a liberation organization called the Organisasi Papua Merdeka (OPM, Free Papua Organization) emerged as a local movement in Manokwari in the 1960s and from there spread over the Kepala Burung (Bird's Head region). It soon became a fragmented network of dispersed groups of guerrilla-fighters.<sup>4</sup> Its access to weapons was limited and popular support scant. Very few elite Papuans joined the armed struggle and the vast majority of people living outside the urban centres did not feel the sense of belonging to a nation that had been invaded by Indonesia. Nevertheless, disillusion with the Indonesian government began to grow widely among those who had enjoyed the fruits of the accelerated development effort of the Dutch government since the 1950s.

President Soeharto's New Order regime (1966-1998) put much effort into developing the province and it received more funds than all other regions of Indonesia. But the implementation of largely top-down development programs often failed. At the same time, an ever-growing but relatively poorly funded military (Tentara Nasional Indonesia, TNI), supporting a network of alliances for both political control and predator business, has led to the dislocation of Papuans. On top of that, Butonese, Buginese, Makassarese and Javanese immigrants began to fill manual labour and seize small business opportunities. As a result, frustration about limited access to opportunities in modern Indonesia intensified tensions between 'Papuans' and 'Indonesians' in particular those who have arrived in Papua through so-called transmigration programs or the larger waves of spontaneous migration.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, in terms of governance, the region is amongst the most poorly developed in Indonesia while economic and ethnic differences play a significant and sometimes alarming role in land and resource politics (Timmer forthcoming).

Following the fall of Soeharto in 1998 and the presidency being handed over to his Deputy President, B.J. Habibie, a spirit of 'democratic reform'

<sup>4</sup> A reconstruction of the origin and development of the OPM can be found in Vlasblom 2004: 469, 486-636. Less thoroughly researched is the Indonesian-language account by Djopari 1993.

<sup>5</sup> Since the Indonesian government began to stimulate economic development in the region, an older Dutch colonial programme of population distribution from highly populated regions such as Java and Bali to Papua and other less populated regions was continued. Among policy-makers, this so-called *transmigrasi* ('transmigration') was seen as a way to boost the development of Papua, but the programme proved to be largely unsuccessful (Pouwer 1999:173-4).



Map 19. Papua (Irian Jaya)

(Reformasi) swept across the archipelago. In Papua it led to what has been duly called a 'Papuan Spring' during which Papuan leaders from all over the region carefully sought to balance representations from coast and highland in a wave of national Papuan actions and the establishment of Papuan organizations (Van den Broek and Szalay 2001). At massive gatherings all over the region during which heated debates over the history of Papua and its possible future ('autonomy' or 'independence') were held, the Papuan Spring 'took the form of the indigenous Papuan people demanding *merdeka*, or independence, from Indonesia' (Agus Sumule 2003a:353; Chauvel 2005:11-20). Before I discuss the Papuan Spring it is necessary to briefly elaborate on what kinds of meanings *merdeka* has assumed in the history of Papua.

#### *Merdeka and Memoria Passionis*

The Indonesian nationalist revolutionary understanding of *merdeka* dates back to the mid-1920s growth of the nationalist movement followed, after promises during the Japanese occupation, by the Indonesian revolution of 1945-1949. During the late 1940s, *merdeka* became the battle cry with which the citizenry was summoned to support the cause, the salute with which revolutionaries would greet each other, the cry of solidarity at every mass rally, and the signature at the end of every Republican document' (Reid 1998:155). As Anthony Reid (1998:156) points out, *merdeka* meant national independence to the revolutionaries but the people experienced it as a far more immediate and personal freedom. Later, during Soeharto's New Order government, *merdeka* became part of the military ideologies and plainly came to mean 'the independence' that was proclaimed on 17 August 1945 and ritually celebrated every year since.

In Papua, primarily urban educated Papuans began to absorb the idea of *merdeka* as national independence since the late 1950s, when President Soekarno became determined to incorporate Netherlands New Guinea to complete the nationalist struggle and resistance amid the Papuan elite against the Dutch government grew (Grootenhuis 1961). Before that period, only a limited number of educated and politically active Papuans cherished ideas about *merdeka*. For example, in Serui on Yapen Island, Silas Papare established the Partai Kemerdekaan Indonesia (PKI, Indonesian Freedom Party) in 1946 of which members read sections of Republican papers in village churches on the island, while outside the churches people exercised the exclamation of *merdeka*. Papare was a charismatic leader and the pro-Indonesian movement on Yapen got seriously crippled when he left for Indonesia in 1949 (Vlasblom 2004:162; Chauvel 2005:71).

Around the same time, also as part of a struggle against the Dutch govern-

ment, Lukas Rumkorem, a Biak assistant patrol officer, established the Partai Indonesia Merdeka on the island of Biak (Vlasblom 2004:163). In Hollandia as well, 'enthusiasm for "red and white" (the colours of the Indonesian national flag) got hold of a number of schooled Papuans' (Vlasblom 2004:163, my translation). The *merdeka*-leader there was Marthen Indey who was raised in Ambon, Maluku, and had been posted to Banda Neira where he got inspired by the prominent nationalist Mohammed Hatta who was exiled there. In 1946, Indey joined the Komite Indonesia Merdeka (KMI, 'Indonesia Freedom Committee') led by the Manadonese government medical doctor, Ms Gerungan. KMI advocated the independence of Indonesia, including West New Guinea through all legal means (Vlasblom 2004:164).

As Richard Chauvel (2005:6) concludes, the nationalism of this period had a narrow base and the nationalists 'were culturally isolated from the great mass of Papuans'. The majority of Papuans had very little knowledge of Indonesia and its *merdeka* struggles. After the incorporation of West New Guinea into Indonesia, people throughout Papua began to learn about *merdeka* as one of the chief dictums of the New Order government. At the same time, resentment began to grow due to the failure of development promises to crystallize and due to the unrelenting military operations, and *merdeka* began to take on meanings that were part of a struggle to secure freedom against a tyrannical state.

While the OPM and a number of Papuans in exile tried to keep the ideal of *merdeka* alive, for most Papuans it became a principle that is suggested to be in the hearts of all Papuans. When asked bluntly about 'OPM', Imyan people of the south-western Kepala Burung, while having no clear ideas about its organizational structure and strategies, tend to suggest that the OPM will eventually complete the struggle for *merdeka*. Further scrutiny of their worldviews, however, reveals that many take the view that Jesus Christ will perform the role of bringing *merdeka*. He will bring wealth and prosperity to their community (not 'Papua') and He will re-establish the just, original order in the world. Imyan refer to this order in terms of Toror or Baimla, a mythological world during which the Imyan were at the centre of the world and possessed all the knowledge and power (Timmer 1998, 2000a, 2000b:302; compare Rutherford 2005 and Golden 2003).

Taking into account the immense variety of cultural traditions in Papua, it should be no surprise that peoples' ideas about *merdeka* are diverse. Moreover, there are also divisions within Papuan communities. Imyan villagers, for example, tend to divide between two groups: one that is inclined to withdraw into autonomy (related to ideas about a past community of male initiates retreating in the forest to engage with powerful sky beings), and another that seeks to benefit from unique opportunities offered by 'Indonesia' by engaging with the government and its promises of develop-



ment. What the two divisions share is a versatile but persistent concern with effective knowledge that they believe is held among foreigners and considered indispensable for bringing about change that Imyan people themselves can control. These beliefs are expressed in terms of a felt need for relative autonomy from state control when the government's administrative grid discords with local realities and people's aspirations (Timmer 2004b:121-4; compare Maclean 1994).

This concern is in fact a crucial part of a larger and still more intrusive concern with denied identity and lost certainties (Timmer 2004b:130). The Imyan share this concern with most other Papuan communities and it can be said that a possibly shared *merdeka*-aspiration in Papua is thus, in general terms, about deferential treatment as human beings, and in principal irrespective of the political or national context. In these ontological ideas about sovereignty and dignity (*harga diri*), *merdeka* is thus chiefly a response to decades-long denial of the people's competence in learning and performing in modern colonial and post-colonial contexts. This partly explains the unrelenting search for understanding of the suffering of the Papuans, preferably through a democratic dialogue with 'Jakarta' that was so effectively expressed during the Papuan Spring. But the idea of having one's own state, right now and for all times, is seldom on the minds of most Papuans, as it is a construct far from the more intrusive largely individual and communal concern with sovereignty and *harga diri*.

During the 'Papuan Spring' (1999-2000), *merdeka* took on the *harga diri*-meaning when throughout the territory numerous raisings of the Bintang Kejora flag (which was prohibited until 1998) and concurrent praying sessions were organized.<sup>6</sup> The Papuan Spring was a period during which President Abdurrahman Wahid allowed the Papuans to name their province Papua and to raise their national flag along the Indonesian flag. Hundreds of prominent leaders from all over Papua found the space to organize a broadly supported front. They developed political strategies during two large gatherings: MUBES (Musyawarah Besar or 'Grand Gathering for Discussion') in February 2000, and the Kongres Papua (Papuan Congress) in May-June 2000 (Agus Alua 2002a, 2002b). These gatherings proceeded undisturbed and while the political agenda demanded independence of Papua, the strategies developed favoured a dialogue with Jakarta short of violence. The focus was on the suffering of the Papuans and numerous discussions revolved around human rights. 'HAM' (Hak Asasi Manusia, Human Rights) became a widely used term taking on a variety of meanings in different contexts but generally referring to lack of respect for the Papuans.

<sup>6</sup> See Van den Broek and Szalay (2001) for an overview of the turbulent events in Papua from 1999 to 2000.

Expressions of independence for Papua were articulated by the Presidium Dewan Papua (PDP, Papuan Presidium Council) that was established during the MUBES. Under the combined highland-coastal leadership of Thom Beanal and Theys Eluay, the Presidium formulated Papua-wide supported resolutions that were adopted during the Kongres. The resolutions include the claim that Papua had in fact become independent with the establishment of the New Guinea Council in 1961 and rejected the New York Agreement because Papuans did not take part in the negotiations. In addition, the resolution states that the Act of Free Choice was not conducted properly (Agus Alua 2002b:96). More widely shared was the opinion that 'the land of the Papuans' had become the plaything of international and capitalist forces and that its people had become marginalized in Indonesian society.

Underlying a strong wish for increased sovereignty with predominant millenarian characteristics, the rise of Papuan nationalisms at all levels of society also called into question any extent to which Papuans had become Indonesians. The differences between 'Papuans' and 'Indonesians' were, however, only rarely expressed. Both the symbolic and explicit messages broadcast during gatherings, manifestations, prayer sessions and flag raisings, emphasized the living memory of distress that in human rights activist circles in Papua is typified as *memoria passionis* (or in Indonesian: *ingatan penderitaan*) in circles of human rights activists in Papua.<sup>7</sup> *Memoria passionis* refers to the memory of trauma due to general social and economic marginalization, frequent denial of dignity, and sometimes outright terror. Since the dawn of this period *memoria passionis* began to be expressed as a shared Papuan history of suffering and was flung in the face of 'Jakarta' when a team of 100 leaders (Tim 100) from all over Papua presented a clear demand for independence to President Habibie on 26 February 1999. Next, a fact-finding team of the Indonesian House of Representatives was sent to Irian Jaya in July 1998, leading to a wave of enthusiasm among virtually all sections of society about a dialogue.

The dialogue was expected to lead to at least formal apologies for human rights violations, end impunity for the armed forces, and increase respect for the *harga diri* of the Papuans. At the same time, it also unleashed often very political expressions epitomized in such as expressions as OFM (resonating with OPM) meaning: Otonomi – Federasi – Merdeka, indicating people's hope that discussion about increased autonomy for Irian Jaya would lead to the establishment of a Federal State of Indonesia which would eventually

<sup>7</sup> J. Budi Hernawan and Van den Broek 1999. The concept of *memoria passionis* was introduced into Papua by the Office for Justice and Peace (Sekretariat Keadilan dan Perdamaian) of the Catholic Diocese of Jayapura and is also the title of a series of annual reports on the social and political situation in Papua ([www.hampapua.org](http://www.hampapua.org)).



culminate in independence for West Papua. What followed in reality, however, was an overall well-intended Papuan response to President Habibie's offer to contemplate on independence aspirations and, within the term of reference, establish a dialogue between 'Jakarta' and 'Papua'.

The dialogue was continued during Aburrahman Wahid's presidency but a ban on flag raisings and a number of bloody military attacks on protesters discouraged most Papuan leaders to continue seeking understanding of the situation in Papua amid policy-makers in Jakarta. The Presidium was declared illegal and the detention of its leaders on charges of treason and subversion, and the brutal murder of the chair of the Presidium, Theys Hiyo Eluay in 2000 marked the end of the Papuan Spring. The killing of Eluay was orchestrated by Kopassus (Komando Pasukan Khusus, the Army Special Forces). The counterinsurgency practised by the TNI began to form a major threat to most attempts to organize people to defend their rights and to continue pressing Jakarta to seek solutions to past and present injustice and feelings of disenchantment. By the close of 2000, 'the developing atmosphere of a 'Papuan Spring' [...] had been replaced by widespread fear, silence, and renewed anger' (Van den Broek and Szalay 2001:91. At the same time, people began to distrust the remnants of the Presidium and its regional branches because of rumours about the Presidium accepting money from big companies in Papua and frustration about its leaders travelling abroad all the time while neglecting the issues faced by local communities.

#### *Special autonomy and new blossoms*

Among the most promising developments in this Reformasi period was the granting of a so-called Special Autonomy (commonly referred to as Otsus, from Otonomi Khusus) for the province of Papua in early 2001. Otsus matches an earlier law for the province of Aceh but was drafted by people in Papua and establishes provisions that surpass the autonomy conditions for other provinces. Otsus envisions enhanced autonomy for Papuan communities and their institutions, as well as a greater share of revenues from resource extraction projects in Papua, including 70% of the oil and gas industry and 80% from mining ventures. On top of that, Otsus entails special funds for the improvement of health services, education facilities, and infrastructure that benefit rural communities for a period of 20 years (Agus Sumule 2003b).

Otsus was a Papuan political choice that indicated a willingness to cooperate with the central government. It was envisioned as a necessary step towards justice for the neglected people of Papua (Maniagasi 2001; Agus Sumule 2003a). A technical assistance team comprising intellectuals from Papua whom the Governor of Papua, Jaap Solossa, had appointed drafted

the bill in early 2001. After extensive lobbying by the team and a number of influential Papuans, it was accepted as Law no. 21/2001 that was to be implemented as of 2002 (Agus Sumule 2003a). This initially positive answer from Jakarta was one of an insecure central government after the 1999 ballot in East Timor during which a majority voted against autonomy within Indonesia.

Apart from a few hard-line voices demanding *merdeka*, people in Papua expected positive developments from Otsus. But public interest in Otsus dwindled when people saw that implementation of the Otsus was slow due to the lack of capacity of legislators and that the establishment of the Majelis Rakyat Papua (MRP) or Papuan People's Assembly did not receive support from Jakarta. The MRP is an essential element of Otsus as it envisions the protection of the rights of the Papuans. It would assemble people from customary groups, religious institutions and women groups and grant them extensive political powers. The Ministry of Home Affairs delayed the establishment of the MRP because elements in Jakarta saw that the powers it granted to Papuans could endanger the stability in Papua (Chauvel and Bhakti 2004:38). In the mean time, people in Papua began to question whether Otsus was yet another hollow promise made by 'Jakarta'. Others remained hopeful that with assistance of and pressure by foreign governments and international NGOs Jakarta would eventually grant the MRP to Papua.

These hopes basically faced a dead end after President Megawati Sukarnoputri promulgated a decree on 27 January 2003 on the expedition of the implementation of Law no. 45/1999 regarding the creation of two new provinces (West Irian Jaya and Central Irian Jaya), three new regencies (Paniai, Mimika, and Puncak Jaya), and one municipality (Sorong). The envisioned plan behind the decree is labelled *pemekaran* ('blossoming' or administrative fragmentation). While the division of Papua was also part of the Otsus Law it outlined the procedure that it could only be implemented after deliberation of the MRP and approval of the provincial parliament (Sullivan 2003).

Then Deputy Governor John Djopari stressed that the idea of *pemekaran* was not new but that it had been proposed in 1999 by the then Governor, Freddy Numberi, and his three Deputy Governors: Djopari, Herman Monim, and Abraham Atururi (ICG 2003d:3). Soon it became clear that Monim and Atururi were frustrated because they had been promised governorship for the new provinces but that never materialized. Djopari later became Ambassador for Indonesia to Papua New Guinea and Monim retired. Atururi, however, was still interested in the establishment of a new province.

In contrast to Otsus, the *pemekaran* decree was issued without consultation with the provincial government. Local communities or leaders of religious and other civil society organizations in Papua were also not involved in the

decision-making process. While Otsus had been poorly socialized among the people it met with support because it came from people whose dialogue with Jakarta intended to benefit the development of Papua. Supporters of Otsus saw the presidential decree as a sign that the political climate in Indonesia was reverting to a New Order-style government. Many began to speculate that it was an attempt by Jakarta to 'divide and rule' the Papuans. Distress in Papua grew when people learned that the initiative for the policy had come from disgruntled elements in the Papuan elite in cooperation with policy-makers in the central government – the Ministry of Home Affairs and the National Intelligence Board (BIN, Badan Intelijen Negara) (McGibbon 2004:55).

The International Crisis Group (ICG 2003:8-9) points out that BIN involvement in the revival of *pemekaran* may have commenced with the lobby by Jimmy Ijie, a Papuan from the Sorong region. Ijie heads the so-called Irian Jaya Crisis Centre (IJCC) in Jakarta and in that capacity he sent a letter to BIN urging that Law no. 45 be implemented immediately. According to him an administratively undivided Papua would foster Papuan nationalism (ICG 2003d:8). In late 2002, Ijie formed a team called Tim 315 consisting of people from the Sorong and Manokwari regions and a number of Papuan students residing in Yogyakarta and Jakarta to support Atururi to negotiate the plan with BIN and the Ministry of Home Affairs. Apparently, a large amount of money (approximately U\$ 320,000) was involved and a number of financial rewards were promised to officers in the Ministry of Home Affairs and to Ijie's IJCC.<sup>8</sup>

A possible other motive for the partitioning of Papua is that the creation of new provinces and districts will imply a significant increase in the number of troops in the territory. Each separate province may get its own Military Resort Command (Komando Resort Militer, Korem), with its own network of District Military Commands (Komando Distrik Militer, Kodim). A potential stronger military presence aroused suspicion as it may not only increase repression but also facilitate connections with local business in which the army is involved. As a result, much of the goodwill that was created among Papuans during the dawn of Reformasi turned to disappointment. At the same time, the awareness that elements of the Papuan elite were involved in the *pemekaran* policy nourished already widespread distrust of those Papuans who are making careers in the formal sector or the armed forces 'infecting them with the Indonesia virus', as the popular expression runs. This virus of Indonesia refers to untrustworthy behaviour of Papuan legislators that is also captured under another popular expression, KKN or Korupsi, Kolusi, Nepotisme (Corruption, Collusion and Nepotism) which dates back to the

<sup>8</sup> Muridan Widjojo, personal communication, 7-5-2005.

New Order period. Swiftly the previous expression 'OFM' developed into 'OPM', now referring to a new sequence: Otonomi (autonomy), Pemekaran (blossoming), and eventually Merdeka (independence).

Ideally, the devolution of power entailed in the *pemekaran* policy should be a promising move as it can enhance good governance at the local level. Currently, government officials in the region are inclined to acknowledge local demands to become *tuan di atas tanahnya* ('the ruler of one's own country') but they also tend to be hungry for power after decades of curtailing bonds to the centre. Elite politics and the responses among local people largely revolve around these issues. Decentralization leads to a diversification of political concerns that are connected with local identities which on their turn tend to become more extreme. The resulting condition may be labelled as 'erring decentralization', after the discussion by Netherlands New Guinea's penultimate Governor Van Baal of 'erring acculturation' among Papuans. Van Baal pointed at the counterproductive transformation in people's attitudes to life due to their confrontation with the Western world, or, more precisely, the process in which acculturation goes astray and 'development turns in a direction harmful to the realization of the intended aim' (Van Baal 1960:108). In the remaining part of this essay, I elaborate the characteristics of 'erring decentralization' in Papua in more detail.

### *Papuanization and adaptation*

Present-day conflicts in Papua include disputes over natural resources and economic and political power struggles, and frictions between different ethnicities, religion, and immigrants and locals (ICG 2002b; Amnesty International 2002). Studies of 'the conflict in Papua', however, commonly focus on Jakarta policies and armed forces operations. Most reports produced by Papua watchers portray developments in Papua mainly in terms of violations of human rights by 'Jakarta' which is opposed by 'Papuan resistance'. This resistance is often depicted as a single actor with a uniform ethnic identity driven by a uniting national consciousness. Papuan identity is then presupposed to exist in a bounded cultural and racial sphere defined as 'Melanesia' as opposed to 'Indonesia' or 'Asia'.<sup>9</sup> This is hardly conceivable considering the vast variety of cultural backgrounds and centuries-old histo-

<sup>9</sup> See for example, Budiardjo and Sioe Long 1983; Osborne 1985; Sharp 1994; Walsh and Rouch 1999; J. Barr 2002; Martinkus 2002; P. King 2004; and contributions to a special edition on Papua of the *New Internationalist* (Volume 344, April 2002). By and large, these works follow one basic line of argument which suggests that Papua will or should become a second East Timor and that Papuans are the victims of genocide or deliberate, well-organized terror, obscuring the fact that Papuans are (and have always been) divided.

ries of connections between Papua and the Moluccas (see below). Only a few recent anthropological and historical studies of Papuan communities relate to these histories and include discussions about the integration of Papuans into Indonesia and its concomitant internal tensions.<sup>10</sup> Danilyn Rutherford (2003:4), for instance, points out that the high degree of integration of the Biak-Numfor region into Indonesia illuminates 'a socio-cultural economy that stands cheek by jowl with the discourses of Papuan separatism and Indonesian nationalism, yet radically undercuts them both'.

The lack of attention to the variety of and changes in Papuan worldviews since the 1960s is astonishing as newly emerging identities and related concerns and strategies lead to tensions in and between local communities and shape to a large extent the politics of the elite. In the virtual absence of a middle-class and very limited private investment in human development and the delivery of services, the powerful elites in Papua are to be found in the administrative sector and in religious institutions. Therefore, Papuan political power is in the hands of these new bureaucratic and religious elite.

Christian and Muslim leaders in Papua recognize that religion is an important source of inspiration for the people and that religious institutions, being the largest and most organized civil society organizations in Papua, should play an important role as mediators between the government and communities (Giay 2001). The varied ethnic and political landscape in Papua is accentuated by the timing and nature of contact with outside powers. In pre-colonial times, contact with regional others and internal and in-migration were perhaps the most significant factors in demographic, social and cultural change in Papua. More in general many coastal groups looked for centuries towards the west. In particular the coastal communities of the Kepala Burung and the Cenderawasih Bay maintained trade and marriage relationship with Maluku and Islam spread along certain coastal stretches.<sup>11</sup> In contrast, people in the highland regions lived relatively isolated in mountain valleys with little direct but extensive indirect trade networks extending to the coast (Ploeg 2001).

Cultural differences between the mountains and the north and the west coast changed markedly with the advent of Christian missionization and Dutch administration during the twentieth century. Mission activity, followed hesitantly by the government, affected the Cenderawasih Bay, the Kepala Burung, the north coast and coastal stretches such as Mimika and

<sup>10</sup> Oosterhout 2000; Rutherford 2003; Stasch 2001, 2003; Timmer 2000a, 2000b, 2003. One of the reasons for this lack of attention to the cultural and social realities of Papuans is that since its incorporation in Indonesia access to the region for researchers has been severely restricted.

<sup>11</sup> Chauvel 2005; Ellen 2003; Huizinga 1998; Kamma 1947-49; Swadling 1996; Timmer 2000b; Visser 1989.



Merauke along the southwest coast, while most groups in the highlands and communities in the southern plains remained 'untouched' until the 1960s. Encounters between highland people and the state and church intensified after the Indonesian government took over the territory from 1963 (Ploeg 2001; Hays 1993).

Shortly before and after the Second World War economic development was limited, while at later stages, new political developments took place. Especially the rapid expansion of administration and education had a major impact on the coastal people in Biak, Manokwari, Yapen en Sentani, and to a lesser extent in the Kepala Burung and Fak-fak. Papuans from these regions absorbed Dutch teachings at high schools in Netherlands New Guinea and were exposed to European life styles. Some were given the opportunity to enjoy education in Europe and the Pacific. The figures remained modest since in the early 1960s, only about 10,000 Papuans (of a total population estimated at around one million) were in government service while a smaller number was employed in the private sector (Timmer forthcoming).

Later generations grew up in the context of the Indonesian nation-state, undertook studies at Indonesian institutions and made careers in the Indonesian civil service, equipping them with the skills and language of modern Indonesia. Whereas many members of the old Papuan elite that were created by the Dutch were marginalized, the new generations of educated Papuans (still largely from coastal regions) found their way into the civil service. Participation of Papuans in the administration and commercial ventures was however still restricted. The Indonesian government was afraid that Papuans would gain too much of a voice in the administrative sector while banking facilities are few and tend to privilege Javanese, Buginese, Maluku and foreign investors. Moreover, the commercial infrastructure is poorly developed and bureaucratic approvals for trade are painfully slow, in particular for Papuans.

It was only in the late 1990s that sincere efforts were made to Papuanize the formal sector. Today, around 35% of the labour force in the government is Papuan which is a poor reflection of the demographic reality in which approximately 60% of the population is Papuan.<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless, over the last few years more Papuans have become legislators both at the district and provincial levels. Amid many people from elsewhere in Indonesia, the provincial bureaucracy is chiefly dominated by coastal Papuans from the Cenderawasih Bay islands of Biak and Yapen, Sentani, and, more recently from the Sorong and Ayamaru regions of the Kepala Burung. Muridan Widjojo (1998:3) signalled in this respect that the biggest problem facing Irian Jaya was social and cultural polarization and domination of the formal sec-

<sup>12</sup> Don Flassy, personal communication, 23-4-2005.



tor by ethnic Biak, Ayamaru, Serui and Sentani. In contrast to the provincial bureaucracy, in the district governments in the highlands and south coastal regions the local population is more strongly represented notwithstanding the presence of a significant number of decision-makers from Biak and Yapen in the Cenderawasih Bay, the Sorong region of the Kepala Burung, and a few people from Java and Maluku.

Particularly among the recently ascending Sorong and Ayamaru elites, there is a remarkable acquaintance with Indonesian ways of doing politics. The acquired skills and knowledge of the present-day bureaucratic elite enables a number of influential people to establish links with Jakarta which primarily serves their own benefit. Highlanders and people from the south-coastal regions (Mimika, Merauke) are often consumed with envy about the power enjoyed by people from the Kepala Burung and the Cenderawasih Bay. Underlying this foremost regional cleavage in Papua is the serious lag in development of most regions of the highlands (Timmer forthcoming). Moreover, because of isolation and due to ongoing often poorly orchestrated TNI action, the highland region is currently the chief nursery of Papuan resistance to the Indonesian government. This Papuan resistance also translates into regional tensions as highlanders regularly challenge both the provincial government and coastal Papuans from Biak, Sorong and Sentani where they at times accuse of collaboration with 'Indonesia'. This tension highlights one of the main divisions within the Papuan nationalist movement which is illustrated by Rutherford (2003:xviii) recounting a joke in which a highlander tells another that when Papua gains independence all Biaks will become foreigners (*amberi*) while highlanders will become Biaks.

As mentioned, during the massive gatherings during the Papuan Spring Papuan leaders managed to balance representations from the highlands and the coast and Papuans felt united in their *memoria passionis*. With the advent of *pemekaran*, the tensions between elites from Biak, Yapen, Ayamaru and Sorong as well as between 'the coast' and 'the highlands' intensified. A recent Indonesia briefing by the International Crisis Group (ICG 2003d:1) outlines that the new *pemekaran* policy alongside a certain level of support for Otsus 'has generated intense acrimony within the governing elite in Papua between those who stand to gain from the division [...] and those who benefit more from the status quo'. Chauvel (2005:xi) notes that 'the jockeying for position that this policy unleashed suggests that regional and tribal interests remain politically salient'.

### *The protagonists*

As indicated above, the *pemekaran* option was supported if not stimulated

by a number of Papuan delegates who met with President Megawati, the Ministry of Home Affairs and BIN throughout 2002. In particular, malcontent Papuan political elements were mobilized by the above mentioned Ijie, and the Marine Brigadier General (retired) Abraham Atururi, who had lost against the current Governor, Jaap Solossa, during the election campaign for governorship in 1999 (ICG 2003d:8-9). Atururi enjoyed Dutch boarding school at primary level in Serui, Yapen during the heyday of Dutch efforts to develop Netherlands New Guinea. After the Dutch left New Guinea, Atururi attended the Navy National Academy after he finished Senior High School in Biak. Next he made a career in the Navy and became a Lieutenant Colonel and member of intelligence agency (BAKIN, Badan Koordinasi Intelijen Negara, currently BIN). He also served in the Paspanpres or the 'Security Guard for the President'. While still a Lieutenant Colonel, he was assigned as head of the Sorong District in 1992. After one five-year term in Sorong, he went to Jayapura to become one of the three Deputy Governors under Freddy Numberi. His term as Deputy Governor allowed him to rise in the military ranks and he earned his first star. During the Reformasi period and marking the end of the military's New Order *dwifungsi* ('dual function' of the military conflating national defence with nation-building), General Wiranto, the then Chief of the Armed Forces, demanded all active military personnel who were occupying civilian positions to choose whether they wanted to continue in the army or pursue a career as legislators. Atururi chose the latter as he aspired to become Governor of Irian Jaya but, as indicated, in 1999 he lost to Jaap Solossa.

Like Atururi, Solossa enjoyed Dutch education at primary and secondary level in Teminabuan and Manokwari respectively, and then Junior High School in Sorong. After the transfer of West New Guinea to Indonesia, he continued his education at Senior High School-level in Manokwari before studying Civil Administration at Universitas Cenderawasih in Jayapura for his undergraduate degree. Later, when he served as a member of the National Parliament, he used his spare time to pursue a Master Degree in Development Economics at Universitas Gajah Mada. He continued this specialization at postgraduate level at Universitas Padjadjaran in Bandung with a research on Special Autonomy for Papua. In May 2005, he received his doctorate. Dr Solossa has a large circle of acquaintances especially from the Ayamaru and Sorong elites who became unhappy with Atururi during his term as district head in Sorong. In a similar vein, Atururi is currently supported by elements of the Kepala Burung elite that are not happy with the current district head, John Piet Wanane, who is from the Ayamaru region.

Despite growing controversy over the status of the province, the Minister of Home Affairs, Hari Sabarno, inaugurated Atururi as the Governor of West Irian Jaya in November 2003, leading to a barrage of regional criticism. The

Speaker of the Papua provincial legislature and supporter of Solossa, John Ibo, said that the inauguration contradicted a recommendation issued by the People's Consultative Assembly during its latest annual session and urged Jakarta to revise the law on the division of Papua.

Atururi arrived in Manokwari in February 2003 to start work on the establishment of the new provincial headquarters. On his way from Jakarta he stopped in Jayapura to present to Speaker Ibo an official BIN statement signed by its head, Lieutenant General (retired) Hendropriyono, saying that Atururi had the authority to establish West Irian Jaya (Timmer 2004a:411). Exactly a year later, the Constitutional Court ruled against a lawsuit from a Special Autonomy Defence Team that sought to undo the division of Papua. Supported by Governor Solossa and elements of the Papuan elite in Jayapura, the Defence Team had argued that the establishment of the new province served the interests of the Megawati Sukarnoputri-led Indonesian Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan, (PDI-P, Democratic Party of Struggle) which intended to weaken the dominant Golkar Party in the region through the *pemekaran* plan. The Team suggested that the PDI-P had economic interests in the Bintuni Bay where British Petroleum is establishing the Tangguh liquefied natural gas plant (ICG 2003d:9). The Team added that both the TNI and BIN had also a lot to gain with the province as the two institutions have economic interests in maintaining a high level of TNI presence in the region.

The Constitutional Court concluded that the establishment of West Irian Jaya remained valid although Law no. 45/1999 was no longer effective. Eight of the nine judges argued that the Otsus Law took effect after the new province and regencies were designed and that the law had annulled no state institution. The court ruling was seen as a victory for Atururi and left many in Jayapura, Sorong and elsewhere in Papua confused. While the media reported the decision as a win-win solution for all conflicting parties in Papua and Jakarta, John Ibo noted that it will lead to increasing disorder and growing loss of confidence in Jakarta's commitment to the problems in Papua (Timmer 2005:454-5).

One of the effects of the above-mentioned differences between the Sorong-Ayamuru elite which is often suspected of conspiring to control Papua as 'SOS' (Semua Orang Sorong, 'all-Sorong') and 'disadvantaged' highland tribes and 'backward' south coastal plains peoples was the significant local support for the establishment of a separate province of Central Irian Jaya in the Timika area. This new province was advocated by the head of the district of Timika, Clemens Tinal and the head of the Timika legislative council, Andreas Anggaibak. As Anggaibak said himself, he was encouraged by BIN to go ahead with the establishment of the new province (Chauvel and Bhakti 2004:41). In the region he enjoyed support from a group called 'Group of Seven Tribes'. When Anggaibak announced the official establishment of the

province in late August 2003 riots broke out during which five people were killed and dozens were injured. Anggaibak's alliance met with opposition from a youth group of the Amungme people led by Thomas Uamang, Yopie Kilangin and Yohanes Deikme, with the support of the Amungme and other ethnic groups around Timika. This regional conflict about *pemekaran* is an extension of older disputes between the communities close to PT Freeport Indonesia copper and gold mining operations that relate to the misuse of company funds and collaboration of community leaders with the TNI in the region.<sup>13</sup> Exposing tensions between highland and north coastal people and in an attempt to gain a share of the riches of the Freeport mining venture, elements of the elite in Biak argued that Biak would be a better location for the new province's capital in April and May 2004. They proposed that Admiral Henk Wabiser should be appointed as acting Governor (Chauvel 2005:77).

Tensions at the regional level also played a role in the establishment of West Irian Jaya. New districts in West Irian Jaya like Fak-fak and Raja Ampat (which is rich in forest and nickel resources) felt uncomfortable with what they feared as domination by those from the Sorong and Ayamaru regions and opted to remain within the Province of Papua. Furthermore, during Atururi's lobbying for the establishment of West Irian Jaya, customary leaders in the region had an interest in the division plans, as it would lead to the establishment of 28 new regencies, including Teluk Bintuni, which would offer them an opportunity to occupy new administrative positions. The importance attached to the creation of the Teluk Bintuni regency is related to the above-mentioned operations of the Tangguh plant in the Bintuni Bay. The new regency, and the new province of West Irian Jaya of which it is part, will be abundantly rich in natural resources.

The *pemekaran* decree amplified cleavages within the Papuan elite of which one favours Otsus as a means for the development of Papua as a whole and is led by Governor Solossa who is supported by a number of civil society organizations and prominent Papuan intellectuals. Others were keen to establish their own provinces and districts to claim their own power positions and secure access to natural resources. Ethnic tensions along regional fault lines intensified as the pro-*pemekaran* players in Papua demanded a share of the fiscal transfers from the central government and wanted to increase control over the territory's riches. The resulting disunity among influential people in the Papuan bureaucratic elite weakened the support for Otsus and eased the implementation of the *pemekaran* law (McGibbon 2004:61).

<sup>13</sup> Leith 2003; Ballard 2002; Muridan Widjojo 2003. Anggaibak, who is a former police man tried to control the so-called One Percent Fund that was set up 1996 by the Freeport mining company to support social development programs which met with opposition from other political players in the region.

*Autonomy and its opportunities*

Within the plans for the establishment of new districts and new provinces, almost no provision has been made to ensure that new government policies are adjusted to local circumstances and meet the aspirations of the people. The majority of government officials are accustomed to working with top-down programmes and accountability procedures that rarely involve the communities who figure as subjects in the plans and reports. The New Order government with its ambition to impose a layer of Indonesianness all over the archipelago propagated the idea that the lives of citizens in such remote and 'underdeveloped' regions as Papua had to be transformed according to fixed formats. The results are often unsettling in particular when long-standing community-based ways of doing things and local ways of resources management were disrupted. While development plans for Papua were designed to improve the living conditions of so-called 'isolated people' (*masyarakat terasing*) they often lead to estrangement. This in turn stimulated a tendency to reflect nostalgically on one's own unique non-state units such as the kinship group and the 'customary people' (*masyarakat adat*) whose rights should be restored.

Currently, decentralized governments at the district levels face the daunting task of finding ways to overcome deep-seated feelings of distrust towards the state, and to develop programs that acknowledge the complex varieties and recent changes in Papuan society. Newly recruited personnel are for the most part educated at schools for public administration with curricula are in accord with the New Order and its top-down philosophy. As such, they are ill-equipped to adjust themselves to new democratic and open-minded ways of governance.

Reflecting on the colonial context in the Australian-administered Territory of Papua and New Guinea in the 1960s, Peter Lawrence (1969) argues that the difficulty of establishing a Western type of legal system is that the groups concerned, that is, the Australians and the New Guineans, represent quite different, specialized social systems. Both systems had their own idiosyncratic process of social control that was not expected to function in a single legal framework. Today, the Papua New Guinea Government still faces the difficult challenge of binding a variety of distinct communities into an effective political and ideological organization (LiPuma 1995; Douglas 2000; May 2001, 2003). The present situation in Papua appears to suffer from a similar incompatibility between models of governance structured upon institutional principles of modern statehood and variety of everyday political and social realities. Otsus aims to counter this, but the formidable challenge facing decentralizing governments is beyond most administrators' imagination and not anticipated by the legislative or the executive bodies that enacted and



implemented the *pemekaran* law.

Previously, the political and governmental situation in Papua was characterized as based on an 'outside' and 'Indonesian' government ruling a majority of Papuans through models of governance current in Java and not embracing or fully appreciating 'Papuan ways of doing things'. While there were a fair number of Papuans in the bureaucracy at all levels and a few Governors in the period from 1963 were ethnically Papuan, local communities saw the regional and provincial government as dominated by Javanese. Since more Papuans began to occupy seats in the formal sector the ideas about the government changed to a sense of domination of 'Indonesian politics' endorsed by Papuan elites.

Many criticize provincial leaders because they promise local communities development and access to resources while they actually profit from arrangements with elites in Jakarta, TNI and Javanese and foreign investors. This obviously leads to an unstable situation as political support at the local level will soon dwindle and break along regional or ethnic fault lines. Since administrative procedures lack transparency, the widespread feeling among Papuans that their own elite cannot be trusted will no doubt increase.

There is currently a growing tension between those who seek, find and use opportunities offered in the formal and commercial sectors and those who are denied such prospects. Papuan communities' responses to a corrupt administration and dishonest behaviour of their own elite are varied. In many of the locations where large-scale resource extraction takes place, such as Freeport mining in the Mimika region and the Tangguh project in the Bintuni Bay, as well as logging and fishery business, local communities organize themselves against neighbouring groups and their elites who also claim natural resources and compensation.

One effect of this development is the emergence of eccentric and charged revitalizations of customary structures and the establishment of customary organizations (*masyarakat adat*). The expectations of monetary flows that resource development projects might bring, and the related competing claims over land and resources, pose problems for local people who no longer know whom to trust and through whom to raise their voices with outside companies and the government. At the same, the government and the companies find it increasingly difficult to deal effectively with the dispersed forms of Papuan leadership.

On top of the resulting frustrations and tensions between groups and a growing gap between local communities and the formal sector, criminal and predatory business is increasingly entrenching itself in the instruments of the state. The ways in which this also affects local sentiments and long-standing discourses on identity, autonomy and independence, and leads to new regional and ethnic alliances, show parallels to situations in African



countries as described by Jean-François Bayart, Stephen Ellis and Beatrice Hibou (1999), among others. Comparisons between problems with governance in Africa and the Pacific and Asian region may provide many analytical advantages.

For example, Mahmood Mamdani's (1996) emphasis on colonial legacies and what he calls a bifurcated state, characterized by friction between the creation of an urban civil society and a rural zone administrated by means of ethnic division and retribalized authority, puts central the super-ordinate structure of governance and state strategies. As shown in this chapter, an analysis of the legacies of the state and the emergence and politics of urban elites since the colonial epoch is crucial to understanding the social and political dynamics in present-day Papua.

However, as Jon Fraenkel (2004) points out, comparisons between Africa and Oceania and Asia ought to be done cautiously. A careful comparison between Papua and Africa is beyond the scope of this paper but let me make the point that the most obvious parallel between Papua and certain regions in Africa is, as said, the criminalization of the state in Papua. In the capacity of provincial legislator, district head, head of a department and so on, they not only gain influence over state resources but they also enjoy relative freedom to make profitable deals with resources extraction ventures. These businesses are largely unregulated exploitation of the minerals, oil, fish, and forest resources.

A striking example is rampant logging and the illegal trade of merbau (*kayu besi*) threatening the pristine forests of the region. (EIA/Telapak 2005; *Logging* 2002). Merbau (*kayu besi*) is a luxurious dark hardwood that is the main target of a billion-dollar trade route from Papua to the booming cities of China's Yangtze River delta. Another unsettling example is the involvement of the TNI and government officials in the gathering and trade of *gaharu* (eaglewood) that is sold for high prices to the Arab world.<sup>14</sup> One of the results is that wealth is taken away from the bottom up while opportunities for advancement are redistributed inside and outside Papua within limited elites by the provision of gifts, commercial opportunities, and so on. Politically and economically, Papua begins to show signs of the privatization of the state and the criminalization of the behaviour of power-holders.

<sup>14</sup> SKP Merauke 2004. The rampant spread of the HIV/AIDS-virus is partly connected to the prostitution centres established and run by the TNI to service local and migrant workers. These prostitution centres are a principal source of the infection. Estimates suggest that the number of HIV-infected people in Papua stands at approximately 15,000 at present.

### Conclusion

The post-Soeharto Reformasi period in Papua was marked by revivals of optimism about change and expectations of imminent far-reaching sovereignty. The prospect of justice, the acknowledgement of the 'true history of Papua', and increased respect for the Papuans, alternated with strong disappointment and mounting resentment towards 'Jakarta' due to renewed harsh and poorly controlled TNI operations. Amid a persistent undercurrent of distrust towards the national government many in Papua showed a remarkable ardour for entering into a bargaining process (albeit often with high opening bids, alarming policy-makers in Jakarta). Hopes that justice can be done for the Papuans were again visible during the recent national elections in which the people of Papua went to the polls in high numbers (Timmer 2005:448-50). Also the Otsus and *pemekaran* lobbies indicate that many in Papua want to participate actively in a political economy of dependence on and engagement with Jakarta.

Dependence is constructed and maintained as much by Papuans who support a dialogue with 'Jakarta' and are eager to cast votes during democratic elections, as by political actors who try to convince Jakarta of the importance of recognizing the grievances of the people of Papua, or merely seek to profit financially from this relationship. On the other hand, both the 'indigenous Papuans' and those generally labelled as 'immigrants' – the divisions between the two can never be clear, let alone desirable – have for a number of reasons quite a strong urge to live their lives largely autonomously. This is due to their *memoria passionis* and disappointment with the central government's policies towards Papua. When the need to distance oneself from unreliable elites and a decentralization that goes astray, people begin to revitalize traditions of relative freedom allegedly enjoyed in the past.

At the level of local communities, throughout history, people have been subject to forms of destabilization as the result of interactions with others and they continuously developed new strategies with locally specific inventiveness. Papuan people's potent histories of relative autonomy and their recent experiences with the church, the colonial government and Indonesian institutions are diverse. Generally, local institutions have been internally negotiated in response to the administration and the church. At the same time, from the district level up to the provincial bureaucracy and the national parliament, Papuan leaders and politicians increasingly usurp the powers of the civil service. Less promising is that in particular the district and provincial levels of the administration have become intertwined in personal patronage systems.

The voices for more autonomy in Papua are generally not about Papuan nationalism but are cast in opposition to the dominance of the state. The state

has not brought what Papuans expected and is thus challenged by social, ethnic, religious and regional identities. Most Papuans treat the state with a high degree of suspicion. Only when the promise of commitment to and respect for their demands and aspirations is in the air, they want to engage with the state. Currently, there are two points of contention among the vast majority of people in Papua. One is the unpredictability of 'Jakarta' as the model of the state that the central government is propagating to Papua is unclear, and the other is frustration over the wealth and influence of Papuan elites whose agendas are often too detached from the circumstances they suggest to address.

To remain critical of what is going on in Papua, policy-makers (as well as Papua watchers) should be careful not to fall into the classical mistake of seeing that there is a united Papuan cause that is frustrated by 'Indonesia'. In fact, there has never been an en masse Papuan effort to struggle for secession from Indonesia or a 'compact, self-conscious, and organized community', as Chauvel (2005:3), among others, observes. There have always been strong divisions within Papua even when people organize in civil society organizations, government bodies, or alongside activist circles abroad. What most Papuans have in common though is a *memoria passionis* and the experiences of development programs and democratization efforts dogged by unfulfilled promises and failures. During the Papuan Spring this shared history was expressed Papua-wide in terms of a demand for the straightening of Papuan history and enhanced respect for the Papuans. But the attempts of organizing people into a united front were undermined by military operations and the *pemekaran* decree that was supported by elements of the Papuan elite. What remained was Otsus but this promising reform policy was frustrated by Papuan and Jakarta politics surrounding the *pemekaran* decree which brought to the surface a spate of old and enduring regional, political and personal tensions in the region. The *pemekaran* plan provided opportunities for disenchanted Papuan leaders and subsequently unleashed regional and ethnic sentiments as well as mutual distrust among Papuan leaders.

Finally, with respect to the increasing prominence of the informal economy in Papua, it is important to realize that already since the New Order period major parts of domestic Papua operated more as an unofficial or 'unconventional' economy than an economy of wage earners, formal institutions, and legal contracts. While it is true that a formidable number of people earn government wages, most rural people trade and exchange goods in and between communities in order to survive. Erring decentralization and the limited presence of meaningful development programs trigger fractionalization when people begin to compete for political and economic resources. Self-interest in this context is the result of a realistic view that relates to current and past development promises. People know that outsiders come and

make promises about financial rewards, roads, bridges, sago factories, logging activities, fish factories and so on. Then things – people in Papua know from experience – are unlikely to be sustainable and will favour some over others. In these circumstances, elites and local people have a realistic view to get what they can while they can.

Hence what is often seen as greediness, is a response to the ongoing deferral of development alongside failing policies that aim at enhancing services to the people of Papua. In a region which is abundantly rich in natural resources, whose people do not share equally in the profits of resource development projects, and of which many people's dignities have been denied in violent ways for a long period of time, this kind of response is understandable. In other words, 'disorder' in Papua is not merely a condition created by 'Jakarta' or as a state of dereliction; it is a condition that offers opportunities for people in Papua who know how to play the system.