

Papua New Guinea-Indonesia Relations:  
A New Perspective on the Border Conflict

Beverley Anne Blaskett  
B.A.(hons), M.A., Dip. Ed., M.Ed.

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Except for those sources as acknowledged in the text, this thesis is all  
my own work.

*B. Maskett*

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**Abbreviations:**

ABC	Australian Broadcasting Commission
ABRI	<i>Angkatan Bersendjata Republik Indonesia</i> (Indonesian Armed Forces)
AEC	Administrator's Executive Council
APPDT	<i>Alokasi Penempatan Penduduk Daerah Transmigrasi</i> (Transmigration Area Population Residence Allocation)
ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
BAPPEDA	<i>Badan Perencanaan Pembangunan Daerah</i> (Agency for Regional Development and Planning)
BL	Border Liaison
<u>CT</u>	<u>Canberra Times</u>
DFA	Department of Foreign Affairs
DFA&T	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DPI	Department of Primary Industries
<u>FEER</u>	<u>Far Eastern Economic Review</u>
FUNDWI	Fund of the United Nations for Development in West Irian
GPK	<i>Gerakan Pengacau Keamanan</i> (Peace-Disrupting Movement)
GPL	<i>Gerakan Papua Liar</i> (Wild Papuan Movement)
HofA	House of Assembly
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank)
<u>ICATS</u>	<u>Indonesian Current Affairs Translation Service</u>
ICJ	International Commission of Jurists
IGGI	Inter-Governmental Group on Indonesia
INPRES	<i>Instruksi President</i> (Presidential Instruction)
IrJa	Irian Jaya
IRJA-DISC	Irian Jaya Development Information Service Centre
JBC	Joint Border Committee
K	Kina
<u>KdK</u>	<u>Kabar dari Kampung</u>
Kepres	<i>Kebijaksanaan President</i> (Presidential Order)
km	Kilometer
KODAM	<i>Komando Daerah Militer</i> (Regional Military Command)
KOWILHAN	<i>Komando Wilayah Pertahanan</i> (Regional Security Command)
MAF	Mission Aviation Fellowship

## Abbreviations, cont.:

NBC	National Broadcasting Commission (Papua New Guinea)
NPD	National Parliamentary Debates (Papua New Guinea)
NPEP	National Public Expenditure Plan (Papua New Guinea)
OPM	<i>Organisasi Papua Merdeka</i> (Free Papua Movement)
Pelita	<i>Pembangunan Lima Tahun</i> (Five Year Development [Plan])
Papenal	<i>Pasukan Pembebasan Nasional</i> (National Liberation Group [OPM military wing])
Pepera	<i>Penentuan Pendapat Rakyat</i> (Determination of People's Opinion/ Act of Free Choice)
<u>PIM</u>	<u>Pacific Islands Monthly</u>
PIR	Pacific Islands Regiment
PIR	Small Holder Nucleus Estates Programme
PNG	Papua New Guinea
PNGDF	Papua New Guinea Defence Force
<u>PNGEAR</u>	<u>Papua New Guinea Foreign Affairs Review</u>
PRGWP(IJ)	Provisional Revolutionary Government of West Papua (Irian Jaya)
Repelita	<i>Rencana Pembangunan Lima Tahun</i> (Five Year Development Plan)
RIOP	Research Institute for Oppressed Peoples
Rp.	Rupiah
<u>SMH</u>	<u>Sydney Morning Herald</u>
Tapenal [OPM])	<i>Tentara Pembebasan Nasional</i> (National Liberation Army
TPNG	Territory of Papua and New Guinea
Translok	Local Transmigrant (i.e. from within same province)
TRIPIDA	<i>Tentara Republik Indonesia Pusat Inteligen Daerah</i> (Regional Military Intelligence Centre)
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UPNG	University of Papua New Guinea
WWF	World Wildlife Fund
YPMD-IRJA	<i>Yayasan Pengembangan Masyarakat Desa Irian Jaya</i> (Irian Jaya Community Development Foundation)

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## **Abstract**

The study of international relations theory has undergone major revision in the 1980s: commentators have been increasingly concerned with the influence on foreign policy of actors other than governments. In contrast to the realist approach - typified by assumptions that states act rationally, have full control of the international relations arena and constitute the only significant actors in inter-state relations and that domestic and international politics are sharply separated - there is a realisation that there is a multiplicity of variables shaping international relations, variables which are often beyond the control of states.

Although some studies of the Papua New Guinea - Indonesia border issue express reservations with the assumptions of realism, the prevailing interpretations of the Indonesia - Papua New Guinea relationship have been based on realist assumptions. This is partly because critical discussion of the dominant international relations perspective is new; but also the realist approach purports to reveal, even if it fails to 'realistically' deliver, 'the' predictive framework for the behaviour of states. The urgency and volatility of the Papua New Guinea - Indonesia border issue has encouraged scholars to adopt the realist perspective, for it has been widely accepted as utilitarian, and, far from promising to supply a more forceful 'utilitarian' model, new theoretical studies critical of realism have denied the possibility of finding any simple formula for analysing the behaviour of states. It is no longer reasonable to advise states on the assumption that they constitute the principal actors in the field (although it cannot be denied that states play significant roles in shaping their relations with others). Accordingly, the shortcomings of the realist approach to the analysis of the relationship between Indonesia and Papua New Guinea should be made apparent and new questions can be asked about the central causes of the continuing tensions between the two states.

In the realist view, the governments of Papua New Guinea and Indonesia (in combination with the states which together determine the geopolitical balance) are the sole actors influencing the relationship between them; although it is clear that that relationship hinges on events on their shared border, and that a third party - the West Papuan resistance movement, often referred to as the OPM - is crucial to the intergovernmental relationship.

Although there is increasing evidence that realism does not offer a failsafe framework for predicting the behaviour of states, states continue to employ a realist perspective in their dealings with one another. More powerful states, in particular, may prefer to act as if their power alone can determine the course of international relations. In the case of the

Indonesia - Papua New Guinea border, bilateral agreements intended to eliminate tension over the border have clearly failed to do so. This indicates the influence on the relationship of actors outside the control of either state. Commentators have largely accepted the position taken by Indonesia, the more powerful state, and dismiss the possibility that both states could fail to secure the border: any such 'failure' on the part of Papua New Guinea has been interpreted as collusion with the OPM against Indonesia; the possibility that Indonesia (the more militarily capable state with a strong interest in border security) could 'fail' to achieve its border security goals has not even been contemplated.

One explanation for the continuing tensions between Indonesia and Papua New Guinea is that the roots of that tension have not been properly recognised by both parties. The border remains troublesome to both countries because of security concerns, as the OPM continues to direct violence against the Indonesian government in an effort to win independence for West Papua (officially the Indonesian province of Irian Jaya). Thus, Indonesia's grievances against Papua New Guinea for allegedly collaborating with the OPM stem from a domestic political issue.

While Papua New Guinea has recognised that it is in a vulnerable position with regard to Indonesia, it has not always circumscribed its actions in the way demanded by Indonesia. Perceiving that the border agreement between it and Indonesia cannot guarantee territorial sovereignty and seeing that it has much to gain by the resolution of the border issue, it has attempted to remove the roots of border conflict by negotiating with the OPM to persuade the independence fighters to accept Indonesian rule. As these negotiations resulted in failure, Papua New Guinea sought other means to confine the threat to Papua New Guinea's sovereignty indirectly posed by the continuing discord between the OPM and Indonesia.

Although Papua New Guinea always publicly accepted that Indonesia is sovereign in Irian Jaya, it adopted some contradictory and secret policies intended to reduce the basic tensions between Indonesian authority and Papuans in Irian Jaya. As many Papua New Guineans involved in government and administration showed sympathy for the OPM, and as inconsistencies in policy have come to light, Indonesia has found evidence of anti-Indonesian feeling in Papua New Guinea's border policies. For example, Papua New Guinean officials have maintained contact with OPM leaders in order to improve intelligence and, through it, border security, yet Indonesia, not accepting the necessity of negotiating with the leaders, has found grounds to accuse Papua New Guinea of breaching agreements. Other less controversial attempts by Papua New Guinea to improve border conditions through joint discussion with Indonesia on matters relating to 'balanced border development' have also met with failure. Another official strategy has

been to 'broaden the relationship' with Indonesia in the hope that increased interaction will result in increased trust and knowledge, and some enduring guarantee of friendship. This last strategy has the virtue of being highly publicised and supported by Indonesia, but does not redress the conditions which contribute to border conflict; its inefficacy has been demonstrated by the continued occurrence of border violations.