MMFForum
Media Freedom in Melanesia

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Pacific
Journalism Review

MEDIA FREEDOM IN MELANESIA

EDITED BY KASUN UBAYASIRI,
FAITH VALENCIA-FORRESTER, DAVID ROBIE,
PHILIP CASS AND NICOLE GOOCH

- Key Melanesian media freedom challenges: Climate crisis, internet freedoms and West Papua
- Journalism in Melanesia and external and internal threats in Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu
- Strengthening the voices of human rights defenders
- In her own words: Melanesian women in media
- Red tape, disinformation and bogus online media disruption in West Papua
- Scott Waide, Maseratis, EMTV and how a public outcry restored media freedom
- Forgetting Papua New Guinea? Australian media coverage

FRONTLINE REVERSING SILENCES IN WEST PAPUA: INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH AND (AUDIO) DOCUMENTARY

- CREATIVE PRACTICE AS RESEARCH

PLUS

- When TC Harold meets the novel coronavirus
- Negotiating uncertainty with public health communication
- What's in a name? A history of NZ's unique name supression laws and their impact on press freedom

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EDITORIAL: Melanesian media freedom

THE SOVEREIGN states of Melanesia are countries where the yoke of colonialism and struggles for independence are still within living memory. There are territories within Melanesia where the questions and complexities associated with achieving self-determination are very much live issues. In West Papua, this issue is one over which blood continues to be spilt. As these countries, and the communities within them, grapple with political-economic and technical shifts, the need for independent journalism is self-evident. However, journalists, editors, publishers and media owners face a barrage of challenges to their ability to operate free from repression or coercion by those who wield power in their societies. Some of these challenges are overt and can extend to threats or physical intimidation. Others are more subtle but no less pervasive and damaging. They lead to a narrowing of the media landscape, the loss of talented professionals to other areas, the rise of self-censorship, and more.

The establishment and entrenchment of democratic culture in Melanesia is a work in progress. Recognising the threats to media freedom and supporting industry professionals in navigating and countering them is fundamental to furthering this endeavour.

This special issue of the *Pacific Journalism Review* draws upon a growing need to discuss media freedom in Melanesia—a distinct sub-region of Oceania that comprises Fiji, Vanuatu, New Caledonia, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, the Autonomous region of Bougainville, West Papua and the Torres Strait Islands. The articles in this collection are the culmination of a series of wide-ranging discussions bringing journalists from these countries together in Brisbane, Australia, under the banner of the Melanesia Media Freedom Forum (MMFF)—a gathering convened in response to increasing media repression in Melanesia, to find avenues of future-proofing press freedom, though transnational regional co-operation and knowledge-sharing among journalists, editors, publishers, press-freedom advocates and journalism scholars.

In editing this special issue, we are mindful of the ongoing media repression in the Melanesian sub-region—in particular in Fiji, Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea and West Papua. In his article on press freedom in Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, **Shailendra Singh** notes 'how little control the media have over both external and internal threats, and how stakeholder support is needed to overcome some of the issues', while **Marie M'balla-Ndi Oelgemöller** and **Levi Obijiofor** note increasing threats to media freedom and abuse of journalists when discussing challenges they faced researching the impact of national security legislation.

The Fijian military dictatorship continues to maintain a stranglehold on the

KASUN UBAYASIRI

Figure 1: Former Vanuatu Daily Post media director Dan McGarry: A Vanuatu government attempt to deny him re-entry to his home country of 16 years heralds a troubling future for press freedom.

local press under Prime Minister Voreqe Bainimarama, fostering a culture of self-censorship. The hostile media environment under which the Fijian press had operated since the introduction of the repressive *Media Industry Development Decree* in 2010, which became an Act of Parliament in 2015, has further paved the way for even more insidious control through the establishment of a state-controlled Media Industry Development Authority. The MIDA's intimidation, coupled with the use of sedition laws to silence journalists, as in the case of the three *Fiji Times* journalists in 2018, has further raised the cost of independent journalism in Fiji.

The Vanuatu government attempted to deny *Vanuatu Daily Post* editor **Dan McGarry** permission to re-enter the country in 2019 after he participated in the Melanesia Media Freedom Forum. McGarry was the former media director of the *Vanuatu Daily Post*, the country's only daily newspaper. This heralds a troubling future for press freedom. McGarry's claim that the Prime Minister had personally summoned and reprimanded him for alleged 'negative' coverage is even more worrying and indicative of the extrajudicial and arbitrary nature of such repression.

The election of Prime Minister James Marape in Papua New Guinea, in mid-2019, may have removed the dictatorial grip of former Prime Minister Peter O'Neill that saw countless violations of press freedom from direct threats, intimidations, and attempts to bribe journalists to prosecutions and media censorship; but media freedom in Papua New Guinea remains endangered. With the country's two leading dailies owned by overseas multi-nationals—*PNG Post Courier* by Australian media tycoon Rupert Murdoch's News Corp, and *The National*, by the Malaysian logging company Rimbunan Hijau, journalists continue to lack real agency in reporting issues that are important to the local communities. Rimbunan Hijau has been particularly restrictive in sanctioning vital environmental reportage. The government's attempt to suspend senior Papua New Guinean journalist and EMTV's Lae city bureau chief **Scott Waide** for airing a story critical of the government in 2018 (see the **Fred Wesley** profile) and the sacking of Neville Choi under the pretext of 'non-compliance' is further evidence of this worrying trend.

Press freedom in Indonesian-occupied West Papua continues to deteriorate. Since Indonesia's occupation in 1963, nearly all foreign media have been banned from entering West Papua. A handful of local journalists like *Jubi* editor **Victor Mambor** continue to work under challenging working conditions, walking a thin line between compliance and press freedom. However, this special issue of *PJR* is also about acknowledging positive developments in press freedom, however fleeting. It aims to identify new opportunities delivered through long fought political change—the overwhelming election result in favour of independence from Papua New Guinea offers fresh hope for independent and robust journalism in Bougainville.

Bridget Backhaus notes external threats to media freedom are not limited to government pressures, as she points out 'funding requirements of the global aid industry means that Melanesian journalists may find themselves under pressure to conform to dominant narratives of development in order to appease donors and training providers'. This reliance on outside funding models can lead to media coverage that 'paints a misleading picture of the way things are, instead of showing donors and international interests what they want to see' and Backhaus critically considers approaches to development communication that may impact the way Melanesian media workers work in this environment.

We begin this edition of *PJR* with **David Robie's** outline of some of the key challenges for Melanesian media freedom. Presented in his keynote presentation at the Forum, Robie focuses on a number of central developments in the region's media theatre—climate crisis, the impact of the rise of social media platforms, internet freedom and the growing prevalence of fake news. **Amanda Watson's** commentary on mobile phone access and equity in Papua New Guinea and the government decisions to impose tighter regulations that may exclude disadvantaged communities accessing mobile communication highlights the impediments to the digital revolution in the region.

Several authors, including David Robie, have also noted how Australia has systematically distanced themselves from their closest neighbours in the region.

ISABELLA PORAS/MMFF

West Papua a
human rights
journalism
A MELANESIAN MEDIA FREEDOM CASE STUDY
EXIT

Figure 2: Participants at the Melanesia Media Freedom Forum pre-conference on 28 October 2019. Veteran Papua New Guinea and Pacific correspondent of the ABC Sean Dorney is in the centre.

Lee Duffield reminds us how ‘coverage of Papua New Guinea in Australian media has been a source of resentment and dissatisfaction among academic writers and journalists within PNG and in Australia, and PNG activists and political leaders since the former Territory’s independence in 1975’. The exception, Duffield argues, was acclaimed journalist **Sean Dorney’s** ground-breaking reportage of the Melanesian sub-region for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) as Auntie’s Port Moresby correspondent. He notes how Dorney was an institution, providing quality ongoing coverage of the Pacific from PNG contrasted against the disinterest from Australia’s commercial press and television—a void. It is left to the ongoing contributions of the non-Murdoch press such as ABC, SBS, NITV and the ‘new media’ *Guardian Australia* providing essential coverage of the region.

This special issue of the journal also comes at a time of renewal and hope in the region, with the Bougainville and New Caledonia’s independence referenda bringing the West Papuan independence issue into even sharper focus. Robie’s keynote lecture speaks to West Papua, acknowledging it is undergoing a vitally important self- determination issue that if left unresolved threatens the security of the region. This concern for the crisis in West Papua remains high with journalists and academics alike. This is evidenced by the number of submissions for this special edition about West Papua. Researcher **Pelagio Da Costa Sarmento** collaborates with editor-in-chief of the West Papuan media outlet *Tabloid Jubi* **Victor Mambor**, in producing an in-depth commentary detailing the limitations faced by local and international journalists highlighting West Papua’s status as one of the most closed regions in the Reporters Without Borders Global Press

Freedom Index. They describe how foreign journalists are hamstrung by intricate complexities of redtape in applying for a permit to come to West Papua where they are then closely monitored by security forces on arriving. Local journalists with legitimate news organisations regularly face threats to their safety and security. They also discuss how an increase in online media has seen fake news and disinformation campaigns threatening legitimate news outlets.

Presenting a different perspective about the impact of social media outside of West Papua, **Jason Titifanue, Romitesh Kant** and **Glenn Finau** argue social media is the antidote to West Papua's media oppression and growing 'solidarity for West Papua's self-determination is resulting in a heightened Pacific regional consciousness at the community level'. **Ana Nadhya Abrar** takes an intimate look at two West Papuan journalists and their relationship with human rights. Separating the journalist from the reporting, the author's interviews with the reporters suggest there is a weariness developing, fatigue if you will, around reporting ongoing human rights abuses and violations.

The special issue also focuses on several touchstone issues in the cultural landscape of the region's media. **Faith Valencia-Forrester, Bridget Backhaus** and **Heather Stewart** capture the panel discussions featuring female Melanesian journalists to analyse the unique challenges women reporters face in terms of representation and media freedom, in an inherently patriarchal society. **Verena Thomas** and **Jackie Kauli's** work, assisting human rights defenders in sharing their experiences around sorcery accusations and violence in Papua New Guinea, provide a rare glimpse of how the news media is navigating the intersect between human rights and traditional beliefs. In their contribution to this special edition, they examine the ethics of representation when it comes to reporting human rights abuses and violence and provide suggestions for alternative ways of reporting.

Pacific Journalism Review's associate editor **Philip Cass** contributes an article exploring climate change communication in Papua New Guinea, particularly with the use of the Tok Pisin language. The paper compares the situation in PNG with the use of Pidgin English in Nigeria and concludes that the Pacific's largest country faces an 'enormous challenge' in educating the *grassruts* about climate action best practice and engaging with communities.

Despite the trials, tribulations and complexities inherent in producing independent and meaningful journalism in the Melanesian sub-region, this special joint issue of the journal and the Melanesia Media Freedom Forum is one of hope. It is a testament to the resolve and commitment of the region's journalists, media academics and communications sector stakeholders in striving to produce independent and robust Fourth Estate journalism and media content that speak truth to power, animate democracy and give voice to the voiceless. It is the start of a new journey for a stronger press and a united front against tyranny.

This commitment is echoed in the words of the *Fiji Times* editor-in-chief,

Fred Wesley, who writes of the need for solidarity, and how he, along with his colleagues, Victor Mambor from West Papua, Scott Waide of Papua New Guinea, and Dan McGarry in Vanuatu, are holding firm to the banner of press freedom in Melanesia in the face of overwhelming forces. As Wesley notes

> When you start reaching out, talking to others in the region, you find that you are not actually alone in this. The experiences are similar. The intensity varies, but the take-home for me is that nobody should be alone to handle their problems on their own.

We hope this special edition of *PJR* goes in some small way to reaching out to those who couldn't make it to the forum, to let you know that while your media may not be free, you are not alone.

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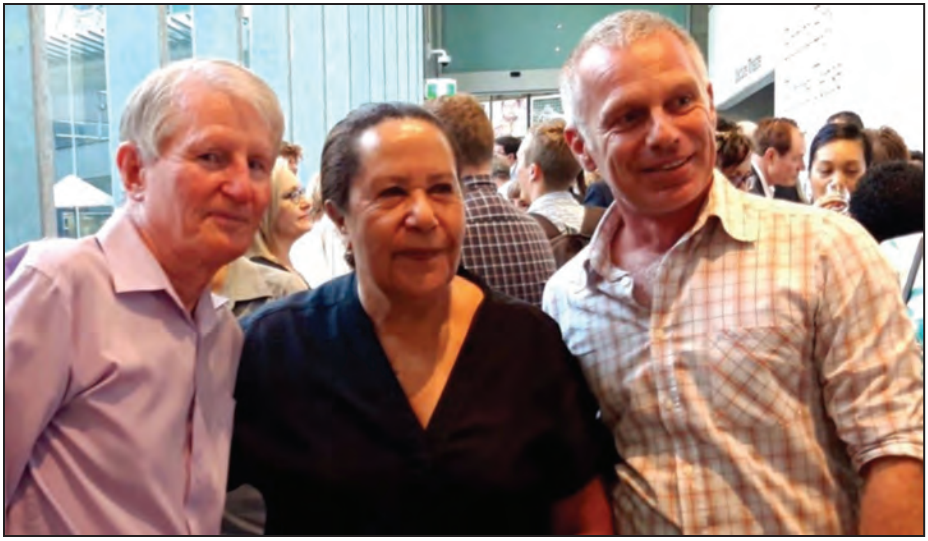

Figure 3: Sean Dorney, the doyen of Pacific journalism, pictured with Pacific Islands Forum Secretary-General Meg Taylor and SBS World News reporter Stefan Armbruster at the 2019 MMFF symposium in Brisbane. Dorney was named an Officer of the Order of Australia in the 2020 Queen's Birthday Honours for his 'service to the broadcast media as a journalist, and as an author'.

OUR unthemed section of this edition of *Pacific Journalism Review* also begins with Melanesia, specifically West Papua. The first article in our double-barrelled *Frontline* department—dedicated to journalism and creative practice as research edited by Professor **Wendy Bacon** and **Nicole Gooch**—features **Belinda Lopez** with an exegesis and narrative based on her 2020 ABC radio documentary profiling women advocates for West Papuan freedom, *#Illridewithyou, West Papua*. As Lopez, explains, West Papua is poorly understood by Australians—and New Zealanders—in spite and the human rights upheaval across both West Papua and Indonesia in 2019 so she set out on a long-form journalism project that could ‘explore the roots of this discontent’. She invokes the work of Haitian anthropologist Michel-Rolph Trouillot, Papuan writer and an anthropologist Benny Giay and Australian author, journalist and filmmaker **Chris Nash** (*What is journalism? The arts and politics of rupture,* 2016) on the affective mode on her journey. She concludes:

> I argue that effect is important in reversing silences on underreported issues, such as those that take place in West Papua… The audio documentary allows for an affective mode, as opposed to a statistical representation of deaths and crimes often found in reporting about West Papua.

In the second *Frontline* article, Professor **Annie Goldson** debates creative practice as a research methodology from a New Zealand research environment perspective in the contexts of both her own trailblazing documentary career within a university with such acclaimed feature film titles as *Brother Number One, He Toki Huna: New Zealand in Afghanistan and Kim Dotcom: Caught in the Web,* and the Performance-Based Research Fund (PBRF) framework. She argues:

> The now-common usage of the term [creative-practice] … is in part a greater recognition within the academy that cultural production can be research-rich providing ‘new knowledge’ to its respective fields. But its recognition has also been useful to the institutions themselves.

The Special Report section features an article by University of the South Pacific’s Pacific Centre for Environment and Suistainable Development (PaCE-SD) director and joint Nobel Peace Prize-winner Professor **Elisabeth Holland** addressing the simultaneous challenge of Tropical Cyclone Harold and the global COVID-19 pandemic faced by four island nations, Fiji, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu. She notes how Prime Minister Bainimarama called upon Fiji to ‘honour the power of the spirit of *vei lomani*—that profound sense of love and devotion to the protection of our people’. With the late 2019 measles epidemic in Fiji, Samoa (death toll 83), Tonga and American Samoa fresh in their minds, Pacific leaders were determined to lead by example to prevent coronavirus devastation in their countries.

Also addressing the challenges of COVID-19 is **Arjun Rajkhowa**, who argues that a more sophisticated approach is needed to negotiating gaps in emerging communication and information uncertainties of a pandemic of this magnitude is needed. Also, the media coverage of health crises in Australian and New Zealand can have a significant impact on the wider Pacific region.

Two Indonesia-based UNESCO lecturers **Gilang Desti Parahita and Zainuddin Muda Monggilo** with PR2Media's **Engelbertus Wendratama** analyse the success and challenges of multimedia journalism training in Timor-Leste, a country that is seeking to build a sound mediascape for the future. In New Zealand, **Francine Tyler** provides a compelling history and critique of the country's unique name suppression laws. While a new law due to take effect in August 2020 addresses some of the issues, she laments that after erosion for many years the 'raft … of suppressions' code will still impact on 'New Zealand's media in a way that is extremely unusual in comparison to other Western nations'.

Heading the Reviews section, is an intriguing and compelling analysis by former *New Zealand Herald* editor **Jeremy Rees** of the 1972 Commission of Inquiry report into the controversial sacking of the then New Zealand *Listener* editor Alexander MacLeod. The *Listener* is one of the icons of New Zealand magazine publishing and was among the host of titles axed with the sudden closure of Bauer Media's New Zealand operations during the COVID-19 lockdown in April 2020.

The pandemic has ushered in a host of publication and radio closures on both sides of the Tasman and the loss of hundreds of editorial jobs. But we should not totally despair. The 'new normal' is also creating many entrepreneurial and niche media opportunities. While the mass media market model may be dead, or dying, journalism is still very much alive.

A FINAL word. Many thanks to the countless people who have contributed much to this journal over the years as volunteers or in roles outside their core academic and media jobs. Now in its 26th year—an incredible milestone—*Pacific Journalism Review* last year celebrated the addition of 17 years of research archives to its Tuwhera indigenous open access platform at Auckland University of Technology. All the articles from the journal's pioneering days at the University of Papua New Guinea (1994-1998) and University of the South Pacific (1999-2002) are now available to freely download. Thank you **Donna Coventry** and **Luqman Hayes**. No more paywalls—great news for Pacific researchers.

DAVID ROBIE
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Pacific Journalism Review
www.pjreview.info

1. Key Melanesian media freedom challenges

Climate crisis, internet freedoms, fake news and West Papua

Abstract: Melanesia, and the microstates of the Pacific generally, face the growing influence of authoritarian and secretive values in the region—projected by both China and Indonesia and with behind-the-scenes manipulation. There is also a growing tendency for Pacific governments to use unconstitutional, bureaucratic or legal tools to silence media and questioning journalists. Frequent threats of closing Facebook and other social media platforms and curbs on online freedom of information are another issue. While Pacific news media face these challenges, their support networks are being shaken by the decline of Australia as a so-called 'liberal democracy' and through the undermining of its traditional region-wide public interest media values with the axing of Radio Australia and Australia Network television. Reporting climate change is the Pacific's most critical challenge while Australian intransigence over the issue is subverting the region's media. This article engages with and examines these challenges and also concludes that the case of West Papua is a vitally important self-determination issue that left unresolved threatens the security of the region.

Keywords: climate change, climate crisis, corruption, China, fake news, Indonesia, internet, media freedom, Melanesia, West Papua

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IT NEVER ceases to amaze me how politicians in the Pacific manage to regularly shoot themselves in the foot over media freedom. Many simply fail to recognise the importance of news media in democracy, development and policy making. They just do not want to be questioned or challenged.

On the eve of the Melanesia Media Freedom Forum (MMFF), which was organised at Griffith University in November 2019, there were three major assaults on media freedom. Ironically, these happened at the very moment that the MMFF was about to 'respond to increasing media repression in Melanesia and to future-proof press freedom through transnational regional cooperation

AL JAZEERA

Figure 1: Melanesia Media Freedom Forum (MMFF): Addressing Increasing media repression in Melanesia, such as in West Papua.

and knowledge-sharing' (MMFF, 2019) among journalists, editors, publishers, press freedom advocates and journalism scholars (Figure 1).

Growing authoritarianism and legal gags

First, on 6 November 2019, just days before journalists, editors, publishers, press freedom advocates and journalism scholars gathered to debate press freedom, the Premier of Western Province in the Solomon islands, David Gina, threatened to close down the local office of *Island Sun* in the provincial capital of Gizo because of a series of embarrassing exposés in the newspaper (Nantara, 2019). 'I am working hard to make this province great again and all I get from your paper is articles rubbishing my reign and regime,' he declared. 'I will not tolerate opposition inside my province.'

Two days later, on November 8, the media director of the *Vanuatu Daily Post*, Dan McGarry, revealed on his Facebook page the disturbing news that he had been denied a renewal of his work permit (Davidson, 2019; McGarry, 2019b). The lame official excuse was apparently that he had not 'localised' his position by then.

Although McGarry is Canadian, he has lived in Vanuatu for 16 years, his wife and two daughters are ni-Vanuatu and had applied for Vanuatu citizenship.

The Vanuatu government's reaction was quite outrageous. Dan McGarry is one of the leading investigative journalists and editors in the Pacific, and a courageous inspiration to all. McGarry has also been a strong media freedom advocate and has followed the proud traditions set by the *Daily Post's* founder and owner, Marc Neil-Jones, by publishing the truth and holding the powerful to account. His short, crisp and challenging Facebook statement said:

> After over a month of delay and uncertainty, I was informed this afternoon that my work permit has been rejected.

> The overt reason is that my position should have been localised by now. But we all know the real reason: The *Daily Post* reporting on the government's activities has raised such discomfort that they are willing to abuse administrative processes to silence me.
>
> In July, the Prime Minister summoned me and berated me for my 'negative' reporting. 'If you don't like it here,' he told me, 'go home'.
>
> But Vanuatu *is* my home.
>
> Everything and everyone I love is here. I have devoted 16 years of my life to this country's development. I took the job of Media Director because I knew the country needed someone who was willing to step into the *Daily Post* founder Marc Neil-Jones' shoes.
>
> I have spent all my years here in service to this country. I love Vanuatu. I can't imagine a life without it.
>
> And now, I'm being told I have no place here. Because I spoke out for the truth, and the rule of law.
>
> People will hem and haw and say all kinds of things, but it all boils down to this: I spoke out and was punished for telling the truth. (McGarry, 2019b)

Media freedom groups condemned this draconian action by the Vanuatu government and social media postings ran hot with allegations by some correspondents that Chinese influence was behind it. McGarry said he was 'gutted' by the action and declared he would 'fight for justice' (Krishnamurthi, 2019). One correspondent claimed that the work refusal was because of an article published in July highlighting 'the depths to which China pressures Vanuatu and how deeply Vanuatu bends to China' (McGarry, 2019c).

This claim was shared by others and echoed in *The Guardian* on November 8 when the newspaper reported that in July the *Daily Post* had '[broken] the story of Vanuatu deporting six Chinese nationals—four of whom had obtained Vanuatu citizenship without due process of access to legal counsel' (Davidson, 2019). McGarry began his July 8 article with this introduction:

> Under a veil of secrecy, China has convinced Vanuatu to enforce Chinese law within its own borders.
>
> Six Chinese nationals were arrested, detained without charge on the premises of a Chinese company with numerous large government contracts. Without access to the Vanuatu courts, they were escorted out of Vanuatu with Chinese police holding one arm and Vanuatu Police holding the other.
>
> Neither Chinese nor Vanuatu police were in uniform. (McGarry, 2019a)

The third media freedom issue on the eve of the Melanesia Forum was a controversy over an Australian-based *60 Minutes* crew, including Nine Network journalist Liam Bartlett, which was detained ‘under house arrest’ by Kiribati authorities at their hotel before being deported on October 31 for allegedly violating conditions after failing to apply for a filming permit before arriving in the country (Lyons & Meade, 2019). A spokesperson claimed the crew ‘intentionally came to Kiribati without applying for a permit’ and then ‘lied about the reason for their visit’ to Immigration officials at Tarawa airport (Wasuka, 2019). The *60 Minutes* crew were researching a story about Kiribati’s decision to sever diplomatic ties with Taiwan in favour of China.

This raises some of the key geopolitical media issues facing Melanesia (and the Pacific) at present (Figure 2):

1. The growing influence of authoritarian and secretive values in the region—projected by both China and Indonesia with behind-the-scenes manipulation;
2. A growing tendency for Pacific governments to use unconstitutional, bureaucratic or legal tools to silence media and questioning journalists;
3. Frequent threats to close Facebook and other social media platforms and curbs on online freedom of information;
4. The decline of Australia as a so-called ‘liberal democracy’ and the undermining of its traditional region-wide public interest media values with the axing of Radio Australia and Television Australia;
5. Reporting climate change as the Pacific’s most critical challenge while Australian intransigence over the issue is subverting the region’s media; and
6. The case of West Papua, a vitally important self-determination issue which, left unresolved, threatens the security of the region.

Facebook and social media threats

As this article has already raised the first two concerns—both issues being compounded because of a cultural ‘big man’ syndrome whereby many Pacific journalists are reluctant to ask the hard questions of political leaders and those in high office—the third challenge will now be addressed.

Social media has been a healthy antidote to growing cultures of self-censorship in the Pacific, particularly in Fiji and Papua New Guinea, with Melanesian journalists increasingly using online blogs as ‘safety valve’ journalism—an outlet for hidden truths. Kudos to journalists such as EMTV’s Scott Waide for setting positive examples. However, governments in the region are increasingly using authoritarian methods to shut down, or gag social media. The attempts to gag Waide during Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) in November 2018 and other EMTV staff more recently by government interference in their company were outrageous (PMW, 2019a).

MELANESIA MEDIA FREEDOM FORUM

Figure 2: David Robie raising geopolitical issues by Zoom from Yogyakarta, Indonesia, at MMFF on 12 November 2019.

Jope Tarai of Fiji has done some ground-breaking research on how the incumbent Fiji government manipulated both the 2014 and 2018 general elections, published in the last edition of *Pacific Journalism Review* (Tarai, 2019). Also, recent research in Pakistan has shown that Fiji is not alone. In countries such as India, Indonesia, Philippines and Sri Lanka, where there are long-standing ethnic and religious tensions, citizens are relying on online information in significant numbers (Raza, 2019). Fake news, disinformation and media manipulation are now critical issues. There are lessons for Melanesia and the Pacific.

Australia's waning Pacific influence

Australia's waning influence and arrogance towards the Pacific was of special interest given that the MMFF symposium was in Brisbane. In October 2019, human rights lawyer Jennifer Robinson, who has played a key role in defending

West Papuan political prisoners, penned an op-ed article in *The Sydney Morning Herald*, which questioned Australia's right to continue being called a liberal democracy (Robinson, 2019). She wrote:

> Between police raids on journalists, unlawful accessing of metadata to identifying a journalist's source, and a spree of new national security legislation which criminalises journalistic activity, the recent actions of the Australian government sound less like those of a liberal democracy than of an authoritarian regime.
>
> This is dangerous, not just for Australian journalists, but for journalists everywhere. (Robinson, 2019)

Robinson cited how fellow human rights lawyer Amal Clooney had warned in a World Media Freedom conference in London in July that whatever happened in Australia 'will be looked at by every other leader in the world and potentially used as an excuse to clamp down even further on journalists' (Clooney, 2019). At the London conference, Clooney also raised free speech concerns about the United States indictment for Australian activist publisher Julian Assange. He was in jail in the United Kingdom facing US extradition and 175 years in prison for the same WikiLeaks publications which won him the 2011 Walkley Award for Most Outstanding Contribution to Journalism.

Robinson wrote that there was no denying the parallels between the 2019 Australian Police Force raids on journalists and the Assange indictment. Sadly, Australia is no longer the bastion of media freedom that Melanesia and the Pacific generally have looked to as a shining example when dealing with the bloody-mindedness of their own governments.

Australia slipped two places to 21st in 2019 as it continued to decline on the RSF World Press Freedom Index, which declared that while the country had good public media, the concentration of commercial media ownership had worsened since Channel Nine Entertainment took over the Fairfax media group and put investigative journalism at risk (RSF, 2019a). The following year, 2020, it declined further to 26th place, with the RSF noting the 'fragility' of journalistic freedom in the Commonwealth and the lack of a constitutional guarantee of press freedom (RSF, 2020).

The criticisms were echoed by the independent Sydney website *Crikey!*, which has been describing Australia as a police state for some time. In an article headlined 'Welcome to Stasiland Down Under', a reference to the methods of the East German secret police, the Stasi, the website warned about the legal risks for Australian media outlets using footage sourced from foreign broadcasters—even potentially those in the Pacific (Keane, 2019).

The independent Criminal Lawyers website also warned about proposed new laws about to be introduced by the Attorney-General's Office to target environment groups and climate change activists (Gregoire, 2019). The website cited the actual words describing the draft law by Prime Minister Scott Morrison addressing a 'room full of his fossil fuel mates'. Morrison called the draft law:

> Apocalyptic in tone. It brooks no compromise. It's all or nothing. Alternative views are not permitted. (Gregoire, 2019)

This raises the question of climate change and media freedom on Melanesia. One of the questions that I was asked by a group of Indonesian communication studies students in Yogyakarta in November 2019 was when Greta Thunberg, the young Swedish teenager championing climate change activism, faced abuse and ridicule by some global politicians. The students asked what they should do. I replied, 'Do *something.* It is your future. Don't rely on dinosaur politicians who don't have the answers and don't have the sense of urgency needed to tackle climate change.'

I was heartened by reports in September that four Pacific Islands children were among the 16 youth, including Thunberg, who filed a complaint on the climate crisis to the United Nations. Their petition to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) was a bold attempt to hold Argentina, Brazil, France, Germany and Turkey accountable for their alleged climate crisis inaction. This was the first time children had petitioned the UNCRC. The Pacific students were Carlos Manuel, a 17-year-old from Palau (and originally from the Philippines), and three Marshall Islanders—Litokne Kabua, David Ackley II and Ranton Anjain. They addressed the US in their indigenous languages.

In contrast to this youthful clarity and courage, the Pacific's case for global support on the climate crisis suffered a serious blow when it was formally announced in early November that the United States was withdrawing from the Paris Accord on climate change (RNZ, 2019f). Although President Donald Trump had long signalled this arrogant and short-sighted move, the formal notification of the one-year withdrawal process was met with dismay around the world.

Pacific Islands Forum chair Kausea Natano, who is also Prime Minister of Tuvalu, one of the Pacific climate crisis frontline states, said the withdrawal would undermine US influence and credibility in the Pacific—just when there was a growing concern in Western countries about Chinese influence in the region (RNZ, 2019g). He said Washington used to play a leadership role in supporting multilateralism and promoting a global rules-based system. However, the Forum chair argued that it was disappointing to see the ethos 'fade and falter' when it was so vitally needed in the world.

This focuses on the challenge for Melanesian and Pacific journalists—how to promote the Pacific agenda on climate crisis. The world's media must accept that we are long past the era of deniability. It is now time for action and time is running out.

The Forum's Kainaki II Declaration for Urgent Climate Action Now (Kainaki II, 2019) that the shared prosperity of the 'Blue Pacific' continent could only safely exist if the international community pursues efforts to limit warming to 1.5 deg Celsius, as stated in the Paris climate agreement, is a laudable objective. Scientists of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), a UN body, have been warning since 1988 that human activity, industrialisation and the world's dependence on fossil fuels have caused the warming of global temperatures that threaten life on Earth. By contrast, climate change deniers dismiss such dire premonitions as conspiracy.

I wrote in a new 2019 book for Asia-Pacific journalists, *Science Writing and Climate Change*, that:

> This is a challenge for journalists and the media who need to counter misinformation and ignorance. While there is a reported 97 percent scientific consensus about the cause of climate change, still some media organisations, such as those owned by billionaire Rupert Murdoch in Australia and the United States, give disproportionate oxygen to deniers. (Robie, 2019b, p. iii)

The lead author of this book, Professor Crispin Maslog of the Philippines, notes there are not enough qualified or trained journalists in the Asia-Pacific region who have the insights and expertise to report and analyse with enough depth and are yet able to connect with ordinary people. He wrote:

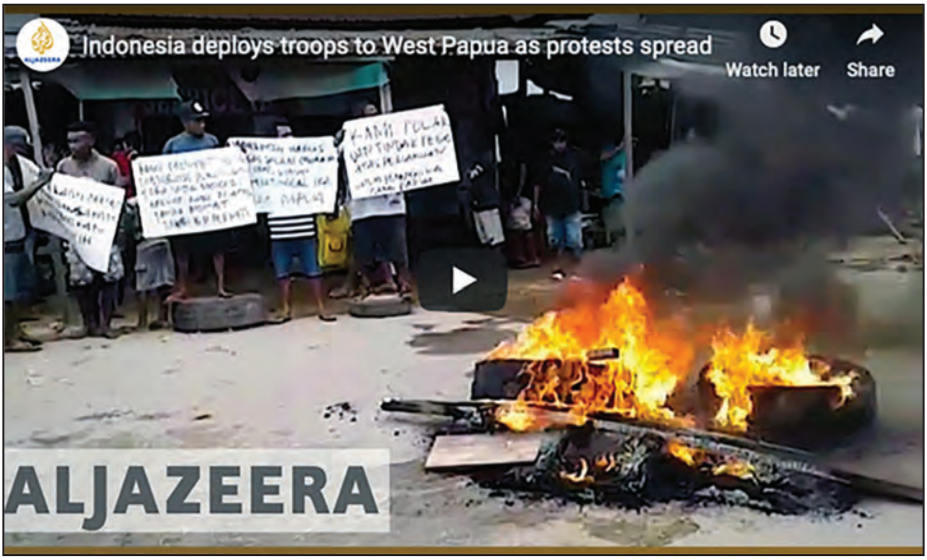
> Local media is largely confined to traditional disaster reporting of casualties, physical destruction and damage to property, as it should be. But there is little contextual reporting and explanation of why these natural disasters are happening more often and more violently. (Maslog, 2019, p. 2)

The good news is that in contrast to Australia, the New Zealand Parliament has passed landmark legislation that enshrines the national commitment to the Paris Accord into law, and will hopefully see the country achieve zero net carbon dioxide emissions by 2050 (Mazengarb, 2019). The new law will establish New Zealand as one of the few countries in the world with a legislated commitment to establishing policies consistent with limiting global warming to just 1.5 deg. Celsius. It was passed with almost unanimous bipartisan support, including the conservative National Party.

West Papua – 'black hole' in the Pacific

Finally, to West Papua. West Papua has generally been poorly covered by New Zealand's mainstream media, apart from RNZ Pacific, and a handful of specialist websites such as the Pacific Media Centre's *Asia Pacific Report*. The situation is only slightly better in Australia. Papua has generally been regarded as a media 'black hole' or 'black spot' (Andrew, 2019; Leadbeater, 2018; RNZ, 2018; Robie, 2014, 2017b, 2019a, 2019b; Webb-Gannon, 2019). When Camellia Webb-Gannon wrote in October 2019 about the experience of bringing West Papuan survivors of the little-known 1998 Biak massacre to give evidence before a citizens tribunal at the University of Sydney in 2013, she recalled:

> Singing and creating the combined testimony became, for the participating survivors, acts of healing, of ensuring the restrained legal procedure of the tribunal also privileged Papuan culture and foregrounded Papuan agency and voices.
>
> Realising the importance of art—in particular, music—in West Papua's decolonisation movement, members of the Tribunal's organising group were inspired to apply for a research grant to explore how art could be further used to facilitate social justice in similar instances. (Webb-Gannon, 2019)



AL JAZEERA

Figure 3: Al Jazeera reports on the protests and rioting in Papua in response to a racist attack in Surabaya, Java, 22 August 2019.

The recent turmoil has included (Figure 3):
December 2018: Papuan resistance fighters killed 19 Indonesian construction workers employed on the Trans-Papua Highway at Nduga, in Papua province. However, the status of the workers has been in dispute as resistance leaders have claimed they were in fact soldiers (Mambor, 2019).

January 2019: One Indonesian soldier was killed in Nduga.

March 2019: Three more soldiers were killed in Nduga.

July 22, 2019: Solidarity Team for Nduga aid agency reported 139 people had died in displacement camps in the previous six months and 5000 people had been displaced by the conflict (RNZ, 2019a).

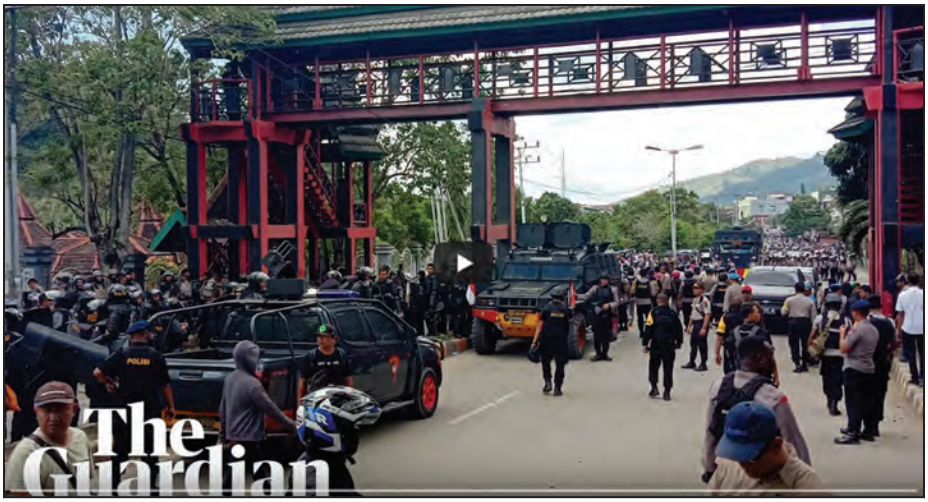
August/September 2019: The violence worsened with a police officer being shot dead on August 12, and a soldier dying after a Papuan resistance ambush. Between August 19 and late September, huge demonstrations broke out calling for independence after Indonesian students were reported to have racially insulted Papuans studying in Surabaya and Malang (Figure 4). The rallies erupted in Fak-Fak, Jayapura, Manokwari, Sorong, and also in the capital of Jakarta. Demonstrators torched several buildings including the local parliament in Manokwari, capital of West Papua province (Doherty, 2019; Firdaus, 2019a).

The Widodo administration—led by the very president who had grandstanded a new 'open era' (*The Guardian*, 2015) for Papua when first elected in 2014 and who has now backtracked on his promises after winning a new five-year term in 2019—was quick to blame the United Liberation Movement for West Papua (ULMWP) and its exiled leader, London-based Benny Wenda, for the demonstrations and violence (Blades & Smith, 2019). A fresh round of arrests began and harassment of rights lawyers defending the protesters, such as Veronica Koman (*Pacific Media Watch*, 2019c; RNZ, 2019b). It was a delight to see that in October Veronica had been awarded the Sir Ronald Wilson Human Rights Award while she was living in Australia, away from the Indonesian threats and an arrest attempt through Interpol (*Asia Pacific Report*, 2019).

More recently, in April 2020, Veronica Koman teamed up with Jennifer Robinson and the Indonesian human rights watchdog TAPOL (2020) to represent 63 political prisoners detained on treason charges in making a joint urgent appeal to the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention and UN Special Rapporteurs in response to the global coronavirus pandemic. The prisoners were 56 indigenous West Papuans, five Moluccans, one Indonesian, and one Polish citizen. They had all been charged with *makar* (treason), a crime that carries punishment of up to 20 years in jail.

In an *Asia Pacific Report* commentary, I warned that Indonesia would ignore the lessons of Timor-Leste at its peril as the stakes grew higher for West Papua (Leadbeater, 2007; Robie, 2014). I added:

> Indonesia's harsh policies towards West Papua ought to be scrapped. Whatever happened to the brief window of enlightenment ushered in by President Joko 'Jokowi' Widodo in 2015 with promises of a more 'open door' policy towards foreign journalists and human rights groups?
>
> They were supposed to be seeing for themselves the reality on the



THE GUARDIAN SCREENSHOT

Figure 4: ***Guardian*** **footage from citizen journalists in West Papua, 23 September 2019.**

> ground. But apart from a trickle of carefully managed visits by selected journalists after the grand announcement—including two multimedia crews from RNZ Pacific and Māori Television in 2015—no change really happened. The serious media freedom and human rights violations remain rampant. (Blades, 2016; Robie, 2019c; RSF, 2019a)

Indonesia's bureaucrats and government are tenacious about imposing obstacles on foreign media access to Papua (Figure 5). There is a routine perception and 'suspicion that the presence of foreign media and human rights activists in East Timor helped pave the way to that former Indonesian [occupied] province's independence in 2002' (Kline, 2016). The extent of blacklisting and repression against journalists by Indonesian authorities was superbly outlined by Australian investigative journalist John Martinkus in his 2020 book *The Road: Uprising in West Papua*. He concludes: 'No amount of hiding the truth can stop the reality of the situation in Papua coming to light … [I]f the Indonesians and the Australians and the UN continue their current policies in Papua, there will never be peace (Martinkus, 2020, p. 109).

In the wake of the protests and shootings, reports revealed that Indonesia had blocked foreign diplomats from visiting West Papua, with British, Canadian and New Zealand officials denied entry (RNZ, 2019d). Intolerable pressure was put on West Papuan journalists by Indonesian police and security forces and a well-funded social media campaign was launched by using 'bots' to promote the pro-government agenda (*Pacific Media Watch*, 2019b; RNZ, 2019c, 2019e). An investigation by BBC News and the Australian Policy Institute (ASPI) revealed that a flood of easily recognisable 'bots'—or automated fake accounts—would

AL JAZEERA

LIVE
@AJStream

Figure 5: Should West Papua remain part of Indonesia? The Stream, 6 September 2019.

piggyback on hashtags supporting independence, such as #freewestpapua and drown out negative news (Strick & Syavira, 2019).

Reports at the end of September revealed how police were stifling reporting by local journalists. Before the protests peaked, police reportedly blocked three reporters working for *The Jakarta Post* (Benny Mawel), *Suara Papua* (Ardi Bayage) and *Tabloid Jubi* (Hengky Yeimo) from covering student demonstrations. This echoed earlier research by *Tabloid Jubi's* Victor Mambor, long an advocate for a free media in West Papua, who had lodged a United Nations appeal with support by human rights lawyers to lift the Indonesian internet ban during August (*Pacific Media Watch*, 2019a).

In June, a document was presented to Britain's House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee alleging a range of human rights violations. Prepared by researcher Pelagio Da Costa Sarmento of TAPOL and *Tabloid Jubi's* Mambor, the submission was a response to an inquiry by the Commons Select Committee into the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and Global Media Freedom in an effort to combat disinformation.

A covering declaration accompanying the submission made it clear the report was exposing the current state of lack of media freedom in West Papua.

> Over the last 10 years, journalists and news organisations have faced serious threats to their personal security, as well as being targeted by digital disinformation campaigns that aimed to disrupt the work of legitimate news sources and reporting.
>
> "The death of two local journalists, assaults on multiple others and several cases of international journalists being deported from Indonesia

> for reporting on or in West Papua underscores the lack of media freedom of West Papua. (Sarmento & Mambor, 2019)

In a commentary about Sarmento and Mambor's submission to the House of Commons and in response to a renewed 'charm offensive' diplomacy in the Pacific by Indonesia in *Asia Pacific Report*, I wrote:

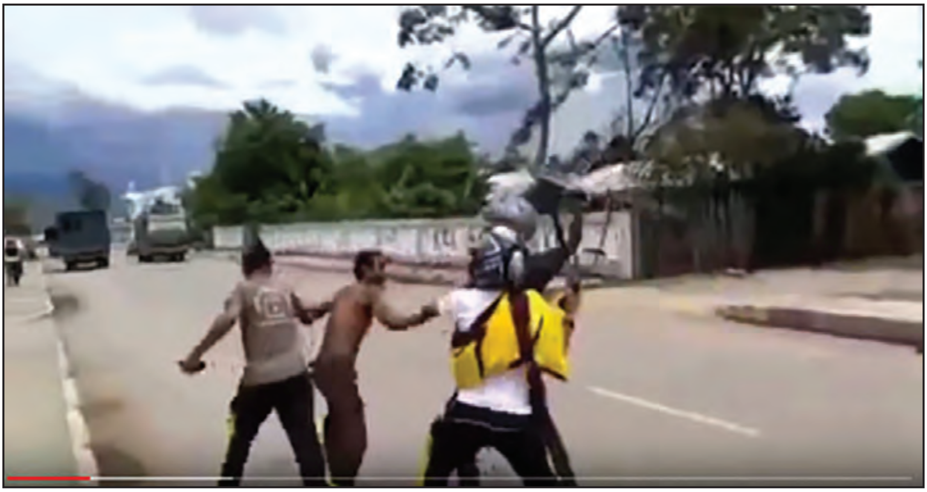
> Indonesia recently hosted a bold public relations window-dressing expo in Auckland presenting itself as a 'Pacific' nation while attempting to provide an unconvincing impression of normality in the two Melanesian provinces…
>
> Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi hailed 'a new era of Pacific partnership—a Pacific Elevation' while New Zealand's counterpart, Winston Peters, responded to human rights questions with a remarkably naïve statement that Indonesia was 'making progress' by welcoming a press pack to West Papua.
>
> Nothing could be further from the truth. Papuan critics have dismissed this Pacific Expo as effectively 'fake news'—a cover-up of more than a half-century of repression and distortion. (Robie, 2019c)

I first encountered Victor Mambo when he became the first Papuan journalist to visit New Zealand in 2013 and I subsequently shared with him in a Melanesian parallel people's panel during the UNESCO World Press Freedom Summit in Jakarta in May 2017 (Robie, 2017a, 2017b).

The PMC and human rights journalism

This brings me to the contribution of the Pacific Media Centre in the Melanesian media freedom debate. While Victor was in Auckland, my students were involved in an indigenous Māori welcoming powhiri and seminar for him as a 'political teach-in'. Many of the students did interviews and wrote stories. As part of that exercise, a video report entitled *Media 'Freedom' in West Papua Exposed* (Figure 6) was made by student journalist Struan Purdie (Pacific Media Centre, 2014):

The PMC—or Te Amokura—was founded in AUT's School of Communication Studies in 2007 as a research and publication unit and is probably unique in a university environment, certainly in New Zealand (http://pmc.aut.ac.nz). The initiative came out of my Design and Creative Technologies faculty in response to an evolving pool of Pacific journalism research and publication, including this journal, *Pacific Journalism Review (*https://ojs.aut.ac.nz/pacific-journalism-review/), launched at the University of Papua New Guinea in 1994. The centre now also publishes three news and current affairs websites—*Asia Pacific Report* (general Asia-Pacific news), *Pacific Media Centre* Online (specialist media reports and



PACIFIC MEDIA CENTRE YOUTUBE SCREENSHOT

Figure 6: Media 'Freedom' in West Papua Exposed, student journalist report.

research) and *Pacific Media Watch* (regional media monitoring), *Pacific Journalism Monographs* research publications and a range of books. All the books and publications are available via AUT Shop (www.autshop.ac.nz/pacific-media-centre/). The mission is:

> Informed journalism and media research contributes to economic, political and social development and the Pacific Media Centre—Te Amokura—seeks to stimulate research into contemporary Māori, Pasifika and ethnic diversity media and culture production (About the Pacific Media Centre https://pmc.aut.ac.nz/content/about-pacific-media-centre).

A core of our teaching and philosophy of media is focused on human rights journalism. One of the more enlightened advocates for human rights journalism (HRJ) is global justice and former Sierra Leone newspaper editor Ibrahim Seaga Shaw. He points out that traditional human rights journalism has either been seen through the prism of the journalist reporting on human rights abuses, or on free speech, which is itself a 'human right'. However, he says those approaches do not go far enough.

Shaw is co-author of an excellent book on peace journalism, including HRJ, entitled *Expanding Peace Journalism*. Jason MacLeod's book on peaceful protest by West Papuans over the past decade leading up to the renewed conflict in the past 18 months, *Merdeka and the Morning Star*, is also an essential read in this context. My own 2014 Pacific book, *Don't Spoil My Beautiful Face,* presents a persuasive case for human rights journalism in Melanesia and the Pacific.

In his book, Shaw argues that 'mainstream minority-world journalism generally sides with official rhetoric and policy stances of the governments in the countries in which it is produced' (Shaw, 2011, p. 97). Hence West Papua and human rights are underreported in Australia and New Zealand, if not in Pacific countries. Where human rights violations are reported, they are usually portrayed as 'the actions of individual perpetrators, not as the product of a system and of structures that construct and sustain long-term relations in conflict'. According to Jake Lynch, the 'predominant war journalism of conflict reporting in the wealthy northern hemisphere also dominates global news flows' (Lynch, 2008, p. 79). Shaw adds:

> Mainstream journalism has failed to communicate not only peace, but also human rights in ways that have the potential of illuminating the important nexus between them. Perhaps more importantly, mainstream journalism has failed to focus on the potential for positive peacebuilding and on positive human rights to match the dominant negative peace negative rights emphasised within the cosmopolitan context of global justice. (Shaw, 2011, p. 98)

Much research has also highlighted the 'economic injustice' imposed by Indonesia and the region's extractive industries in the two Melanesian provinces when the Papuan people remain among the poorest of the communities in Indonesia. As a National University of Singapore researcher argues,

> Papua's resources are plundered by foreign countries such as PT Freeport McMoran [now with Indonesian majority shareholding in the US established company], which owns the world's largest gold mine of the territory. Massive environmental degradation is also a sore point among the Papuans, who view their forests as sacred communal lands. (Singh, B., 2019)

Many regional companies are complicit in this exploitation. In 2011, *Metro* magazine, a leading New Zealand glossy magazine reporting issues and society, published an investigation, entitled 'Blood Money', probing the NZ Superannuation Fund's (NZSF) investment in the Freeport mine. It led to awards for the investigative journalist, Karen Abplanalp, then a postgraduate student at Auckland University of Technology, and also ultimately forced the fund to abandon the 'unethical' investment (Abplanalp, 2012).

This student also carried out excellent research about media coverage of West Papua in the Asia-Pacific region. She interviewed a range of journalists in Australia, Indonesia and New Zealand and created a research website with their video statements. Her website was embargoed for a few years, but it is now available on the university research repository. Meanwhile, a collaborative research project seeking to map the extent of Indonesian human rights violations since the takeover of the Melanesian region has got under way as part of wider research across the archipelago (Webb-Gannon, Swift, Westaway & Wright, 2020).

This article has overwhelmingly dealt with the West Papuan crisis because this is the major one challenging Melanesia and the Pacific in the region at present. In fact, if Australia and New Zealand do not rethink their Papuan strategy—or rather, lack of one—and strongly side with the Pacific bloc, led by Vanuatu, in unambiguously supporting Papuan self-determination, then the region faces growing insecurity.

Conclusion

However, there are also other major media issues confronting Melanesia. Serious problems stifling media freedom—and probably ultimately a graver threat than repression by governments—is dwindling resources in many newsrooms, especially for investigative journalism; and a culture of subservience to the 'big man' syndrome. Crackdowns on social media, such as in Fiji, Papua New Guinea and Samoa are also a serious threat.

Those journalists who do stick their necks out in defence of a free press or investigating corruption ought to be lauded—it takes real cocurage to do so in the Pacific. I am singling out EMTV's Scott Waide, Neville Choi and Sincha Dimara; the *Vanuatu Daily Post's* Dan McGarry, Fiji's *Simpson @ Eight*—he is doing an exemplary job on a University of the South Pacific management exposé at present—and Alex Rheeney and *Mata'afa Keni Lesa* at the *Samoa Observer* as examples. However, there are many more who deserve credit.

Writing in September 2019 in Scott Waide's blog, *My Land, My Country,* in a column to mark Papua New Guinea's 44th independence anniversary, Lucy Kopana made a disparaging comparison with the West Papuan struggle. She noted: 'Many countries fought blood, tooth and nail to gain independence from their colonisers. Papua New Guinea did not.' In the piece subtitled 'West Papua: The Melanesian country in waiting', she wrote:

> West Papua is not just a neighbouring country; they are part of the Melanesian family. We share more than a border; we share a land mass divided by an invisible line set by the colonial countries that governed us. In the colonisers' efforts to gain territories for their countries, they divided families, clans, cultures and ethnicities. They divided WAN PIPOL. People that shared the same dark skin and fuzzy hair. (Kopana, 2019)

The big question that faces us as independent journalists in the Pacific is what do we do about this crisis given the spineless response of many governments in our region. Here is my wish list if we take a human rights approach to the issue:

Journalists in the Pacific should press Indonesia for:

1. An impartial investigation into the cases of arbitrary arrest and impunity in West Papua, as well as other places in the Republic;

2. A guaranteed right to freedom of expression, freedom of association and assembly for all Papuans;
3. Open access to West Papua for the international community, including journalists, diplomats and NGO advocates;
4. An early date for the projected visit of the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression; and
5. A new United Nations-administered independent plebiscite for the future of West Papua

Thanks to the courage of *Tabloid Jubi*'s Victor Mambor, we had the opportunity to debate these issues publicly in a ground-breaking webinar with a senior Indonesian Foreign Affairs official which became rather strained over discussion of 'self-determination' and justice for Papuans (*PMW*, 2020).

Kia ora. Kia mihi. Papua merdeka.

Web resources

AUT Shop – Pacific Media Centre publications: www.autshop.ac.nz/pacific-media-centre/
Asia Pacific Report: https://asiapacificreport.nz/
Pacific Media Centre Online: https://pmc.aut.ac.nz/
Pacific Media Watch: www.pacmediawatch.aut.ac.nz
Pacific Media Centre on Facebook: www.facebook.com/PacificMediaCentre/

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2. Pacific journalism solidarity in the face of overwhelming forces

Commentary: The Melanesian Media Freedom Forum (MMFF) notes democracy is in retreat and journalists like Victor Mambor (West Papua), Scott Waide (Papua New Guinea) and Dan McGarry (Vanuatu) are carrying the baton for media freedom. There has been a global reversal for a free press that has spanned countries in every region, including long-standing democracies like the United States and consolidated authoritarian regimes like China and Russia. The pattern has been consistent and ominous.

Keywords: democracy, free press, media freedom, Melanesia, Melanesia Media Freedom Forum, West Papua

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VICTOR MAMBOR cuts an unassuming figure. He stands at 1.75 metres in height and is a quiet man. He has a sprightly jump in his stride.

It's a bright and sunny Monday morning.

There's a slight breeze coming in over the Brisbane river, cutting its way across to the balcony of Room S02-7 at Griffith University.

In the distance, what appears to be fog, is, however, smoke emanating from the Queensland bush fires.

Media reports 150 fires rage across New South Wales and Queensland, feeding tinder-dry conditions.

High temperatures and volatile winds are aiding the fires in Queensland, sending forth white smoke hovering above Brisbane.

Residents are forced to remain indoors for two days. Inside the lecture room, Victor mingles with the journalists. The enclosed room kept the smoke out and important discussions in.

This was the first meeting of the Melanesian Media Freedom Forum (MMFF).

Journalists travelled from Bougainville, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu—and Victor from West Papua—for the two-day forum.

On Saturday, a measles outbreak in a south Brisbane school had topped Brisbane news headlines.

DEL ABCEDE/*PACIFIC JOURNALISM REVIEW*

Figure 1: Victor Mambor: faced intimidation and harassment for reporting about an internet blackout sanctioned by the Indonesian government.

But the same day, 24 August 2019, *The Jakarta Post* reported that Mambor had faced intimidation and harassment for reporting about an internet blackout sanctioned by the Indonesian government amid escalating protests in Papua and West Papua (Syakriah, 2019).

The Indonesia Alliance of Independent Journalists (AJI Indonesia), released a report, stating Mabor, the editor of *Jubi* newspaper, an AJI member and correspondent for *The Jakarta Post,* had been harassed by a social media user with the Twitter handle *@antilalat.*

A day later, the AJI reported, the UK-based law firm Doughty Street Chambers representing Mambor had filed an urgent appeal to UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression David Kaye regarding internet blocking in the provinces amid protests.

AJI Indonesia's advocacy head Sasmito Madrim said that *@antilalat* had accused Mambor of having links to the Free Papua Movement (OPM) in the provinces and abroad, as well as being an informant for Indonesian lawyer Veronica Koman, who was a lawyer for the West Papua National Committee.

Sasmita said the accusations against Mambor were groundless since he had merely been doing his job as a reporter objectively while complying with the journalism code of ethics. Sasmito said:

> The AJI would like to remind social media users and law enforcers that journalists, in doing their jobs, are protected by *Law No. 40/1999* on the press. If anyone thinks there is incorrect journalistic material published in the media, the Press Law regulates the mechanisms that ensure a journalistic right to reply and corrections, and allow the filing of complaints to the Press Council. (Syakriah, 2019)

Radio New Zealand took up the report on August 26 (Urgent UN appeal, 2019). The Indonesian government, it reported, deployed 1000-extra military and police personnel to Papua at the time, as some of the protests turned violent. The Ministry of Communications announced it had throttled internet access to parts of Papua.

According to the RNZ report, this came as large protests spread through Papua in response to racist harassment of Papuans in Javanese cities. The ministry said at the time, blocking of the internet would continue until the circumstances in Papua were ‘absolutely normal’.

Mambor insisted the blockage violated international human rights law, meaning coverage of the protests was difficult. The ministry said that although the situation in some parts of Papua had begun to gradually recover, ‘distribution and transmission of information hoax, hoaxes, provocative and racist remains high’.

As a consequence, local media outlets were restricted in their ability to send photographs and videos of the protests.

The Committee to Protect Journalists got involved, urging Indonesian authorities to immediately restore internet access to the Papua region (Indonesia should restore internet access, 2019). Its senior Southeast Asia representative, Shawn Crispin, claimed the shutdown aimed to block the free flow of information in a region notorious for state-sponsored rights abuses.

Back at Griffith University, Mambor’s quiet demeanour slowly evaporated as discussions turned to media freedom. It’s a topic close to the heart of these regional journalists who had been invited to be part of this historic meeting in Brisbane.

In November last year, the ABC reported about a senior Papua New Guinean journalist who was suspended after airing a story critical of government spending, being reinstated by broadcaster EMTV following a widespread public backlash.

Scott Waide, the Lae City bureau chief was suspended for airing a report from a New Zealand television station criticising PNG’s purchase of 40 luxury Maseratis (EMTV suspends senior journalist Scott Waide, 2018). The report came in the wake of anger over government spending during the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) conference. The government was accused of a cover up by the Opposition.

The week before the MMFF gathering, *The Guardian* reported that the Vanuatu government had refused to renew *Vanuatu Daily Post’s* long serving director Dan McGarry’s work permit (Davidson, 2019). Having spent 16 years living

DAVID ROBIE/*PACIFIC JOURNALISM REVIEW*

Figure 2: Dan McGarry (*Vanuatu Daily Post*): Lived in Vanuatu for 16 years, but declined a work permit renewal because of his newspaper's reporting on government activities, causing it 'discomfort'.

and working in Vanuatu, McGarry's application to renew his work permit was refused. It meant McGarry, who was married to a Ni-Vanuatu, and their children, would have to leave Vanuatu.

McGarry believed the turn of events stemmed from the newspaper's reporting on the government's activities, causing it 'discomfort'. It's interesting that Freedom House has recorded what it termed the 13th consecutive year of decline in global freedom (Democracy in retreat, 2019).

The reversal, it pointed out, had spanned a variety of countries in every region, from long-standing democracies like the United States to consolidated authoritarian regimes like China and Russia. It stated that the overall losses were still shallow compared with the gains of the late 20th century, but the pattern was consistent and ominous. Democracy is in retreat.

More authoritarian powers, it pointed out, were now banning opposition groups or jailing their leaders, dispensing with term limits, and tightening the screws on any independent media that remained. Most troublingly, it stated, even long-standing democracies had been shaken by populist political forces that rejected basic principles like the separation of powers and targeted minorities for discriminatory treatment.

However, it believes the promise of democracy remains real and powerful. It stated that not only defending it, but broadening its reach is one of the great causes of our time.

Journalists like Waide, McGarry, and Mambor were at home. The forum discussions focused on an area of their chosen profession that they understood intimately, and were passionate about.

Dr Tess Newton Cain said the idea for the forum started with a conversation over pizza with SBS Pacific journalist Stefan Armbruster.

‘We were reflecting on what we had heard from journalists in the region about the threats to media freedom that they were facing,’ Dr Newton Cain said.

‘We felt that there would be value in getting some of the senior people together to join forces, intellectually and emotionally, and see whether they could work out how to better meet those challenges in the future.

‘We road tested the concept with some key people in Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu and got the sense that it was something that would be welcomed and that people felt a safe and neutral space was needed—hence Brisbane was chosen as the location.’

Griffith University agreed to be the institutional home for the event and so in July 2018 the decision was made to proceed.

‘I was struck by how the participants grabbed the opportunity and made it work for them. It was always our intention to create the space and hand it over to the media practitioners to use it as they wanted to,’ Dr Newton Cain said.

‘I think this is something of a new approach and it was a bit of a risk. What if no-one wanted to say anything? What if people got bored and wandered off?

‘Hearing people say that they were pleased that they had come and that they gained something from the experience was really wonderful.’

Dr Newton Cain had not been prepared for emotional energy that this event would create.

‘I heard a couple of people say, “it’s so good to realise we’re not on our own in this”. I felt really grateful that the participants had trusted us to deliver what we had promised and embraced the opportunity in the spirit with which it was offered.’

‘As you know, Sean Dorney is living with motor neurone disease and he has to be careful that he doesn’t overdo things. At the end of the two days he said to me: “Pauline kept asking me if I was OK, if I was getting tired but I said to her ‘being here and being with these journalists is giving me energy, it’s giving me a boost’.”’

Hosting the event was a big responsibility, with much of the organisation of the event done in downtime.

‘I think I can speak for all of us when I say that it’s been a pleasure and a privilege to have been part of what was such a special event and and we are very excited to see what comes next,' Dr Newton Cain said.

Outside the lecture room, the white smoke hung heavy in the distance.

In the din of the afternoon traffic in Brisbane there was a sense of appreciation in the room. There was motivation and solidarity to strive to work together for press freedom.

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3. Scott Waide, Maseratis and EMTV … how a public outcry restored media freedom

Commentary: ‘It’s like we are operating in a bubble,’ says EMTV deputy news editor Scott Waide from Papua New Guinea at the Melanesia Media Freedom Forum (MMFF). ‘But when you start reaching out, talking to others in the region, you find that you are not actually alone in this. The experiences are similar. The intensity varies, but the take home for me is that nobody should be alone to handle their problems on their own.’

Keywords: Australia, censorship, Fiji, media freedom, Papua New Guinea, television

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IT’S A wrap at the inaugural Melanesia Media Freedom Forum (MMFF) in Brisbane on Tuesday, 12 November 2019. In this mega city, the little grass patch in the confines of Griffith University’s complex along Grey Street offers a sort of reprieve from the hustle and bustle of the city’s streets. The temperature had been hovering between a low of 17 degrees Celsius and a high of 27.

As the afternoon sun slowly ebbs away into another Brisbane evening, the air is cooler. In the background, against the din of the evening traffic along Grey Street and the main Vulture Street, a few minutes’ walk south of the campus, a dance group struts its stuff.

Scott Waide, a senior journalist from EMTV, almost nonchalantly, points out they are from Papua New Guinea. The dance form, attire, and song confirm this for him. They are like trademarks, a sort of rubber stamp of origin perhaps. But there are little ‘identifiers’ that he was able to immediately pick out as the dance group went through their choreographed moves. The graceful sways of their hips, and placement of their feet and arms, in synch with the melodious sounds of the accompanying serenade, consolidate his opinion. It’s not lost at all among his colleagues.

It’s a sort of thankful respite at the end of two days of powerful discussions at room SO2-7. Discussions had kicked off with a panel touching on the issue

MELANESIAN MEDIA FREEDOM FORUM

Figure 1: Paul Murphy (International Federation of Journalists), Kate Schuetze (Amnesty International), Peter Greste (Alliance for Journalists' Freedom), Scott Waide (EMTV), Fred Wesley (*The Fiji Times*), Victor Mambor (*Tabloid Jubi*) during the Melanesia Media Freedom Forum (MMFF) summit at Griffith University in Brisbane, Queensland, in November 2019.

of why media freedom is so important in Melanesia, and the issues journalists faced daily and what they hoped to achieve looking to the future. The plenary session, appropriately tagged 'In conversation', brought together a host of varying opinions and scenarios from journalists from Bougainville, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and West Papua.

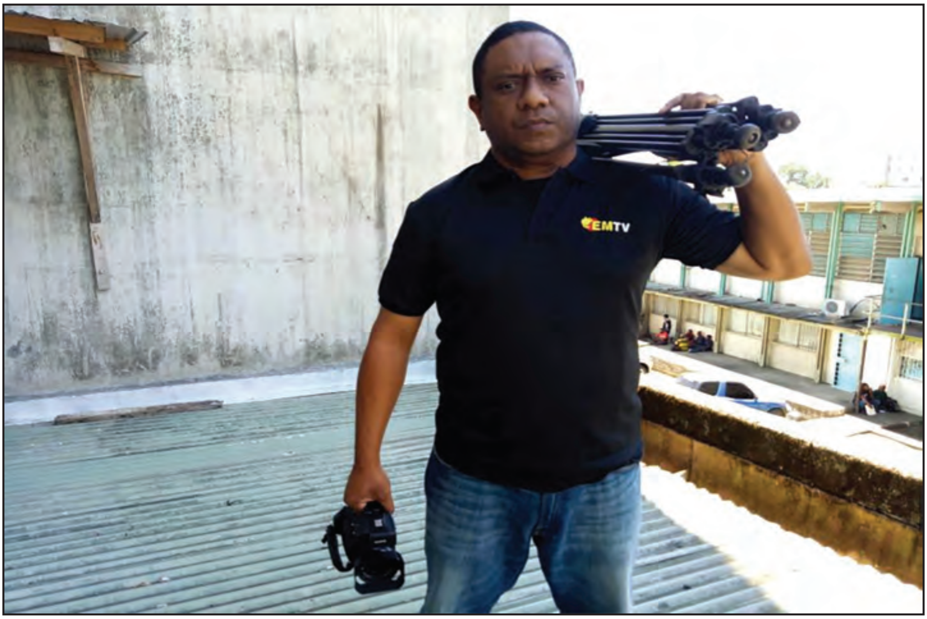
Sections of the *Media Industry Development Authority Act* (formerly the Decree) were raised as a discussion point. Section 22, on content regulation, requires media organisations in Fiji to ensure that their content must not include material which:

- is against the public interest or order;
- is against national interest; or
- creates communal discord.

Section 23 reads: 'The content of any print media which is in excess of 50 words must include a byline and wherever practical, the content of any media service must include a byline.' The penalties for these breaches are fines not exceeding F$100,000 for a media organisation or, in the case of a publisher or editor, a fine not exceeding $25,000 or imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years or to both.

It was an opportunity to discuss the issue with fellow journalists from around the region, raise awareness and engage in open discussions with international experts. You could sense passion, and touches of concern emanating from the discussions.

Waide knows too well what it means to be pushed into a corner. In November



EMTV NEWS

Figure 2: Scott Waide of EMTV: 'We should also be preparing younger journalists to take on these roles so that in the event that we get arrested and are sent to jail, somebody takes over.'

2018, the ABC reported Waide's predicament after he had aired a story critical of government spending.

Waide, the deputy regional head of news for EMTV in Lae was suspended (EMTV suspends senior journalist Scott Waide, 2018) for broadcasting a report from a New Zealand TV station criticising PNG's purchase of 40 luxury Maseratis (Jacinda Ardern says she won't be travelling in a Maserati, 2018). The report came in the wake of anger over government spending during the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) conference.

The government was accused of a cover up by the Opposition. Waide was reinstated in the wake of a massive public backlash (PNG journalist reinstated, 2018; Scott Waide reinstated, 2018).

'The forum was good because it brought together Melanesian journalists,' Waide says. 'A lot of times we think we operate in isolation.

'It's like we are operating in a bubble. But when you start reaching out, talking to others in the region, you find that you are not actually alone in this. The experiences are similar. The intensity varies, but the take home for me is that nobody should be alone to handle their problems on their own.

'We should be talking together on a greater scale. And we should also be preparing younger journalists to take on these roles so that in the event that we get arrested and are sent to jail, somebody takes over. That has worked for us.

‘I think this is a good start. We should have more of this and generally build relations.

‘These are really important. And it’s very Melanesian to sit down in a group and iron out issues, talk about issues, with no time limit.

‘As soon as the objective is achieved, everybody agrees and we move on.’

‘No time limit, no set agenda, but identifying issues, and talking about them until we reach common understanding.

‘My message for aspiring journalists, is to go back to our roots, reach out. Form relationships that should be established. It should not be just a small circle operating out of PNG. It should be a wider circle, Fiji, Vanutau, Solomon Islands and so on. It should be greater than what we have now.’

Renowned former ABC investigative journalist Sean Dorney echoed many of his sentiments (Sean Dorney, n.d.). Dr Tess Newton-Cain, one of the key figures behind the organising of the forum speaks highly of Dorney’s role.

‘Sean Dorney is living with motor neurone disease and he has to be careful that he doesn’t overdo things,’ she said.

‘At the end of the two days he said to me, “Pauline kept asking me if I was OK, if I was getting tired but I said to her, being here and being with these journalists is giving me energy, it’s giving me a boost”.’

The disease hasn’t knocked off Dorney’s jokes though, or his witty remarks.

‘This has been one of the really good experiences since I have been in Brisbane,’ he offered.

‘I left the ABC in 2014 but I have kept a very close interest in what is going on in the Pacific. I was absolutely pleased. It is so important that when the media is under pressure these days, it is so important that we as journalists get together and reinforce that solidarity that we have had.

‘The forum has been hugely energetic for me, meeting journalists who I have known for a very long time. I have nothing but enormous respect for them.

‘There is no doubt about it, it is becoming increasingly difficult to be a journalist and do your job in the Melanesian region. I think we should keep this going, keep campaigning for the governments in our region, that media freedom is the absolute bulwark in these countries.

‘The takeaway I am taking from this is unity.

‘For journalists from the region, there is a sense of community, there is a sense that we are united.

‘We do have threats, we do have problems, but with the support of each other and our colleagues in countries like New Zealand and Australia, we can fight against oppressive and restrictive problems that many of us face. Look I have nothing but admiration for the people who came to this forum.

‘I think we have actually achieved something in the past few days and we have the opportunity to keep this going for some time.’

It's that hope, that commitment and passion that is embracing. It's the catalyst regional journalists need to face the future.

In the face of great challenges, something Dorney said stands out.

'Journalism is an honourable profession. But we face increasing threats and increasing problems where those in authority seem to think we are the enemy rather than their friends, rather than the ones who are sort of keeping these democracies open and thriving.'

The dancers have finished their item. Discussions have moved away from the topics that are close to the hearts of the participating journalists. It's time to sit back, relax, throw in a bit of small talk, mingle, exchange business cards, and be embraced by the Brisbane night.

Tomorrow is another day. The journalistic instinct though is pretty hard to put down. There are challenges. But there is hope.

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Fred Wesley is editor-in-chief of The Fiji Times *and was awarded the news media executive of the year prize at the Asia Pacific Media Awards after his courageous stand against the Fiji government in a sedition case filed against his newspaper.* The Fiji Times*, oldest and the most influential newspaper in Fiji, celebrated 150 years in 2019. An earlier version of this article was published in the Fiji Times on 23 November 2019 under the title 'Matters affecting Pacific journos'.*
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4. The media and journalism challenges in Melanesia

Addressing the impacts of external and internal threats in Fiji, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu

Abstract: This article advances discussions on media freedom and media development in Melanesia through the introduction of an ‘external’ and ‘internal’ threats analytical framework. Singling out the challenges and categorising them into these two main groups provides a clearer picture of the issues at stake, the links between them, and the need to address the situation holistically. External threats emanating from outside the media sector are often seen as more serious, and they often overshadow internal threats, which come from within the media sector. This article argues that both sets of threats have serious impacts on media and journalism in their own ways, and that both should be regarded equally. Furthermore, the linkages between these threats mean that one cannot be properly addressed without addressing the other. A key outcome of this discussion is a clearer understanding of how little control the media have over both external and internal threats, and how stakeholder support is needed to overcome some of the issues. Because good journalism benefits the public, this article argues for increased public support for high-quality journalism that delivers a public benefit.

Keywords: culture, external threats, Fiji, internal threats, media law, Melanesia, Melanesia Media Freedom Forum, Papua New Guinea, social media, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu

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Introduction

THIS article assesses the shifting media landscapes in four Melanesian countries—Fiji, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu—and the many effects on journalism, including media freedom. The numerous media constraints in these developing nations are both historical and contemporary, and they have been analysed before (International Federation of Journalists, 2015; Robie, 2014; Singh, 2017; Tacchi et al., 2013). This article advances the discussions through a new approach by dividing the major media sector challenges into two sub-categories—external and internal threats. External threats emanate from outside the media sector, and internal threats come from within the sector. While the media in the four countries have been grappling with these threats for decades, there has been little progress in addressing some of the core issues, largely because of their complex characteristics. These range from autocratic-minded governments and a lack of resources, to inexperienced and underqualified journalists, and high staff turnover (International Federation of Journalists, 2015).

The purpose of applying a categorisation of external and internal threats is to identify, isolate and differentiate between the major challenges, as well as draw out the links between them, in clear fashion. This is important for various reasons, the main one being that internal threats, due to their covert nature, are often overshadowed by external threats, which are more overt. Internal threats, such as the often weak financial position of some news media organisations, and the lack of journalist capacity, are seen as more benign and less urgent than external threats such as government pressure and/or harsh media legislation (see Singh, 2017). This article argues that downplaying the internal threats is counterproductive since they are a serious impediment to media freedom and media development in their own ways. Furthermore, the two sets of threats may be different in nature and manifestation, but they are inextricably linked, and feed off each other. For instance, neglecting internal threats could mean strengthening the external threats. The specifics are discussed later in the article. At this point, suffice it to say that this understanding is crucial for capturing the essence of the problems in the Melanesian media sector, and examining/addressing them in a wholesale manner.

Although some threats are country-specific, the others have common traits across the Melanesian sub-region, with similar impacts on media development and media freedom. For instance, an International Federation of Journalists report on Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu found that despite legal protections, media workers in all these countries faced the risk of threats and/or assaults from police and politicians (International Federation of Journalists, 2015; also see Melanesia Media Freedom Forum, 2019).

This article revisits a published discussion paper that linked and analysed the key media developments in Fiji, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu in relation to policy, politics, free speech and good governance (Singh, 2017). Using 2015 as the case year, the discussion paper found hardening government attitudes towards the news media across the four countries, largely over editorial differences (Singh, 2017). All four Melanesian governments made fresh calls on the media to focus on a developmental, nation-building role, rather than apply the classical watchdog model, which they denounced as overly negative. On the other hand, media advocacy groups and the news media sector emphasised the importance of media's watchdog role in good governance. This longstanding ideological divide underpinned the tensions between the government and the news media sector in the four countries. Another key source of the increased hostilities was social media and citizen journalism, a fairly new phenomenon in the region (Singh, 2017).

The governments in the four countries were not just alarmed by the increased public criticism on cyberspace, but also the proliferation of inflammatory and abusive material, and the potential impact on their small and fragile societies. Governments appeared unable to cope with the increased volume of both social media and news media scrutiny, and they reacted by proposing harsher controls (Singh, 2017). The mainstream media became caught in the crossfire because of the overlap with social media. This trend indicated that while social media was initially hailed, globally, as a democratiser, it also had some anti-democratic effects that had started to surface around the world, including Melanesia (Alejandro, 2010; Melanesia Media Freedom Forum, 2019).

This article reexamines some of the findings of the 2017 discussion paper under the 'internal' and 'external' threats framework. The article considers recent developments in the four countries' media sectors, gleaned from news reports and academic literature, including the outcome document from the historic Melanesia Media Freedom Forum conference at Griffith University, Brisbane, in November 2019. Based on the research tabled at the conference, and journalists' first-hand accounts, the Forum made specific calls on Papua New Guinea to include journalists in anti-corruption and whistleblower protection legislation, and on Fiji to repeal the punitive *2010 Media Industry Development Decree*. The Vanuatu government was asked to end attacks against its national media association, and the Premier of Western Province in the Solomon Islands was urged to cease his threats against local news organisations (Melanesia Media Freedom Forum, 2019).

The Melanesia Freedom Forum's outcome document indicates a continuing trend of growing government hostility towards both social media and mainstream news media, with increased concerns about a further shrinking of space for public discourse, and the impacts on freedom of speech (Melanesia Media Freedom Forum, 2019). While a certain level of government-media conflict is normal, even healthy, things can get out of hand if governments retaliate with legal sanctions that stifle legitimate journalism. This seems to be the trend in Melanesia, according to the literature (Melanesian Freedom Forum, 2019; Singh, 2017).

This article emphasises that despite some major weaknesses, the Melanesian news media remain important pillars of democracy, and they ought to be strengthened as part of the national accountability systems framework, especially in a region where corruption is a major problem (see Larmour, 2012). Because journalism serves the public interest, the strengthening of the media sector should be a shared responsibility, rather than shouldered by the media sector alone. Due to the revenue challenges caused by the digital disruption, the Melanesian media sector requires the support of all the stakeholders to grow and survive. This article argues that without additional support from governments, civil society, the private sector and international donors, journalism in Melanesia will continue to struggle and underperform. An important step towards strengthening journalism is a proper understanding of the nature of the problems. This is discussed in the next section, through 'external' and 'internal' threats framework.

External and internal threats

The major sources of the external threats include government, non-government sectors, foreign interests and society at large. Besides the ruling national power, government includes the various state ministries, departments, subsidiaries, proxies and representatives, whereas non-government sources include the corporate and non-corporate sectors. Foreign interests include foreign governments and foreign non-government entities, with diplomatic and or business ties in Melanesia (Melanesia Media Freedom Forum, 2019; Singh, 2017).

The literature indicates that the most common external threat is direct government threats across Melanesia (International Federation of Journalists, 2015; Melanesia Media Forum, 2019; Robie, 2014; Singh, 2017; Tacchi et al., 2013). Direct threats can be both coercive and non-coercive. Coercive threats usually emanate from disputes over the subject or angle of news reporting that cast government in a negative light. Reprisals that can range from a stern dressing down to the implementation of stronger media legislation, and/or warnings, as well as the occasional assault by the security forces. Even though not all the threats are always followed through, they contribute to the stresses of the profession (International Federation of Journalists, 2015; Melanesia Media Forum, 2019; Robie, 2014; Singh, 2017; Tacchi et al., 2013).

The non-coercive external threats include inducements such as government advertising contracts, which could act as a leverage to influence news coverage, especially in the Pacific, where both advertising sources and revenue are limited. The state, as a central player in the small Pacific economies (see Chen & Singh, 2017; Chen et al., 2020) becomes a major advertiser through the various ministries, state corporations and other state-linked enterprises.

Besides the state, the private corporate sector is the other major source of external pressure, largely due to its disproportionately strong advertising clout in the small advertising markets of Melanesia.

The other type of external threat, social and cultural pressure, are prevalent in Melanesia due to communal group affiliations and kinship ties which link the small communities in various ways. Besides community pressure, there is pressure from the traditional power structures, such as the chiefly system in Fiji and the 'big man' culture elsewhere in Melanesia (Robie, 2014; Singh, 2018). According to a senior Papua New Guinean journalist Jean Morea, the 'Big Man Mentality' is a culture which restricts the ability of journalists to challenge or ask tough questions of people in power or respectable positions in society (Shaligram, 2019).

Robie (2019) has conceptualised this challenge through his *talanoa* journalism concept based on a five-legged *tanoa* framework. The *tanoa* is a bowl used for sharing traditional kava when engaged in discursive *talanoa,* or informal deliberation. Besides the four estates of a normative democratic structure – *Executive, Parliament, Judiciary, Media (Press)* – Robie's 'Pacific way' model also has a fifth leg/estate: *Cultural hegemony,* representing Indigenous tradition. Pacific journalists face a constant battle negotiating cultural obligations with the demands of contemporary journalism (Robie, 2019).

The prevalence of direct government threats in all four Melanesian countries indicates why these types of external threats attract the most attention. A sample of such threats in the 2017 discussion paper are revisited to understand their nature and their potential impact.

In the Solomon Islands, the then Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare used his parliamentary address to warn of stronger media legislation, stating that without checks on bad reporting, the country risked creating a society with no respect for authority. He vowed to root out government whistleblowers (Singh, 2017). Sogavare's concerns about media breaches aside, the motives behind punitive legislation and their impacts are always questionable from censorship and good governance perspectives.

In Fiji, *The Fiji Times* faced flak from the two most powerful men in the country—Prime Minister Voreqe Bainimarama and Attorney-General Aiyaz Saiyed Khaiyum—over its reporting of government plans to prioritise rural students at state boarding schools and an opinion poll indicating some public disdain about government plans to redesign the national flag. Opposition leader Ro Temumu Kepa alleged that the boarding school decision was a move to 'weaken' the indigenous community, and warned of a push back (Singh, 2017). Bainimarama not only accused Kepa of ethnicising the issue, he also blamed the *Times* of colluding with her:

> *The Fiji Times* also stands condemned for yet another grossly irresponsible piece of journalism. Rather than report dispassionately and in the interests of national stability, *The Fiji Times* is controlled by a cabal that manipulates the news agenda and uses inflammatory language to create disunity, division and instability and to advance its own political interests. (quoted by Singh, 2017)

On his part, Khaiyum questioned the methodology of a *Times*-commissioned Tebbutt Research poll showing that 86 percent of Fijians preferred a vote on whether the national flag should be re-designed (Swami, 2015). The *Times* editor-in-chief, Fred Wesley, stood by the poll. He further clarified that while the newspaper did not necessarily share Kepa's opinion, it was still obliged to report it (Singh, 2017). Ordinarily, media would be expected to take such criticism in their stride, but Fiji's punitive media decree had amplified the risks, resulting in a confused and cagier media, as noted by a former Fiji journalist, Ricardo Morris (2015):

> Do we continue to report views and issues critical of the government—no matter how constructive—and risk a breach that could potentially land an editor or journalist with a fine of up to $10,000 and/or up to two years in jail, and the media company a fine of up to $100,000? Or do we adopt pragmatism and self-censorship and live another day? (Morris, 2015, p.36)

While the two-year prison terms and FJ$1000 fines stipulated for journalists were removed from the media decree in July 2015, the penalties for editors and publishers remain intact. This could mean that the publishers and editors would continue to censor newsrooms to avoid the risk of incriminating themselves.

In Vanuatu, a photographer covering a bribery scandal involving 14 MPs was bashed by one of the accused—the then Minister of Foreign Affairs, Serge Vohor. Reports stated that instead of stopping Vohor, police at the scene advised the photographer to file a formal complaint (Singh, 2017). In recent years, there have been several reports of assaults on journalists in Vanuatu. Such assaults highlight the vulnerability of journalists and sense of impunity exercised by certain powerful individuals in Melanesian societies as part of the 'big man' culture.

External pressure from foreign sources

Besides threats from their own governments, the Melanesian media face an emerging external challenge from beyond their borders, which has come into greater prominence in recent years. This relates to the apparent attempts by some foreign countries and foreign commercial interests to influence local media coverage of certain issues. These foreign entities often have diplomatic ties or business interests with the Melanesian countries. The pressure on the media could be exerted in connivance with the host countries' national government or state officials. Often, the aim is to either keep the media at bay, or to shape the coverage in a certain way with the 'growing influence of authoritarian and secretive values' (Robie, 2020). This form of pressure has become more frequent and more noticeable recently, with some well publicised incidents involving China and Indonesia. The incidents coincide with these Asian nations' increased geopolitical maneuvers and business investments in the region.

A recent example involved the *Vanuatu Daily Post* news director, Dan McGarry, over a story in the 6 June 2019 edition of the paper on the arrest of six Chinese nationals in Vanuatu, by Chinese and Vanuatu police. Without access to the Vanuatu courts, the detainees were flown to China. McGarry's story highlighted this as an example of Chinese law being enforced in Vanuatu, raising questions about sovereignty issues. Following publication, McGarry was summoned by the Vanuatu Prime Minister, and told that he was being too negative, and, 'if you don't like it here, you can go home' (Galloway, 2019). Originally from Canada, McGarry is married to a Vanuatu citizen and has lived in the country for 16 years, but this did not stop the government from barring him from re-entering the country. While a court order reversed the decision, the incident highlighted China's influence over some Pacific Island governments, and the subsequent threat to news media (Galloway, 2019).

Another incident in PNG in June 2015 involved a 'fishy' US$95 million Chinese deal to build the southern hemisphere's largest tuna processing hub in Madang. In response to growing community opposition and increased media scrutiny into the project's environmental impact, the government took out a restraining court order. The media advocacy group Pacific Freedom Forum saw the court order as an attempt to gag the media and concerned citizens, describing it as 'striking at the heart of democratic rights' (Pacific Freedom Forum, 2015).

In the Solomon Islands, the carefully-controlled visit of the Indonesian Foreign Minister, Retno Marsudi, drew the media's ire, with veteran journalist Ofani Eremae claiming that the government was shielding her from media questions about West Papua (Singh, 2017). Historically, the Melanesian countries have supported a free West Papua, and some observers saw the Marsudi visit as a move to 'scuttle Melanesian recognition of Papua as [an] 'Occupied State'' (*Jakarta Globe*, 2015). The Solomon Islands' action during the Marsudi visit drew attention to the strong lobbying by Indonesia throughout Melanesia. This includes military support to Fiji after the 2006 coup, and significant aid to Papua New Guinea. With these countries' support, Indonesia was granted observer status in the Melanesian Spearhead Group in 2011 (Blades, 2011). The continued national media support for a free West Papua would conflict with the national governments' changing priorities on the issue.

Another example of external threat in Fiji in 2019 involved a private Chinese company, Freesoul International. Three New Zealand journalists investigating allegations of extensive environmental damage in a tourism project on Malolo Island were arrested and detained overnight at a local Fijian police station (Radio New Zealand International, 2019). Extensive international coverage saw to the release of the journalists, followed by a personal apology from Prime Minister Bainimarama, with the arrest blamed on 'rogue' policemen. The company was eventually charged, and its licence revoked, but not before another outcry over a court official asking local reporters to leave the courtroom during a proceeding in Nadi. The court official claimed to be acting on the magistrate's orders (Nasiko, 2020; Radio New Zealand International, 2019).

It should be noted that to a large extent, the external threats are beyond the control of the media sector and its responses to date have been limited, if not muted on some occasions. For instance, media react to government threats by ignoring them, or with a rebuttal, in the hope of setting the record straight, and winning some public support. With regard to the use of advertising to influence media, at least some media are deemed susceptible to the overtures from both the state and the private sector due to their low and limited financial base, although more research is required in this area to obtain a clearer understanding of the situation (see International Federation of Journalists, 2015; Robie, 2014; Singh, 2017; Tacchi et al., 2013).

Social media—both a threat and an asset

More recently, social media has emerged as a major challenge and potential game changer for the news media sector across Melanesia, both in positive and negative ways. The 2017 discussion paper on Melanesian media indicated that mainstream media in all four countries have borne the brunt of both social medias' democratising and anti-democratising impacts. Social media, including citizen journalism, support and strengthen traditional journalism, but also weaken it by diverting away revenue. There is, as Robie indicates (2020), a 'growing tendency for Pacific governments to use unconstitutional, bureaucratic or legal tools to silence media and questioning journalists'. In Melanesia, the government crackdown on social media abuse has repercussions for the news media (Singh, 2017; Tarai, 2019).

While governments could be accused of censorship, they have some real concerns about social media abuse, and the damage to individuals, communities and society. These concerns are shared by the public. Fiji's Online Safety Act implemented in January 2019 to address cyber stalking, cyber bullying, revenge porn and internet trolling had a measure of public support (Tarai, 2019). However, there were also concerns about the restrictions on freedom of speech under the guise of protection against malicious acts. In Fiji, social media is seen as an important avenue for uncensored information in the context of country's restricted media landscape (Tarai, 2019).

In Papua New Guinea, the then Peter O'Neil-led government had warned of banning Facebook and other social media, claiming that 'fake news' was destroying the country. Similar views were expressed by some members of the public. Papua New Guinea national rugby league chief executive Brad Tassell, while resigning in March 2015 over a torrent of defamatory allegations online, described the social media scene as 'literally out of control' (Singh, 2017).

However, civil society organisations called for measured government response given the country's corruption problem and the fact that social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter had become an 'essential check and balance' on the abuse of power (Singh, 2017). During this controversy, O'Neill was dogged by allegations of corruption and faced a no-confidence motion, forcing his resignation in May 2019. Since then, the social media controversy has receded to the background, but it could well reemerge, with continued internet penetration, ongoing scrutiny and criticism of the government, and a fair share of online media abuse (Melanesia Media Freedom Forum, 2019).

The 2017 discussion paper indicated that Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands also face threats of legislation (Singh, 2017). In Vanuatu, the government had warned of a law to curb 'excessive liberty', including unsubstantiated allegations and abusive comments on radio talkback shows. The then Prime Minister Sato Kilman accused the *Yumi Toktok Stret* Facebook group of 'inciting social anarchy and instability', adding that the wrong use of media could 'easily destabilise' peace and order (Singh, 2017). The current Vanuatu Government is working with the Australian Government and the Council of Europe on a cybercrime bill to target 'false claims' on social networking sites such as Facebook, which were 'out of control' (Kant et al., 2018).

In the Solomon Islands, threats of legislation have been growing since 2015, with the then Prime Minister, Sogavare, singling out the watchdog group, Forum Solomon Islands International, for alleged inaccurate statements. Since the 2014 election, the blog had highlighted what it saw as rampant government malpractice, with claims that corruption had 'gone viral'. But Sogavare dismissed the group as a 'listed charity' interfering in national politics (Singh, 2017). The Director of Public Prosecution, Ronald Bei Talasasa, has stated that legislation is needed to overcome cybercrime and to control Facebook, where '…people are just running free' (Kant et al., 2018).

The summary of external threats explains why they are at the forefront of discussions about media freedom, but internal threats pose major difficulties as well. This is covered in the following section.

Internal threats

Internal threats emanating from within the news media sector include longstanding, unaddressed issues such as underqualified and inexperienced journalists, uncompetitive salaries, high journalist turnover and some media companies' often weak financial positions, largely due to the small advertising markets. For example, the International Federation of Journalists (2015) report on Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu found a relatively youthful, inexperienced and underqualified journalist corps, who were among the lowest paid employees in their countries. Internal threats are the apparent causes of what some critics describe as poor journalistic standards, including lack of knowledge about political and social institutions, questionable grasp of ethics and poor understanding of complex issues (Robie, 2014).

Internal weaknesses that hinder the media's ability in public interest reporting are contained in two separate studies on Fiji and Papua New Guinea (Larson, 2008; Lasslett, 2015). The Fiji study observes a fairly heavy media dependence on the government as a news source. This is regarded as a threat to the media's watchdog role (Larson, 2008). Similarly, the PNG study highlighted the alleged dearth of indepth journalism and it described the national media as an 'unfiltered communications mouthpiece' for government and corporate interests (Lasslett, 2015). The apparent reliance on media releases in both Fiji and Papua New Guinea could be a result of deadline pressures and/or a manifestation of inexperienced and under-qualified journalist corps' shying from complex reporting assignments. Whatever the reasons, the impact of internal threats on public interest reporting and the public right to know is undeniable. What is noteworthy is that the Fiji and PNG media sectors are the largest and most developed in Melanesia. This raises questions about the situation in the smaller island countries.

What this article has identified as internal threats are at the heart of government concerns about the media – alleged unprofessional practices and their impacts on society. Such concerns cannot be dismissed out of hand. Coronel (2001) has highlighted the antidemocratic tendencies of media, such as sowing fear, division and violence, particularly in fragile, developing states (Frohardt & Temin, 2003). Such threats pose the greatest danger in unstable countries susceptible to societal tensions. Melanesia has seen its fair share of internal conflicts in recent decades, with the media accused of fuelling some disputes through reckless, uninformed reporting (Iroga, 2008; Robie 2014).

The risks multiply in countries with underdeveloped media infrastructure. The journalists commit ethical breaches not necessarily because they are biased, but due to poor professional skills and other constraints. This is *involuntary* or *passive* incitement to violence (Frohardt & Temin, 2003, p. 2). Under such circumstances, journalists could inflame grievances and promote stereotypes, even though their intentions are not malicious (Frohardt & Temin, 2003, p. 2). This scenario indicates that the need to address internal threats is greatest in fragile societies because of the potential for damage.

Punitive legislation on its own does not address the internal threats that lead to poor reporting practices in the first place. It is now 10 years since the Fiji media decree was implemented to 'improve' professional standards, but the government still complains about poor reporting (Singh, 2018). If criticism of the Fiji media decree—that it has fostered self-censorship—are valid, then the Fiji trend of stronger legislation taking hold in Melanesia should be a concern.

Punitive legislation could be a double blow for journalism if a cowed media go into self-censorship mode, with no discernible improvements in professionalism to boot. It could be a further strike against journalism if such legislation is a disincentive to join the profession because of the risks of fines and imprisonment; especially if the pool of journalists is small to begin with, as in Melanesia (see International Federation of Journalists, 2015; Tacchi et al., 2013).

Another internal threat is the media companies' commercial priorities and the effect on news coverage. The question is whether the pursuit of profits compromise and/or override editorial obligations and the public interest. In Fiji's case, the national newspaper, the *Fiji Sun*, is often accused of pandering to the government, which advertises exclusively in the newspaper (Morris, 2015). But the *Sun* insists that the advertising tender was won in a fair process.

Internal threats are largely being addressed by international aid agencies such as the latest Australian government-funded multi-million Pacific Media Assistance Scheme (PACMAS) to improve 'practitioners' capacity to report responsibly on key developmental issues'. But given the ad-hoc nature of donor funding and concerns about strings-attached media development aid, there needs to be greater local input and ownership (Robie, 2014).

Moreover, journalism is becoming tougher to support commercially, more so in the Pacific, and the media industry will need the sponsorship and support of governments, the private sector and other interested parties to achieve relevant, meaningful and sustainable change. Governments, especially, could do more than just implement punitive legislation. Governments could provide various subsidies for media organisations and increased scholarships for journalists to address the root causes of poor journalism, while keeping a respectable distance so as not to influence coverage.

The discussion on internal problems indicates that while such problems emanate from within the media industry, they are linked to the broader national factors in each of the four Melanesian countries. These include the relative smallness of the national economies, low disposable incomes, limited product sales and small profit margins. These conditions often leave little room for paying competitive salaries to retain journalism staff, or investing in staff development to improve news coverage and quality. In other words, the internal problems may be internal in name, and in nature, but they are not fully within the media sector's control, or of its making.

The links between internal and external threats

The literature indicates that much of the emphasis is on the external threats to media freedom, since they are considered more dangerous than internal threats. The overt and coercive nature of external threats, especially from governments, make them more visible, and give them a greater sense of immediacy and urgency. Because external threats often have stronger news elements of conflict, impact, and prominence—especially if the government is involved—such threats are deemed more newsworthy, and as a result, they receive greater media coverage. Moreover, external threats from governments also pose a danger to the news media's power and pecuniary interests by curbing their influence. As a result, such threats receive greater priority from the news media organisations, which mount a fight-back through the best means at their disposal—the power to reach and influence the public.

Public awareness about internal threats is comparatively lower since the news media are less likely to carry regular reports about internal matters concerning journalists' working conditions, lack of training and qualifications, or their ethical and/or professional lapses. Besides reduced media coverage, internal threats receive less attention from civil society organisations when compared to external threats. This is because external threats are seen to pose a greater risk to ideals of civil society—good governance and civil rights.

Internal threats may also receive lower prominence in most reports, studies, conferences and statements, again because such threats are deemed less urgent and less damaging in the overall scheme of things. For example, the Melanesia Media Freedom Forum Outcome Statement (2019) had a clear focus on external threats. The statement is self-explanatory as to why external threats are often prioritised: not only is the list of external threats substantive, but they are quite serious in nature: intimidation, political and legal threats, police and military brutality, illegal detention, and violence against younger and female reporters. The statement did not address the core internal threats—journalists' working conditions, the low prospects for training and development, and the high turnover rate in newsrooms—in as much detail (Melanesia Media Forum, 2019).

While the emphasis on external threats is understandable, even justifiable, internal threats should not be played down. The strong connections between external and internal threats suggest that they both need to be addressed jointly to strengthen media freedom. External threats are the symptoms whereas internal threats are the root of the problem. For instance, both experience and qualifications are determinants of journalist professionalism. To a fairly large extent, retaining professional staff and building newsroom experience depends on salary and work conditions (notwithstanding the stress some tend to place on passion for journalism alone). Uncompetitive salaries mean that media companies are unable to retain staff. This leaves media companies in a perpetual struggle to build newsroom capacity, with staff leaving for better paid roles in the other fields of communication having to be replaced with new recruits. This scenario, which is being played out in the four Melanesian countries, affects the quality of journalism (International Federation of Journalists, 2015; Tacchi et al., 2013).

Poor journalism—the output of unaddressed internal threats—is government's main justification for stronger legislation. This exemplifies how outstanding internal threats give rise to external threats. This clear link should not be overlooked.

The more entrenched the internal threats become, the more they compound the external threats, especially if the public become disenchanted with the quality of journalism, and are pushed into the governments' arms with regards to harsher legislation. This situation is exemplified by an incident in PNG in 2015. One of the two national dailies, the *Post-Courier,* was accused of ethical breaches over a page one lead story on February 20 about illegal Asian prostitutes in the country when it emerged that the images in the story were not of local girls, but lifted from a Nigerian news website. Public anger was rampant on social media, with the newspaper accused of falsifying information for profit (Singh, 2017).

Conclusion

This review approached outstanding issues in the Melanesian media sector from the 'internal' and 'external' threats framework. Some historical issues have been compounded by the growing use and abuse of social media—a double-edged sword that both helps and hobbles the practice of journalism in Melanesia (Singh, 2017).

This review identified the links between external threats, like government and corporate pressure, and internal threats, like the lack of journalist capacity. While external threats tend to overshadow internal threats, unresolved internal threats that lower professionalism pose major risks in their own right. For example, the media's heavy reliance on government and corporate press releases could be an outcome of internal threats or weaknesses that compromise the public right to know. This is also a curtailment of media freedom.

Governments favour punitive legislation to address the alleged lack of professionalism in the media corps. But this only treats the symptoms, not the root causes. Punitive legislation on its own does not address internal threats, like the lack of journalist, experience, qualification or uncompetitive salaries. To the contrary, punitive legislation could well exacerbate the problems by causing fear and worsening journalist attrition, besides stifling debate and encouraging bad governance.

The real challenge is to lift standards by addressing internal threats through a consistent programme of education and training, and by retaining staff through better salaries and working conditions. A system that produces a well-educated and a well-paid journalist corps is better at withstanding and staving off external threats like government pressure, and to rising up to emerging threats, such as the misinformation on social media, and attempts by foreign powers to influence reporting.

Granted that addressing internal threats is not a full-proof strategy against attacks on media freedom, unless governments are sincere. After all, governments are known to target media not just for not doing their work well, but also for doing it too well. However, a more professional workforce would be better able to face up to external threats from government and other sources. Moreover, such a professional workforce is more likely to have public support against government crackdowns compared to an unprofessional one.

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5. In her own words

Melanesian women in media

Abstract: Representation of women in media has been a noted gender equity issue globally for decades. Given the increasing encroachments into press freedom in Melanesia, female journalists and media workers face serious challenges. With this in mind, the Melanesia Media Freedom Forum (MMFF) hosted a special session focusing specifically on the issues affecting women in the media in Melanesia. This article focuses on the discussions of female Melanesian journalists and the unique challenges they face in terms of representation in the media workforce, having their voices heard in the media, and the threats to their personal safety.

Keywords: female voices, gender, gender equity, journalists, media freedom, Melanesia, Melanesia Media Freedom Forum

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Introduction

> I think that you're very challenged, but at the back of your head, when you know that you've got people that you're serving, you have to hold people to account, then it pushes you to do your job.

FEMALE journalists and media workers in Melanesia occupy a fraught and unenviable position. On the one hand, they are trailblazers and mentors, passionate and brave. On the other, they must fight to be taken seriously professionally and face threats to their livelihoods and personal safety. These challenges are compounded by the changing media environment of Melanesia. The Melanesia Media Freedom Forum (MMFF) at Griffith University, 11-12 November 2019 featured presentations from Melanesian female journalists. The event was attended by journalists from the Pacific, editors, publishers, press freedom advocates and journalism scholars. The Forum was developed to respond to increasing media repression in Melanesia and to future-proof press freedom though trans-national regional co-operation and knowledge-sharing among Melanesian journalists, editors, publishers, press-freedom advocates and journalism scholars. This provided a safe space for media leaders who work in

Melanesian countries and territories to work collaboratively to formulate strategies to counter increasing incidences of media repression. The event created pathways supporting those facing existential threats to freedom of expression and communication. This highlighted the need to provide more safe spaces for informed discussions to continue and a need for larger media organisations to continue to monitor this space and raise awareness about the plight of women in journalism in Melanesia and the effect this has on their capacity to do their jobs safely, without threats of silencing or violence. The focus of this article is the special session within the MMFF on women in media in Melanesia. This article brings the discussions that took place in this safe, collaborative space together with academic literature in order to make the argument for greater investment in women in the media in Melanesia, as well as for further research and spaces for collaboration like the MMFF.

Media freedom in Melanesia

There is a significant gap in the literature relating to the experiences of female journalists and media workers in Melanesia. There is a small number of works focused on female journalists in Melanesia. These include pieces about former *Wantok* editor Anna Solomon and *Wantok* journalist Veronica Hatutasi, *Vanuatu Daily Post* editor Jane Joshua, and Georgina Kekea in Solomon Islands. These profiles make valuable contributions to capturing the experience of women in media in Melanesia but they do not capture the complete experience of female journalists. While there are significant bodies of work on topics such as violence against women, political participation of women, and anthropological perspectives on the roles of women in Melanesian culture and society, there remains a sizable academic knowledge gap in terms of the experiences of Melanesian women in the media. There have been limited reports on violence against female journalists in the media around studies of gender and the media in Vanuatu by IFJ and violence against female journalists in Fiji such as the tragic death of journalist and gender issues advocate Losana McGowan. Mago-King (2019) investigating the representation of women in anti-violence campaigns in PNG interviewed several journalists who ‘highlighted the positive role they can play in alleviating violence’. However, they also point out that ‘this would involve transforming Papua New Guinean journalism into a more *talanoa* style of reporting where the people’s voices matter’. This study points to the multi-layered role female journalists have to play in both reporting and addressing gender-based discrimination violence, and experiencing discrimination and gender-based violence. Given the lack of literature on the specific topic, this review situates this research by drawing together literature from within related fields, namely press freedom in Melanesia and the status of women in Melanesia. This approach contextualises this article within its broader academic fields and also highlights the dire need for further research specifically relating to women working within the media in Melanesia.

The importance of media freedom needs little introduction. It is enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights under Article 19 (UN General Assembly, 1948), which states that: 'Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.' Yet there are many parts of the world where these rights and press freedom, most specifically, are being increasingly encroached upon. Melanesia is, unfortunately, one of those regions. While access to media is increasing (Tacchi, et al., 2013), media freedoms in the Asia-Pacific region have been steadily declining since 2007 (Robie, 2018). Laumaea (2010, p. 32) suggests that the three biggest threats to media freedom in Melanesia are 'political and economic threats against and patronage of journalists', management prerogatives and military dictatorships. There are also issues of increasingly restrictive legislation. In a review of media sector developments in four Melanesian countries—Fiji, PNG, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu—Singh (2015, p. 15) wrote of the growing tension between governments and the media, and subsequent moves towards stronger media laws, 'justified on the basis of national stability'. Singh (2017) also observed the lack of professional capacity of journalists, poor remuneration possibly resulting in high turnover of staff, government pressure to conform to a developmental model of journalism as opposed to the adversarial, watchdog model advocated for by the media and civil society organisations as key issues. Cass (2004, 2014), discusses the role of developmental and mainstream journalism in PNG and suggests, at least when the works were written, that a distinctive Pacific third wave of development journalism was developing and blending with the mainstream press.

Wantok Niuspepa in PNG continues to fulfil a development model while at the same time often being critical of the government. Finally, Indonesia-controlled West Papua remains one of the worst places in the Pacific for media freedom violations, with little signs of improvement (Blades, 2016; Perrottet & Robie, 20011). Media freedom is a long-standing challenge in Melanesia, with few signs of improvement on the horizon.

Women in Melanesia

There is a significant body of academic literature about the experiences of women in Melanesia, though much of it focuses on anthropological studies or the results of development initiatives. While it is problematic to generalise issues affecting women across a region as diverse as Melanesia, this section seeks to highlight two broad, common discussions in the literature that are relevant to women in media in Melanesia, namely gendered violence and the political role of women.

A large body of academic literature focuses on violence against women in Melanesia, exploring cultural causes, development interventions, and the links between constructions of masculinity and violence. While female propriety is culturally and economically linked with constraint and conservatism, male status is culturally and morally dependent on limiting the wider cultural and economic relationships of women (Knauft, 1997). This may be through the social mechanism of avoidance of female power, the rules of which vary from culture to culture, or it may be through denigration (Mantovani, 1993). Zimmer-Tamakoshi (2012) refers to this power imbalance as ‘troubled masculinity’ and links this concept, alongside *kastom* and marital and economic conflicts with gendered violence. Violence against women remains a significant issue and an ‘existential reality’ in many parts of Melanesia (Ellsberg et al., 2008; Onyeke, 2010).

Women play a significant political role in Melanesia. While underrepresented in official politics, women play a critical role at the grassroots level. With the exception of some matriarchal affected the way women see their place in society. As Soin (1998, p. 10) writes, ‘when women believe that differences in status are part of the “natural order of things”, they are less likely to challenge how society is organised to benefit men more than women’. Though culture and *kastom* have been invoked as a way of excluding women from political processes, there are those that argue that this is just one interpretation. Boseto (2000, p. 8) explains that in her vernacular (*babatana* from the Solomon Islands), the terms ‘woman’ and ‘female’ translate to slightly different concepts, one referring to ‘married woman’ and the other to ‘the female’s place and function in the family and the wider community’. The role of women in Melanesia is intrinsically linked both culturally and socially to family groups and the wider community, which Boseto goes on to explicitly link with citizenship. These arguments have been echoed in more recent research. Spark and Corbett (2018) discuss the low levels of female political representation in Melanesian countries. They observe that most of the literature surrounding the topic focusses on structural barriers to participation, implicitly conveying an image of Melanesian women as passive and powerless. In contrast, their research found that women were active political figures in civil society at the grassroots, community level. Many of the political figures they interviewed chose not to pursue a formal career in politics, instead exercising power and affecting change at the grassroots.

Having situated this research within discussions around press freedom and the status of women in Melanesia, this review concludes by offering some statistics from one of the very few studies that includes female Melanesian journalists. Layton (1995) collected demographic details of journalists from around the Pacific, including Melanesia. She found that Melanesia was by far the most male-dominated media system: just 25 percent of journalists were female in Melanesia, compared with 45 percent in Polynesia and 44 percent in Micronesia.

This research also highlighted the attrition rate of female journalists due to family responsibilities. While men were more likely to 'test the waters' and quickly make a decision about making a career in journalism, women showed a strong commitment until roughly their fifth year in the profession – 'when they are in their mid-20s, and most likely marrying and starting families' (Layton, 1995, p. 111). This research was conducted more than 25 years ago so there are limited conclusions that can be directly applied to this research, but it demonstrates the pervasive, ongoing issues associated with representation of women in the media and the challenges facing women in the media workforce in Melanesia.

A review of literature reveals a significant knowledge gap in terms of the experiences of female journalists in Melanesia. While literature about journalism in Melanesia reveals significant concerns about encroachments into press freedom, which affect female journalists as well as males, the body of work surrounding the issues facing women in Melanesia paint a more complex picture. Violence against women remains a prominent issue, as does the low levels of political participation among women. These findings combined with the most recent survey of female journalists and media workers in Melanesia go some way towards situating this research within the academic literature. Though given that the most recent research specifically relating to the experiences of Melanesian women in media is more than 25 years old, this literature review emphasises the urgent need for further research in this area.

Bringing together women in Melanesian media

The MMFF aimed to provide a safe space for journalists and advocates to meet, discuss the challenges they face in their work, and collaboratively develop strategies to improve press freedom and the safety of journalists. A critical part of the Forum was also to facilitate a session where female journalists from across Melanesia could meet and share their experiences. From personal safety to societal expectations, the pressures on female journalists in Melanesia are very different to those of their male colleagues. This article focuses on the facilitated discussions that took place within this session. It should be noted that research was not the primary focus of this session, but instead creating a space for female journalists to safely acknowledge and share their experiences. Participants consented to the session being recorded and analysed for research purposes, but the researcher was not involved in directing the session, conversations and topics flowed organically based on what the participants wanted to discuss. Comments, presented in this article, made by journalists during the panel discussion that may have identified the journalist have been edited to protect their identity. Participants were from the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Papua New Guinea (PNG), with diverse experiences of reporting on Melanesia. Some participants had worked as Australia-based journalists covering the region, others had worked as correspondents, while some worked as reporters for local media organisations. The participants have been deidentified because there is potential for backlash in their home countries. The discussion recordings were deidentified, transcribed and analysed using NVivo qualitative analysis software in order to identify key themes and areas of concern.

Representation in the newsroom

Based on the discussions at the MMFF, there were several key themes that emerged, the first of which was the representation of women in the media in Melanesia. The participants roundly agreed that representation of women in the media across Melanesia was generally quite poor. Solomon's assertion (1994) that the male-dominated media work force was changing and women were moving into upper and middle management has not been fully realised. In the Solomon Islands, PNG and Vanuatu there were fewer female journalists in positions of authority in media organisations. This was highlighted by one participant who shared her experience of press conferences:

> If we have a press conference, the female and the male reporters get together and they talk around the issue that we've covered in the press conference, and give ideas on whoever that will be at the press conference. For us in the [De-identified], they find it funny that I'm the only female inside the press conferences… I'm the only female. So I would be the only one, even when we have the Prime Minister from Australia coming over, the [Deidentified] issue… for the media, I was the only female, unfortunately.

Participants suggested several potential reasons for the lack of women in newsrooms, the foremost of which related to journalist salaries. Participants believed this was a key factor in the number of women leaving journalism to pursue other avenues. The gender pay gap alongside low journalist salaries were seen as a key reason for young female journalists abandoning the profession. The meagre pay of Melanesian journalists has been widely criticised and cited as a key barrier to further media development (Robie, 2008). The participants noted the salaries for female reporters were even lower than for male reporters, so females ended up leaving the profession to work in communications and public relations roles which were deemed more suitable for women, were safer and paid better. One reporter had to take a pay cut so she could work in another news department to gain experience. One participant noted women were leaving the media industry and there was also a lack of interest from women in media studies:

> They have just gone out into other areas, more into care work. Some managed to secure work from government. We do have women, girls in journalism schools now. But they have yet to come up into the field. And at the local university, I think only three are females, while the rest are blokes.

Despite the low number of female journalists, participants observed that times are slowly beginning to change.

> Now we have new young feminists. Mostly they have women in the newsrooms, and we also have more women as the announcers, both radio and other stations. So it shows that more women back home are coming into the broadcasting section. Like, when I talk about broadcasting, like where I work, we are doing both radio and TV. So, it gives us a picture that in the past, like, people would think that only males could do this job. But then we would find, like, after we're there for over 25 years, it gives us a picture that women can also do this work. And we have to stand to give out information to people about issues that are facing people.

Silencing female journalists

A further challenge facing female journalists in Melanesia is that their voices are often silenced. This took place in several different ways. First and foremost was literally erasing the voices of female journalists. One participant recalled newsgathering during the 1980s and 1990s when she would write stories which would then be re-voiced by male reporters. The silencing of female journalists was a common experience: either where female journalists would generate content and men would revoice it, or the female reporters would simply not get a byline on the story.

> The stories I filed didn't go through, unfortunately. I didn't get credit for it. I wasn't getting my name credited in the content. It was used by the editor at that time.

Another way that female journalists are silenced is through limiting access to sources. This may take place at an institutional or a cultural level. One participant shared the experience of one of her colleagues who has been reporting on climate change:

> I have one reporter down in Bougainville, she's been reporting on climate change on the islands that are sinking and she's been reporting the story a number of times, but her voice has not been heard on the island. And you know, interviewing, speaking to those in authority, the government, they just don't seem to even care what's happening. Maybe they do, funding is an issue. But I always wonder why. Maybe with her reporting, if it was a male that went out and reported on this, would there be reaction from the government? Or is it because she's a female?

This silencing was also enacted through access to sources. Participants recounted stories of female journalists seeking interviews with authorities and either not receiving a response or having the interviewee request a male journalist.

> I'll give an example: there was one of our woman journalists who interviewed one of our ministers, and just by giving the interview, the wife complained that a female journalist interviewed her husband. And the wife said that she prepared for a male journalist. Again, we said, it doesn't mean that her husband is a minister and a male [that] she preferred a male to do the interview. She asked us not to do the interview. So we ended up apologising.

Violence and harassment

There was considerable evidence that female reporters feared for their safety when out in the field covering stories. There was evidence of backlash against women for covering stories and courageous examples of female reporters and their media organisations standing ground to ensure the coverage was aired providing audiences with fair and accurate reporting. One participant relayed the following story:

> Being from the mainland of [deidentified], I'm quite different from [deidentified]. And being a female and a manager of a media organisation in [deidentified] is quite challenging. Some of the decisions I make on the ground, I've got to be very mindful of closer impact back on me. So yes, there was a case about a month ago. We had a programme that was recorded in Port Moseby at the University of Papua New Guinea. Nine Bougainville students held a rally for greater autonomy and independence, which are the two options that are going to go to the polls in two weeks time. And there were 'for' and 'against'. For the benefit of the local Bougainville audience, I decided we should have that replayed on our local network. And after that got aired, there was a lot of criticism against the organisation. We were attacked as a propaganda station. And so I came out to say that we have our code of ethics, we have policy guidelines which we are guided by, and we will continue to maintain reporting on Bougainville. And then there was a threatening comment that came out on social media that said, 'And be ready to pack up and leave.' So I'm not sure whether that was, you know, aimed at the organisation, or myself as the manager. You find that with readers, and I'm not sure maybe with the [deidentified] government, but with the autonomous [deidentified] government, the leaders are still not aware of the importance of the role media plays. And I think, if they're more informed about that, they'll learn to appreciate the work of the media on the ground. And also, people, the public in Bougainville as well.

Facing threats of violence and suppression is a daily occurrence for many female journalists in Melanesia, and remains a significant issue to be overcome.

Women supporting women

During the panel discussion, the role of women supporting women and their role working in media was a common theme. One journalist was criticised because she did not have formal journalism qualifications. A second indicated academically qualified female journalists were rare. Mentoring of junior female reporters was undertaken by the participants from the Solomon Islands and PNG who noted it was valuable to develop and keep the women reporters in the industry. The continued presence of women in media roles and the success of female journalists relied upon on an inner circle of women supporting each other. As in other regions, women in Melanesian media's success depends on the support and guidance of other women and allies.

> In [deidentified], yes, I do a lot of mentoring of younger supporters. They'll be designing questions because they get quite nervous when they see male colleagues. They feel intimidated that 'I'm going to be asking a dumb question'. So you end up mentoring.

Findings from research about women achieving leadership positions within organisations identified the need for a 'female-dominated inner circle of 1-3 women' (Yang, Chawla, & Uzzi, 2019). Women having to carve their own niche in media is not unique to Melanesia, women working in media have 'struggled to attain real influence in editorial decision-making roles across all media platforms' (North, 2010).

> In the Solomons, we have... now the women are speaking up more, we know that because from the Ministry of Women they do activities that focus on women issues and all that, so they have been really up front with how they carry out the work with the support from NGOs like... from NGOs, NDP, Oxfam, so they are quite vocal in that area. we say that it's the same for the rural areas, but when you add up, it's really all together, you can see women going forward.
>
> We've had one of our female reporters covering the climate change issue, and there's been so many things that have been happening. She has the job to report anything that is connecting involving children, and just not children, but the local communities. Sometimes when she's out there doing her reports, people tend to be questioning her, like, 'Why are you doing this?' The same with the governor. She says, 'I have to—it is my job to get information, get it out, and let people here know what you are facing. If I don't do my job, people won't be able to hear a word you are saying. So, it's my job to do the reporting.

Conclusion

The discussions thus far have painted a somewhat bleak picture of the Melanesian media landscape for women. There are many driven, passionate female journalists and media workers throughout Melanesia, just several of whom were represented at the MMFF. These women generously shared their experiences in the hope of bringing these issues to light and engaging in critical discussions on how to address the Melanesian media's gender problems.

The Melanesia Media Freedom Forum created a safe space for leading journalists across the Melanesian region to meet face-to-face outside the Melanesian political theatre. The participation and robust discussion highlighted the need for future opportunities to gather to continue to learn from experiences, share knowledge about current and emerging challenges, and identify potential strategies for the future.

This article highlights that unless there is fair representation of Melanesian women who are employed in the media, there will not be a female voice sharing key issues relating to all news, but particularly to news about women. Further, without female journalists in media to talk to, sources have no avenue to raise awareness about key human rights issues such as sexual abuse, domestic violence and child abuse. Culturally these are issues women discuss with women. If there are no women in the media to talk to, the stories are not told and the capacity to raise awareness about the issues is lost. The critical role press freedom plays is not able to be optimised because women are not fairly represented and protected in Melanesia.

Secondly, the loss of a voice for female journalists who do the hard work to gather stories and then have it taken by male colleagues suggests an organisational discrimination in the workplace. These media organisations need to enable the content from their female journalists who created it and put protections in place to ensure these female journalists remain safe as is their duty of care to all staff equally.

Finally, firsthand accounts of the persecution of senior female Melanesian journalists is an indicator of the repressive regimes. This highlights the need for global attention to this region and a media focus to hold those responsible to account.

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6. Media freedom in Melanesia

The challenges of researching the impact of national security legislation

Commentary: In a global context of national security anxiety, governments across the world are passing an increasing number of laws in response to terror-related threats. Often, national security laws undermine media freedom and infringe on democratic principles and basic human rights. Threats to media freedom and abuse of journalists are also increasing in Melanesia. This commentary argues that in a regional context of repetitive political coups, failures in governance, high levels of corruption, insurrections, or even media crises, the tensions between national security legislation and media freedom need to be examined cautiously. The authors suggest that strong methodological and theoretical frameworks that allow for serious consideration of cultural practices and protocols will be necessary to conduct research examining these tensions in Melanesia.

Keywords: comparative studies, journalism practice, media freedom, Melanesia, Melanesia Media Freedom Forum, national security, South Pacific

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Introduction

THE Melanesia Media Freedom Forum held in Brisbane in November 2019 called on development partners such as Australia and New Zealand to 'Recognise and advocate for the role of the free and independent media as an essential accountability institution in Melanesia' (Melanesia Media Freedom Forum, 2019). This commentary argues that engaging in cross-cultural and comparative academic research examining the impact of national security legislation on media freedom in the Pacific region represents an initiative that directly addresses the forum's call. As countries roll out national security legislation in response to terror-related threats, tensions continue to grow between the need to protect national security and the need for journalists to be able to do their work in the public interest.

In other words, national security laws critically affect journalists' ability to uphold their 'watchdog' function. However, as Robie (2012, p. 222; 2014) highlights with regard to the Pacific, in order for media to play its role as the Fourth Estate, the media must also be able to understand the important role that custom (*kastom*), traditional movements, and spiritual beliefs play in the region. As M'Balla-Ndi (2017) also notes in her study of journalistic practices in New Caledonia, French journalism schools attended by the majority of metropolitan media practitioners in New Caledonia neglect the study of knowledge crucial to work as a journalist in the archipelago, particularly knowledge of local customs such as '*la coutume*'. She argues that 'Metropolitan journalists' lack of knowledge about Kanak customs […] and their will to keep reporting as they would in France is problematic. Journalism in New Caledonia involves many things that [one does not] learn in Western journalism schools' (M'Balla-Ndi, 2017, p. 61). It is probably then reasonable to expect that conducting research about national security laws and their impact on journalism in Melanesia will also require recognition of local customs as a factor influencing journalism in the region, and be given significant consideration when conducting such studies.

Since 11 September 2001, more than 100 countries around the world have passed legislation to strengthen national security (Human Rights Watch, 2012). Not only do these laws undermine media freedom, they also infringe on democratic principles and basic human rights. In many countries, national security legislation involves ill-defined Acts that allow security agencies to prevent media from effectively reporting on stories of public interest. Often, these laws imply that journalists can only rely on a limited number of official sources, including limiting their access to crucial information needed to produce balanced stories. This is crucial in Melanesian countries where threats to media freedom and abuse of journalists are increasing.

We argue that examining the conflict between national security laws and media freedom in Melanesia is a complex task that requires attention to, and recognition of, cultural particularities of South Pacific societies. In a global context of national security and public anxiety, and a regional context of repetitive political coups, failures in governance, high levels of corruption, insurrections, or even media crises, these tensions need to be examined cautiously. Such research will need to recognise approaches that consider local cultural dynamics, and that can distinguish genuine cultural protocols from abusive invocations of tradition when it is used to side-line—or excuse the unfair treatment of—journalists.

Kastom and Western ways: A complex equation

It has been said that journalism is 'an Anglo-American invention (Chalaby, 1996, p. 303). This underlines why journalism literature is dominated by Western or Euro-centric concepts. This narrow conceptualisation of journalism implies the omission of important regions of the world such as Africa, Asia, and Pacific Islands in the scholarship of journalism practice. It is for this reason that Wasserman and de Beer (2009) presented a critique of journalism as 'an Anglo-American invention' on the grounds that it excluded non-Western scholarship as contributing to the journalism discipline. They point out that the exclusion of Africa from discussions about how journalism is practised across the globe has deprived humanity of the values of diversity and inclusiveness in cross-cultural journalism practices. Wasserman and de Beer (2009, p. 431) argue the implication is 'too often that the Western democratic model of liberal democracy remains the implicit or explicit normative ideal against which journalism in non-western societies is measured, with media-state relations as a primary determinant of journalistic standards' (p. 431). Similarly, other scholars such as Curran and Park (2000) contend that we should not perceive our world from a long and constricted Western viewpoint but rather we must adopt and encourage approaches that appreciate the values of globalisation, the emergence of the Asian economy, and the move from Hollywood to other centres of media creativity, such as Nigeria's 'Nollywood' movie industry and India's 'Bollywood'. Pacific scholar and writer Epeli Hau'ofa (1993, pp. 2-3) also argues, 'Academic and consultancy experts tend to overlook or misinterpret grassroots activities because they do not fit with prevailing views about the nature of society and its development'.

In their major paper, 'Have We Been Thinking Upside Down? The Contemporary Emergence of Pacific Theoretical Thought,' Huffer and Qalo (2004, p. 87) ask the question: 'Why should we be concerned about the Pacific thought?' Their paper suggests that research, which examines the Pacific, is mostly published by foreigners that fail to study how Indigenous Pacific thought relates to contemporary ideas. Such studies do not consider how fundamental Pacific concepts and philosophies are relevant to the social reality of local societies. Pacific Islanders might have in fact realised that they 'have been thinking upside- down' and they are now trying to find ways to recover from colonial and post-colonial models and ideals, such as Christianity and Western public administration and systems of governance. In a context where collective efforts between Melanesian and Western media practitioners and academics are needed to overcome the challenges current societal developments (e.g., national security legislation) create for media freedom, we uphold such views and suggest that such threats to media freedom in the Pacific region (e.g. national security legislation) can be effectively researched only with close attention to culture and the tensions between Western-imported values and local ones.

Pear ta ma 'on maf (The Land Has Eyes in Rotuman), a 2004 feature film produced and directed by Rotuman playwright and scholar Vilsoni Hereniko, is an outstanding example of how a cultural production can illustrate the tensions between tradition—including local customs, beliefs, and protocols—and Western-imported values and principles in the South Pacific. It was filmed entirely on the Polynesian outer island of Rotuma (administratively part of Fiji), with Indigenous actors and a largely Indigenous crew. *The Land Has Eyes* makes a clear and powerful statement, much like a well-known editorial in *The Fiji Times* in 1987, which criticised Western-style democracy as a 'foreign flower' unsuited to Pacific soils (Larmour, 2005, p. 2). *The Land Has Eyes* also seems to denounce Western practices as a 'foreign flower', incompatible with and unable to take roots in the Pacific soil (Larmour, 2005).

In many Melanesian countries, when journalists probe local or regional governments, especially in regard to corruption, mal-administrative practices, or when all the features of good governance fall down (e.g., Solomon Islands in 2000; Fiji in 1987, 2000-2001, 2006), they are promptly and easily designated as 'foreign weeds needing better control'. In fact, as 'Introduced institutions are often blamed for political problems in the South Pacific' (Larmour, 2005, p. 5), contemporary Pacific journalists are also often unfairly criticised and their work often challenged in various ways. Coupled with the 1987 *Fiji Times* editorial and Larmour's argument about the complex adoption of Western-style democracy in Pacific islands, Hereniko's film demonstrates that some values and practices deriving from Western traditions have been uneasily and uncomfortably imported into the Pacific. In fact, these Western values do not always serve the people of the Pacific, and even, sometimes, create great injustice against them. These are injustices that *The Land* would not have tolerated. This is relevant here because the practice of journalism 'might have its roots in Western society especially when it comes to recording and reporting facts by use of a pen and paper and actually getting it printed but there are many aspects of journalism that are also as old as the Vanuatu society and many others' (M'Balla-Ndi, 2015, p. 12). Robie (2002, p. 147) also argues that 'Customary obligations and pressures are frequently a burden on journalists in the South Pacific. Such obstacles create difficulties for many journalists.' However, much of the existing literature examining media and journalism in the South Pacific overlooks, or gives abridged considerations for culture and traditions, particularly in regard to how these are grounded or manifested in Pacific media and journalism practices.

Similarly, the concept of Western-style democracy, the 'home institution' of the Fourth Estate, sometimes faces resistance in traditional societies where it needs to 'co-exist' with local ways. These conflicts in values, practices, standards, and protocols undoubtedly add a layer of complexity when examining the state of media freedom in relation to national security legislation in Melanesian countries, where local cultures and traditions still run deep and where a more informed and nuanced consideration of contests for freedom or invocations of tradition—or culture—should, at the very least, take greater account of what constitutes 'genuine tradition'. The following discussion showcases a few examples of the 'exceptionalism' in Vanuatu that some people have attributed to tradition previously in times of media crises.

Kastom and media freedom: a Vanuatu case-in-focus

Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara, author of *The Pacific Way: A Memoir* (1997), became the first Prime Minister of Fiji in 1971. Too Van Meijl (1999) states:

> Ratu Mara has also been a founder and leading member of the South Pacific Forum, a regional organisation that was established in 1971. […] He coined the phrase 'Pacific Way' to express that, in spite of the continuing economic dependence on the Western world, Fiji and other South Pacific states were determined to develop in their own way and in their own style.

When examining journalistic practices in Melanesia, it is necessary to acknowledge that the 'Pacific Way' is often appropriated by politicians and other stakeholders for purposes well removed from Mara's original intent. The following vignettes are an attempt to illustrate such misappropriations.

On Monday morning, 2 February 2009, a young ni-Vanuatu[1] man attacked Esther Tinning, a freelance journalist working for the *Vanuatu Daily Post,* as she was walking her children to school. Tinning's assailant, Collen Litch, was 'a local builder enraged by a feature piece she had written based on information provided by the assailant's sister' (Pacific Freedom Forum, 2009). As a result of the attack, Tinning suffered a miscarriage. Late on Saturday morning, 17 January 2009, four Vanuatu Correction Service officers burst into the newsroom of the *Vanuatu Daily Post* in Port Vila and assaulted the then publisher, Marc Neil-Jones, a former British expatriate who had become a ni-Vanuatu citizen. On the afternoon of Friday, 4 March 2011, Marc Neil-Jones was again assaulted in the *Vanuatu Daily Post*'s Port Vila newsroom, this time by a group of four men led by Vanuatu Cabinet Minister Harry Iauko, after the *Post* published stories critical of Iauko's Infrastructure and Public Utilities portfolios. Following his attack, in an interview for the *Sydney Morning Herald*, Jones suspected no one would be arrested, stating that 'Whenever there is a big man nothing happens, it's exasperating. It's so blatant, a week after the assault and there is no apology, no government response nor explanation. There are numerous witnesses but still nothing has happened a week later.'

Prima facie these assaults had nothing to do with culture and/or tradition. The events had, at the time, prompted various responses by regional media monitoring NGOs, such as Pacific Freedom Forum, and international media freedom advocacy NGOs, including the International Federation of Journalists, but had only belatedly been acknowledged by the local Media Association Vanuatu (MAV), and the regional media association Pacific Islands News Association (PINA). However, in late July 2009, during the PINA conference in Port Vila, Esther Tinning gave a speech recounting her assault, stating that her assailant had not yet been arrested or charged by the police, and that she had received no support except for a 'shadowy statement' (Tinning, 2009) from MAV. In response, former MAV president Moses Stevens (2009) said:

> I think that all of us have to understand how the Pacific Islanders resolve issues, we sit together on a mat like in Radio Australia programmes and we talk about it. […] And I want to call on this meeting here to understand the Pacific Way of resolving issues […]: we sit together on a mat and we talk about it and find solutions. (Stevens, 2009)

Stevens' invocation of the 'Pacific Way' of resolving issues to excuse the position of a national media association is significant here. In many instances, *kastom* influences ni-Vanuatu journalists' ability to tell a story. *Kastom* protocols, kinships, the use and abuse of chiefly status and honorifics, big man's authority, *wantok* systems, and so on all affect journalistic practices on a daily basis (see M'Balla-Ndi, 2015). However, culture or tradition can also be too easily invoked to excuse malpractices and the improper treatment of journalists. Journalists who are attacked, criticised or harassed might well have been insensitive or incompetent to a certain extent, but it is of grave concern that journalists might also be at risk because they have, by carrying out their responsibilities and duties, exposed the malpractices of a big man in the *wantok* system. In fact, these malpractices may be corrupt according to Western practices and understandings, but not necessarily within their traditional context. This is where examining the impact of various laws, including national security laws, on media freedom in Melanesia will be problematic because many journalists in the region who have adopted Western standards of reporting are also involved in, affected by, and respectful of the traditional ways. The potential for these laws (and their flaws) to be used or abused by those in power (in federal agencies, but also within traditional society networks) should not be overlooked.

Thus, the assaults on Marc Neil-Jones and Esther Tinning had nothing to do with *kastom*, but occurred in a context where *kastom* runs deep and major players in these matters did not hesitate to call on *kastom* to restrict, delay, or justify any measure the authorities have or have not taken following the attacks. Therefore, tradition can be slippery, exploitative, and in Melanesia, it can also selectively be invoked for the purposes of intimidating or silencing journalists by placing some political practices such as the '*wantok* system'[2] off-limits. There are also many examples of abuses committed by government officials designed to silence journalists and manipulate stories in Melanesia. One of the most recent examples dates from November 2019, in Vanuatu, with the government's refusal to renew journalist and former *Vanuatu Daily Post* media director Dan McGarry's visa, despite having lived in Vanuatu for 16 years. The government's refusal to renew McGarry's visa was also condemned by Media Association Vanuatu. McGarry described the event as a 'straight up attack on the media' (Davidson, *The Guardian*, 2019) and asserted that the Vanuatu government refused to renew his visa because of stories he had published about China's influence in Vanuatu. He stated that 'the *Daily Post* reporting on the government's activities caused such discomfort that they are willing to abuse administrative processes to silence [him]' (Davidson, *The Guardian*, 2019). Later that month, McGarry attended the 2019 Melanesia Media Freedom Forum in Brisbane and was denied passage to fly home to Vanuatu with his spouse. He was informed that the ni-Vanuatu Department of Immigration had issued an order barring the airline from flying him home (Walden, ABC, 2019). In late December 2019, the Vanuatu Supreme Court voided the government-ordered ban on McGarry's visa, judging it unlawful.

Many Melanesian journalists who, like McGarry and Neil Jones, question the probity of local governance or investigate the dysfunctions of government, have often been victims of retribution in complete opposition to the tolerance and fostering of dissent and diversity that are characteristic of democracy. In fact, Duncan (2008, p. 127) argues that 'There have been many attempts by governments in the Pacific to exert control over the media in the name of good governance. […] Government control over the media would raise severe problems for the important role seen for the media in controlling principal/agent problems on Pacific developments.' As stated by the Melanesia Media Freedom Forum in November 2019:

> The global decline of democracy is making it easier for our governments to silence the media. […] The range of threats to media freedom is increasing. These include restrictive legislation, intimidation, political threats, legal threats and prosecutions, assaults and police and military brutality, illegal detention, online abuse, racism between ethnic groups and the ever-present threats facing particularly younger and female reporters who may face violence both on the job and within their own homes (Melanesia Media Freedom Forum, 2019).

Though, in a world experiencing such unprecedented levels of national security anxiety, with most countries responding to outside threats and securing their borders by strengthening national laws that have a heavy impact on media freedom, national security legislation for Melanesian countries and their journalists becomes a 'glocal' issue, a world-wide phenomenon we can expect to be amplified because of well-established cultural norms that have a history of being invoked to excuse corrupt practices and the unfair treatment of journalists.

Concluding remarks

Although countries across the globe do have constitutional provisions for media freedom, these rights are not always respected in practice (Bosch, 2011). In fact, prominent whistleblower disclosures or leaks of classified documents and information (e.g., Snowden; Assange) show us that even in the land of the free and the home of the First Amendment, press freedom and free speech are seriously challenged by national security legislation. It then follows that in countries where free speech and/or press freedom are not constitutional rights, but rather implied rights (e.g., Australia) or where these rights are significantly restricted by other laws or some level of political corruption, such as in various Melanesian nations or other South Pacific islands, their so-called fundamental and essential role for progress, human development and human dignity is often challenged.

It is crucial to acknowledge that national security legislation issues for Pacific journalists are added to other challenges such as development and governance issues, economic growth, health, poverty and human rights abuses, and all are evolving within specific cultural contexts that often make issues faced for local journalists fairly unique. We also argue here that local culture remains an essential concept that media and journalism research need to grapple with. This is especially relevant in a global context of national security anxiety in which Melanesian nations' media organisations need to reflect on how to avoid international marginalisation while also determining how culture can be 'integrated' into the reality of contemporary Pacific society's media sphere(s).

The above suggests that journalism research conducted in the region critically needs to examine diverse invocations of *kastom* or the 'Pacific Way' when used in cases where journalists go against ' tradition' or well-established hierarchies and cultural structures by exposing their chiefs' and politicians' malpractices. Therefore, it is necessary to clarify and define what tradition, cultural protocols, hierarchies, and principles stand for in contemporary Melanesia, and in a context in which media practitioners have adopted many standards of Western journalism. Seldom has academic research documented this. Such knowledge would enable media researchers to gain a deeper understanding of how these journalists carry out their duties in a way consistent with traditional values and beliefs, and with Western journalism standards, and how emerging legislation led by worldwide threats of terrorism affect the work of Pacific journalists.

To gain a better understanding of the implications of national security legislation for media freedom, free speech, and human rights in Melanesia, we must undertake comparative cross-cultural journalism studies that offer insights into how to achieve a balance in the tension between protecting national security interests and the need for journalists to be allowed to serve in the public interest. Therefore, while mindful of the need to protect national security interests of countries in the region, journalists and journalism academics should also be conscious, and recognise the importance, of adopting culturally relevant practices that contribute to solving the challenges of development that are unique to the region, such as peaceful resolution of conflicts, as well as the impact of climate change and global warming on the environment. Such knowledge will be necessary when re-conceptualising what press freedom, journalism, national security and democracy stand for in Melanesia.

Notes

1 ni-Vanuatu are the inhabitants of Vanuatu.

2 The Tok Pisin word *wantok* means 'person who speaks the same language as I do', but it also describes a complex shared worldview, well beyond specific linguistic commonalities, as well as a complex, dynamic web of mutual obligations between a chief (a 'big man', often a politician) and their *wantoks* (the *wantok* system). Melanesian journalists often describe the *wantok* system as a major, if not the major source of corruption in their societies, as well as a major site of corruption threatening journalism. This results in journalists being attacked sometimes physically, for going against the *kastom* (tradition).

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7. Strengthening the voices of human rights defenders in the media

A case study on addressing sorcery accusation-related violence in Papua New Guinea

Abstract: Civil society and human rights defenders in Papua New Guinea have played an important role in bringing about legislative changes with regard to domestic and sorcery accusation related violence in recent years. Their insights in understanding how to address complex issues at the community level when accusations occur have also proven crucial to keeping people safe and providing processes to hold perpetrators accountable. However, the mainstream media has rarely reported on their stories and included their voices in the reporting of sorcery accusation related violence. They have focused on exposing the problem, often by showcasing the horrific nature of some of the crimes related to accusations, instead of further investigating possible solutions. In this article we explore our work with human rights defenders to capture their experiences around sorcery accusations and violence and provide ways to bring their stories into the mainstream media. In particular, we explore questions around the ethics of representation when it comes to reporting human rights abuses and violence and suggest alternative ways of reporting.

Keywords: community media, human rights, media ethics, Papua New Guinea, sorcery

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Introduction

IN 2013, international media caused an outcry about sorcery accusations happening in Papua New Guinea (PNG). The images of the public burning of Kepari Leniata went around the world. Subsequently, international agencies and local civil society groups put pressure on the PNG government to adjust legislation related to sorcery accusation and domestic violence. Between 2013 and 2016, the strong movement from civil society to demand legislative changes that would ensure people's safety and rights (Biersack, Jolly, & Macintyre, 2016) was successful and PNG significantly modified laws connected with domestic violence and the protection of victims of sorcery accusations. As the government continues to face challenges with enforcing the laws, most of the work at the community level continues to be supported by human rights defenders (HRDs) and civil society organisations (UNDP & PNG Department of Community Development and Religion, 2016).

While news media have drawn attention to reported cases of violence, the representation of the issue of sorcery accusations has often failed to provide an indepth understanding of how these cases might be addressed at the community level. Our research revealed, for example, that the voices of HRDs and civil society groups are often missing in national PNG news media representations about reported cases of violence. Given the prominent roles of HRDs in addressing cases in their community, their knowledge and strategies can bring further understandings to the issue. In addition, the approaches taken by news media, both national and international, raise questions about the ethics of representation because news media representations often focus on the horrific nature of the crime, and on victims, instead of investigating potential solutions to the problem. In a country that presents challenges in responding to the issue of sorcery accusation related violence (also referred to as SARV) through legal and state interventions, the media can play a crucial role in supporting education and encouraging positive social change.

This article shares the approaches developed in collaboration with HRDs under the *Yumi Sanap Strong* (Let's Stand Strong Together) initiative, which aims to co-design communication strategies to address sorcery accusation related violence in PNG. Through digital storytelling and continued advocacy at community and national events, stories of change by HRDs were brought to the media's attention. This included directly working with media staff, and strengthening the capacity of HRDs to produce their own stories. We argue that stories from HRDs and community change makers in mainstream media can contribute to shifting audiences' perspectives about human rights and violations related to sorcery accusations. As our case study demonstrates, strategies for bringing such community media and mainstream media closer together can further support human rights advocacy work in the Pacific.

Sorcery accusations in PNG

Sorcery and witchcraft beliefs are part of the fabric of life in PNG. Beliefs maintain a spiritual system embedded in the social relations of people and communities, and are often used to explain unexpected incidents within a community.

Sorcery accusations occur when these social relations break down and people are targeted as having caused the harm the community is experiencing. There have been significant changes over the past decades, with different regions in PNG seeing variations in the way sorcery accusations manifest in communities.

The underlying causes of contemporary sorcery accusations and related violence in PNG vary significantly. In recent years, sorcery accusations can be attributed to being motivated by personal gains and broader inequalities within society. It has been documented that predominantly vulnerable people with limited support systems in their communities become targets of accusations. While accusations are often triggered by an unexplained death in the community, accusations often re-enforce existing disputes or structural inequalities (Statement on Sorcery-related Killings and Impunity in Papua New Guinea, 2013; Eves & Forsyth, 2015). Perpetrators of violence usually act in groups and are often known to those being accused as they are often from the same community (Thomas et al., 2017). Because of these factors, the impunity of perpetrators remains a challenge in addressing the issue of violence in cases of sorcery accusations.

A common interpretation, often supported by international media reports, is that sorcery accusations happen due to a ‘primitive’ cultural belief system, and that ‘modern’ structures offer the solution to the issue. Lawrence (2015) argues that culture and modernisation should not be seen as opposites, but, rather, as integrated with each other. And Stewart and Strathern (2003) regard contemporary sorcery and witchcraft ideas as ways of ‘conceptualising, coping with, and criticising the very “modernity” that was supposed to have done away with them’ (p. 5). This complex link has presented challenges when it comes to media representations of sorcery accusations and related violence because a deeper understanding of the underlying causes is often required. At the beginning of our project in 2016, news media predominantly covered sensationalist accounts focusing on the horrific nature of the crimes related to accusations, including showing the scarred bodies of female victims (Evenhuis, 2015).

The joint movement by civil society groups to address violence related to sorcery accusations in PNG led to legislative changes, including the repeal of the *Sorcery Act* in 2013, and the development of the SARV National Action Plan (Chandler, 2013; Thousands attend anti-violence protest in PNG, 2013). The plan identifies the need for a multiplicity of stakeholders to work together, including developing effective advocacy strategies. Calls have been made to support the media to strengthen reporting and investigations about sorcery accusation related violence, and improve representations of those marginalised by such violence (Rooney, 2017). The posting of violent incidents on social media to alert the police has also simultaneously caused discussion about the role of social media in representing marginal voices and raised issues about the ethics of posting images of human rights violations. The complexity of incidents of sorcery accusations, the considerable risk that people who stand up against it put themselves in, and the limited funding for investigative reporting all play a role in the way sorcery accusation related violence has been reported in the media. Nevertheless, but also because of this, the representations in the media of violence related to human rights abuses need to be examined. This further aligns with previous propositions of a deliberative journalism or development journalism that seeks not only to highlight or expose a problem in the media, but also to investigate possible solutions to the issue (Robie, 2013; Romano, 2010). There is a need for alternative forms of representation that can, on one hand, support journalists, and on the other hand, strengthen the depth of reporting on the issue.

Representation of violence and ethics in human rights reporting

The media outcry of 2013 about sorcery accusation related violence in PNG was largely based on a shock effect: photos of a body burned alive in public with bystanders surrounding the event were publicised through global media. There has been much discussion about representations of violence in the media and how exposure to such representations may affect behavioural patterns, particularly among children. It has been argued that exposure to violent media increases the probability of aggressive and violent behaviour among audiences (Bushman & Anderson, 2015, p. 1818). However, this debate is not the focus of this article. Instead, we ask questions about the ethics of such representations, the consequences for individual victims whose stories are shared and the consequences for their families, and the potential of victims' stories to encourage positive social change among audiences.

Thomas (2018) discusses harm in journalism and reflects on codes of ethics. He acknowledges the dilemma that journalists might face in highlighting issues, and agrees with Bivins that, in some cases, 'harm is either a necessary byproduct [of journalism] or literally unavoidable' (as cited in Thomas, 2018, p. 223). When it comes to human rights abuses, it is journalists' role on the one hand to expose harm; however, on the other hand, they must manage and mitigate the risk of causing harm to those who might be the victims of such human rights abuses. Even more challenging are these considerations in an increasingly under-resourced media environment, and an environment in which codes of ethics and ethics of representation are further blurred through social media engagements and citizen journalism. In this scenario, 'what are the possibilities for robust ethical debate about harm or for the transmission of values through moral exemplars?' (Thomas, 2018, p. 15). One of the key challenges is to:

> … create and share social justice and human rights material in a manner that balances the right to privacy (and the integrity of the person) with the right to freedom of expression—balancing the urge to expose human

> rights violations with a consideration of the very real dangers to human rights defenders and victims or survivors. (Gregory, 2010, p. 14)

Those who view violence through the media could potentially become more aggressive, but one needs to also consider the potential trauma that viewing might cause to them, in particular for younger audiences and those who have experienced similar forms of violence themselves. In addition, we need to consider the representation of the incident and the community it took place in, as well as the people who might be identified in the images. There are therefore several considerations when wanting to expose human rights issues and violations. Firstly, how are audiences affected by exposure to the media representations of violence? Secondly, how are the people in the images and stories represented, whether they are victims or survivors or by-standers? And thirdly, does this kind of representation make media audiences into by-standers when they are watching or seeing an act of violence but are essentially not interfering or might not have any means to act?

With reference to media in PNG, and more broadly Melanesia, such debates must also be seen within the historical and cultural contexts because media representations and ethics operate at the individual, group and national levels. Peace journalism advocates have criticised the way that mainstream minority-world journalism often reports only on the subject and the individuals involved, instead of also recognising the relational and structural issues bound up in conflicts (Shaw, 2011). Indeed, the human rights discourse has promoted an individual rights-based approach that has been pointed out as limiting in understanding the relational and customary responsibilities that need to be contextualised within PNG (Evenhuis, 2015; Lawrence, 2015). Considering these aspects could promote a more sustained practice of development journalism that seeks to identify solutions and provide further education to readers and audiences.

Approach of the project

At the beginning of the project, a media content analysis was undertaken to understand the representation of sorcery accusation related violence in the PNG media during 2016. The content analysis was guided by searching for the words ‘sorcery’ and/or ‘witchcraft’ in news media. While this involved looking broadly and widely at both national and international media, a systematic review of newspaper articles from 2016 in the two main national PNG daily newspapers, *The National* and the *Post-Courier*, was undertaken. This content analysis served as foundational research for the project to better understand the narratives and those quoted by the national media.

As a second step, the project worked closely with civil society groups and government agencies. Key to the approach was working with four community-based partners in four different provinces in PNG via creative workshops. The partner organisations were Kup Women for Peace (Simbu), Kafe Urban Settlers Women's Association (EHP), Nazareth Centre for Rehabilitation (Bougainville) and Kedu Seif Haus (Milne Bay). The creative storytelling workshops were focused on better understanding community narratives. The creative workshops and engagement followed a relational approach and used creative means, in our case photography and digital storytelling, to better understand the causes, impacts and solutions to sorcery accusations and violence. As Lambert and Hessler (2018) write, storytelling provides multiple benefits, including providing:

> a learning modality through memory, as a way to address our connection to the changing world around us, as a form of reflection against the flood of ubiquitous access to infinite information, as the vehicle to encourage our social agency, and, finally, as a process by which we best make sense of our lives and our identity. (Lambert & Hessler, p. 13)

That way, according to Lambert and Hessler (2018), we do not remove the 'messiness of living', but rather engage in it, embracing ambiguities, contradictions and lived experiences. We hoped to gain a better understanding of the complexities and nuances of sorcery accusations, while, at the same time, documenting the solutions that HRDs had developed at the community level. This method was both a research process for us to better understand various cases of sorcery accusation and a reflection process for participants (see Spurgeon & Burgess, 2015). The process of storytelling gives voice to the experiences of HRDs and facilitates the sharing of these narratives, so that they may have an impact on other people. An important consideration of the process of sharing stories is that of consent, which we discuss further in this article.

The workshops produced 41 digital stories, each between 3 and 6 minutes in duration. These digital stories served as a basis for a thematic analysis. This then led to a continuation of participatory action research and, as stories were shared (Kemmis, McTaggart, & Nixon, 2014), iteratively providing evidence and feedback for the development of communication strategies to address sorcery accusation related violence. More than 100 screenings of digital stories were documented and audience feedback collected, and our work with media and journalists was monitored to document how the approach provided alternative ways to represent sorcery accusations and violence.

Print media content analysis

In our newspaper analysis in 2016, we found 118 articles that included the word sorcery or witchcraft (63 articles in the *Post-Courier* and 55 articles in *The National*). We coded these articles into three categories: incidents, comments/

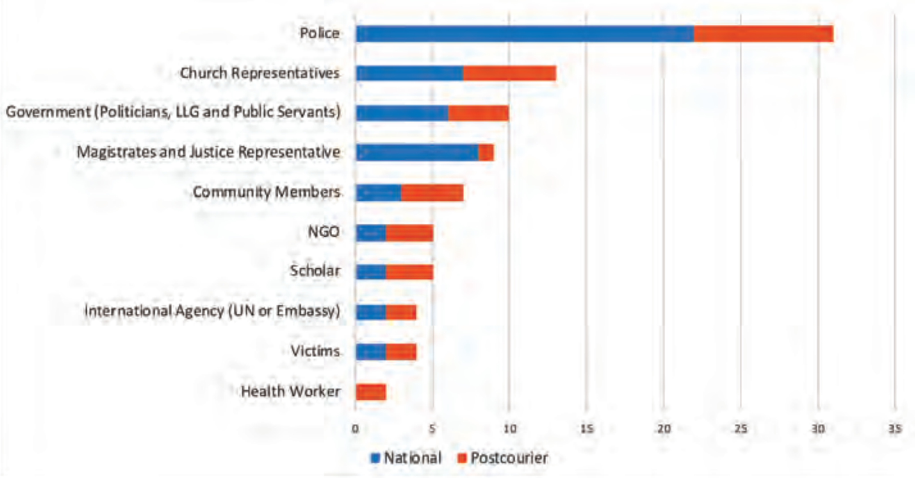
analysis and mentions. It is not our intention here to compare the two national newspapers in their reporting, but to share common findings about the reporting on sorcery accusation related violence in PNG print media.

From this analysis, we found that while details were made available about the victims' ordeals, there was limited investigation about the cause of accusations or the mechanisms inside the communities that allowed it to happen. The topic of fear and threat underlying the communities' actions and reactions was mentioned occasionally, but not analysed in depth. No deeper understandings of incidents were provided, nor follow up of the cases and initiatives. In our sample, reporting on sorcery related violence appeared to occur haphazardly, following access to press releases rather than proactive investigation.

Press releases by the government regarding legal court decisions appeared regularly in the two newspapers. Names of senior officials from the Department for Community Development came up repeatedly in relation to sorcery and gender-based violence (GBV), whether in direct or indirect connection with the issue. However, more thorough—educational—explanations about the actual content of the laws and their implications were encountered on only one occasion.

The main source of information concerning sorcery related violence appears to be the police, whether from general monthly reports or ad hoc ones (Figure 1). A number of senior policemen—who had developed media profiles by being vocal and, in one case at least, by being practically committed to the 'fight against sorcery related violence'—were quoted as calling for support and cooperation from the government and communities, sometimes despite threats to their personal safety.

Figure 1: Frequency of sources quoted in PNG articles, 2016



Note: Quantitative representation of sources used in print media from the two national newspapers, *The National* and *Post-Courier* in 2016

Victims' voices were reported less frequently in the sample articles. When their voices were reported, the journalists reported the relevant details in a context that usually contained no police quotes; for instance, the link between victims' ordeals and perpetrators' substance abuse. On the level of practical initiatives, churches' voices were reported, and churches expressed their commitment to addressing the issue. Grassroots initiatives were hardly reported. On the rare occasions that grassroots voices were reported, there was little follow up or documentation of the work happening inside communities to reduce violence.

The choice of language used in the articles highlighted several challenges. The victims and the perpetrators were often described by words that illustrated their proximity inside the community—whether using kinship or community relationship terms. This choice of words thereby emphasised further the predicament and isolation of the victims, particularly within the context of tight communities in remote areas. Repeated allusions to 'jungle justice' (Mondo, 2016), paired with senior policemen and church officials' calls for cooperation, underline the general perception from the articles that the government's efforts on a legal level are not sufficiently supported on a practical level. This added to documenting the perpetrators' feeling of impunity and the victims' and their defenders' feelings of helplessness.

In our 2016 analysis, we also found confusion around the 2013 repeal of the *Sorcery Act 1971*, legislation that provided the possibility of justifying violence by referencing sorcery. There was a lack of critical engagement in relation to leaders wanting to see the law re-instated because 'sorcery was a criminal offence' (Tarawa, 2016). There was confusion about the distinction between the belief system and the violence that occurs with accusations, as well as re-enforcing the idea that there are no laws in place to deal with violence associated with sorcery accusations (Sirias, 2016). There was a clear need for clarifications and clear messages about the existing laws by which acts of harm and violence are considered offences.

Engagement in creative workshops and key narratives emerging

In the workshop, we were interested in the personal experiences of HRDs and how they worked within their community networks to address issues of violence and sorcery accusations. Crucial to their stories were their own personal experiences of violence and their motivations to create change. The HRDs explored the causes of accusations, hinting at cultural, social and structural impediments that triggered violence.

There were several triggers for the violence mentioned. For example, in the case of Seho Dubai from Eastern Highlands Province, sorcery related violence was triggered when a community tried to come to terms with the death of a family member:

> I was in my village when a close member of my family died … [M]y family said that I took my brother’s life using sorcery: ‘You have to leave this place before Sunday, when we bury him on Sunday.’ When I heard this, I knew something bad would happen … I left the village with my two brothers and three children. I left my wife and other children behind. Later, we heard that our houses were burnt down and our properties were destroyed.

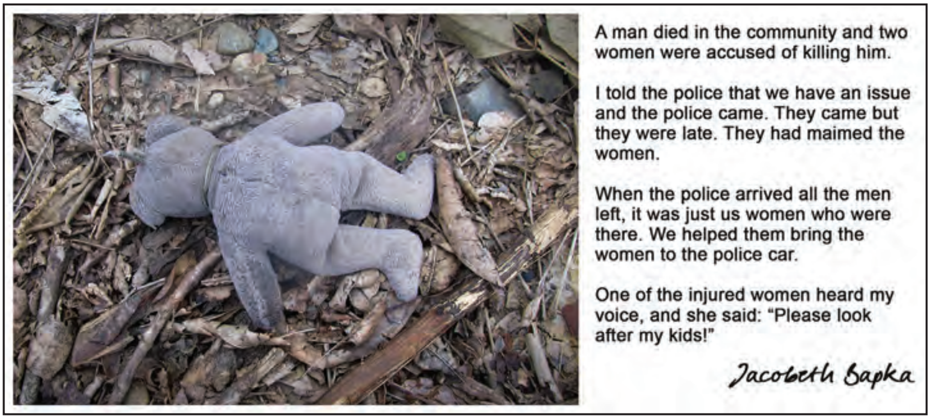
The accusations towards Seho’s family were partly motivated by community members wanting to obtain his land. Other issues explored in the stories included jealousy towards those who were doing well in society. At the same time, the stories highlighted the vulnerabilities of those who were accused. In Leah’s case in the Simbu Province, the label of ‘*sanguma*’ (common word for sorcerer or witch in PNG) was traumatising:

> I was worried that all the students [had] heard about me being named a sorcerer. And this name is not a good name. Especially in the highlands, this name gives a bad image to someone. I thought to myself that, if I live, everyone [had already] heard about it, so later they will still call me that name. I thought of killing myself.

Leah’s story weaves in the complex relationships within her family and her lack of social security within her own family. In the highlands region, women in particular are vulnerable. Their vulnerability is reflected in those who are accused but also those who try to stand up to perpetrators. As Jacobeth Bapka shares:

> At about 7pm the [accused] women escaped and came to my house to seek help. The mob came and surrounded my house … I stood by the door with my seven-months-old baby … I plead[ed] for them to go back and leave the women alone and talk to [them] in the morning.

JACOBETH BAPKA



A man died in the community and two women were accused of killing him.

I told the police that we have an issue and the police came. They came but they were late. They had maimed the women.

When the police arrived all the men left, it was just us women who were there. We helped them bring the women to the police car.

One of the injured women heard my voice, and she said: “Please look after my kids!”

Jacobeth Bapka

Figure 2: Excerpt from Jacobeth Bapka’s story expressing the impact of sorcery accusations on children.

The mob of young men came and took the women, so Jacobeth was powerless to help the women. The accused women had children but no other family to support them and stand up for them.

The stories by HRDs demonstrated the impact of the violence within their communities and the trauma that many of them and others had experienced. Storytelling became a process that allowed them to share and reflect on their experiences and develop a collective strength. The HRDs harnessed these lived experiences and curated them into a repertoire of narratives that could be shared with communities for reflections. Supported by photographs that used metaphors, the stories trigger emotional responses to the impacts of violence, instead of showcasing horrific incidents. This is a kind of creativity that Romano (2010) refers to in her discussion of a deliberative journalism, one that 'engage[s] all verbal and nonverbal elements that can stimulate a sense of connection and understanding among audiences' (p. 234). The storytelling and photographs provided a way for us to explore these various layers of emotions and connections and discuss them collectively.

The HRDs are a network of partners across the highlands of PNG who have developed solutions to addressing various forms of human rights abuses and violence in communities. They are actively cultivating relationships with key institutions to garner support from them. In Goroka, for example, Eriko Fufurefa, Director of Kafe Urban Settlers' Women's Association, works with Judy Girua, Police Sargeant at the Family Sexual Violence Unit, to address violence against women. Judy's witnessing of an event motivated her decision to do more:

> In 2012, while working, I received a report from Banana Block that two women were accused of sorcery and tortured. I wanted to see for myself what had happened. The two women were seriously injured … From there, I came up with the idea to create an office to assist women and children who are being accused of sorcery. I partnered with Kafe Women's Association. We came together with ideas on how to work best, so we work in partnership and created a strong network.

There are state and local interventions that the HRDs draw on to address the extent of violence in their communities. A key strategy that HRDs use is stories of transformation with strong personal motivation for change. Umba Peter's story is one such example:

> I have been involved in sorcery accusations, as a perpetrator. One day, they accused my auntie of killing her own brother using sorcery. My mother and I went to check on her—they had tied her hands and legs with barbed wire. When my auntie saw me, she called out my name: 'Umba!'. I turned around and we saw each other, our eyes met. I felt so sorry, I lost all my strength, my heart melted. That was a turning point for me.

Umba further shared how he became an advocate speaking out against sorcery accusations. The collection of digital stories show courageous individuals motivated to make communities safer. A key component of their own experiences is their feeling of empathy, which audiences experience when hearing the HRDs' stories (Manney, 2008). The HRDs' advocacy networks provided a platform to amplify their existing efforts, instead of focusing on 'voiceless' victims. The HRDs were already established as change agents, and they wanted to engage with the media to strengthen their advocacy work.

Bringing the voices of HRDs into the media

Once the stories were produced, we collectively created *Yumi Sanap Strong* as a combined initiative among the participating organisations. Launch events to showcase the digital stories were held in the different provinces, and HRDs themselves have been using the digital stories for their advocacy in communities and with stakeholders. In addition, the digital stories were distributed via social media and a website was created.[1] We facilitated sessions in which we brought HRDs and journalists together.

From the community screenings, feedback demonstrated how audiences were affected by the viewing of the stories. They felt angry, worried and sorry for innocent people who had been accused. The screenings generated points of reflection for individuals identifying with the stories of the HRDs:

> It makes me feel ashamed of the violence that I have caused over the years. I am very regretful when I see all these pictures. The people I caused harm to, have not come back to tell me such [a] thing and the ordeal they have gone through, but they have gone through the same situation. (Male, 45)

Through facilitated screenings by HRDs themselves, this provided opportunities to discuss possible actions and opportunities for change:

> Yes, before I support[ed] using the word '*sanguma*', but [after] seeing children impacted, I don't know now. I have children and I think children have a long life ahead of them and we should protect them. Their lives are important, and they are the future of our community. (Male, 52)[2]

> Yes, I will try to help and educate people in my community to understand and I will explain things, so people can understand. (Female, 34)[3]

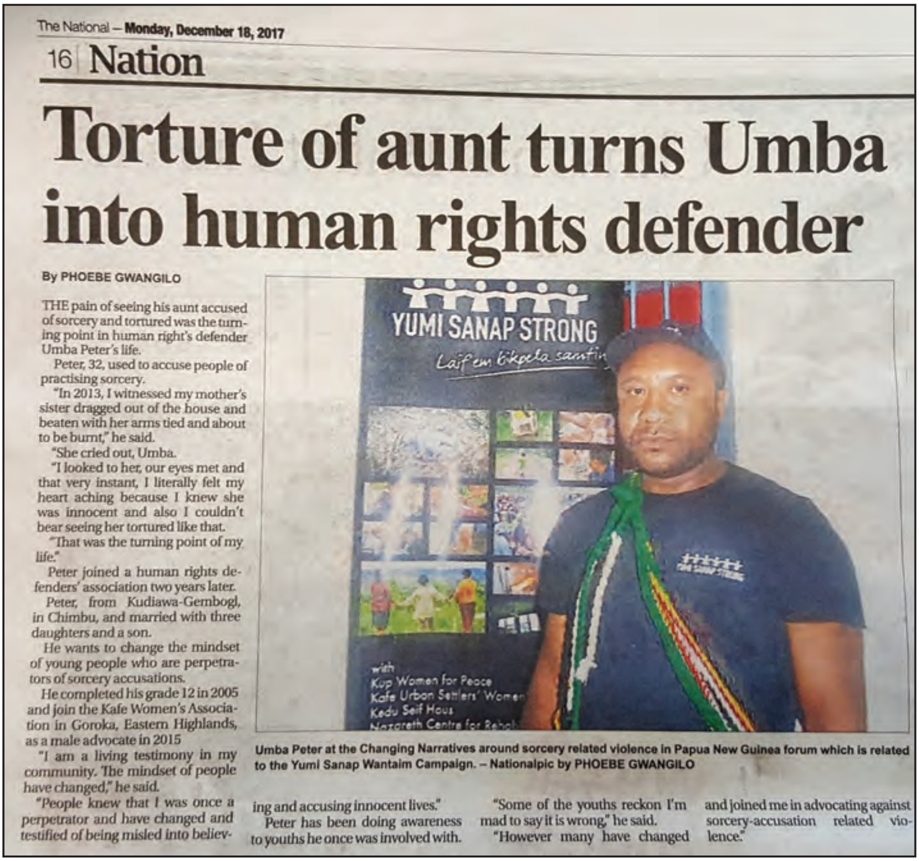
At the same time, the HRDs needed to manage challenging discussions at the screenings and manage the risk and potential existing conflicts, with survivors of violence and perpetrators among the audience. The HRDs' digital stories triggered reflections and dialogue that unpacked and reflected on what was happening in people's communities and created empathy among audiences.

Audiences related to the stories because they focused on the impact of storytelling as a shared human and lived experience.

While the value of community media and storytelling has been highlighted in various accounts (Kidd, Rodríguez, & Stein, 2009), we see the potential for community media to link with news media and support journalists with their reporting. For this reason, we invited journalists to attend events and join discussions with HRDs about the representation of sorcery accusation related violence, with the aim of highlighting solutions and the active work that has been happening to address this violence.

One key theme that emerged from bringing both groups together was a shared appreciation for each other's work and what they could learn from each other:

> As a human rights defender, I [had] the opportunity to meet and connect with the media personnel and share my challenges. And [now I] also know the media team[‘s] challenges and [can help to] find solutions for the challenges. (HRD workshop participant, Port Moresby, 2018)


YUMI SANAP STRONG
Laif em bikpela samtin
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Kup Women for Peace
Kafe Urban Settlers' Women
Kedu Seif Hous
Nazareth Centre for Rehab

The National – **Monday, December 18, 2017**

16 **Nation**

Torture of aunt turns Umba into human rights defender

By PHOEBE GWANGILO

THE pain of seeing his aunt accused of sorcery and tortured was the turning point in human right's defender Umba Peter's life.

Peter, 32, used to accuse people of practising sorcery.

"In 2013, I witnessed my mother's sister dragged out of the house and beaten with her arms tied and about to be burnt," he said.

"She cried out, Umba.

"I looked to her, our eyes met and that very instant, I literally felt my heart aching because I knew she was innocent and also I couldn't bear seeing her tortured like that.

"That was the turning point of my life."

Peter joined a human rights defenders' association two years later.

Peter, from Kudiawa-Gembogl, in Chimbu, and married with three daughters and a son.

He wants to change the mindset of young people who are perpetrators of sorcery accusations.

He completed his grade 12 in 2005 and join the Kafe Women's Association in Goroka, Eastern Highlands, as a male advocate in 2015

"I am a living testimony in my community. The mindset of people have changed," he said.

"People knew that I was once a perpetrator and have changed and testified of being misled into believing and accusing innocent lives."

Peter has been doing awareness to youths he once was involved with.

"Some of the youths reckon I'm mad to say it is wrong," he said.

"However many have changed and joined me in advocating against sorcery-accusation related violence."

Umba Peter at the Changing Narratives around sorcery related violence in Papua New Guinea forum which is related to the Yumi Sanap Wantaim Campaign. – Nationalpic by PHOEBE GWANGILO

THE NATIONAL

Figure 3: Umba Peter's story shared in the *National* newspaper (Gwangilo, 2017).

> Very timely. The journos need to know how to report on the issue of SARV well. (Journalist, workshop participant, Port Moresby, 2018)

A key challenge in reporting on GBV and sorcery related violence for journalists is their limited understanding about the issues; therefore, at the workshop, we provided an introductory insight to GBV and sorcery related violence. One of the objectives of the workshop was also to remind journalists of the role they played in terms of representation. One journalist commented on the importance of this:

> The media needs to report well, so the nation can understand the full extent of the issue. And also, so the government can do policy changes to the issue before us … [and] more stakeholders come on board to address this issue, like the media. (Journalist, workshop participant, Port Moresby, 2018)

Based on the workshop evaluations, both HRDs and the media personnel would like more collaborative, interactive workshops such as the one we held. There was a general consensus that collaboration and information sharing was a key component to contribute to addressing sorcery accusations and GBV. But, to do this, one participant expressed the need to

> … participate in combined workshops or trainings with government leaders, and organisations, so that they could understand the struggles and obstacles faced by human rights defenders and have access to stories and information surrounding SARV. (HRD workshop participant, Port Moresby, 2018)

After the workshops, journalists were able to write about key characters of these stories. For example, Umba Peter was featured in *The National* newspaper with the headline 'Torture of aunt turns Umba into human rights defender' (Gwangilo, 2017). Through connecting with HRDs, the journalists had opportunities to tap into different kinds of stories, many of which demonstrated change and possible solutions, and encouraged individuals and communities to contribute to safer communities. These empathetic and solution-oriented newspaper stories in PNG also informed international media coverage of the issue, with agencies such as the BBC and *The Guardian* exploring the content of the stories, albeit maintaining a focus on the female victim and the scarred female body (Lyons, 2020; Webb, 2018).

Discussion

The ethics of representation

The use of graphic images in reporting sorcery accusation related violence in PNG has raised questions about the ethics of representation and concerns about the re-victimisation of those who have been represented (see Gregory, 2010, p. 11). To report on those who are already victims of violence in a form that does not give them voice and agency is to further stigmatise them because ‘people lack control over the materials from which they must build their account of themselves, then this represents a deep denial of voice, a type of oppression’ (Couldry, 2015, p. 46). As such, journalists must consider this in their representation of violence and reflect on the benefit of victims’ stories, which, most times, provide little control and agency to the victim to represent themselves.

When discussing the ethics of representation, one of our key foundational concepts when working with HRDs has been an informed and multi-layered consent process. As Gregory (2010) writes, one must consider principles of disclosure, voluntariness, comprehension and competence (p. 12). This means that individuals whose stories are told participate on their own terms, they understand how the material will be used and they have a level of agency to make that decision. Further, we promoted a strategy that develops shared distribution approaches in which those whose stories are told are involved in distributing and sharing them.

The lack of in-depth reporting on the multiple layers of sorcery accusations and possible solutions to the issue, as demonstrated in our media content analysis, has limited the media’s contribution to sustained positive change on the issue. Our work with storytelling and visual images uses a creative approach to consider ways of connecting audiences, so that they understand the impacts of the actions, instead of making audience members into spectators or by-standers of the action. As we have demonstrated, this encourages audiences to reflect and feel empathy for others (Manney, 2008). Finally, by having HRDs take their own photos, we support the idea of contextualised understanding, instead of the focus on victims (or scars on the female body). Community media play a key role in providing a safe space to reflect on impacts and possible solutions.

Role of community and participatory media in addressing sorcery accusations

Community and participatory media can play a key role in addressing social issues in community, and in providing a better understanding to inform news media or commercial media. Core to the idea of community media is the concept of voice: ‘Voice as a social process involves, from the start, both speaking and listening: the building of alternative media is a social application of that principle’ (Couldry, 2015, p. 46). Within such dialogue and exchange of narratives, we are able to better understand contexts and relationships and empathise with others. This process is important to making sense of sorcery accusation related violence within each of the varied contexts that it occurs.

In particular, when we talk about reporting on acts of violence, community media provides a space for lived experiences and the ordinary ways of life and how people seek to contribute to peacebuilding (Rodriguez, 2011). In addition to journalists being more informed and having access to stories about community solutions to address sorcery accusation related violence, the process of supporting storytelling generated a new "communicative competence" (Couldry, 2015) among the four participating human rights-based organisations and created a better understanding of how they could engage with media personnel in the future. As a collective, then, the HRDs built 'processes for social, civic and political change, which increase the likelihood of processes of voice being sustained and taken into account in wider public culture and decision-making' (Couldry, 2015, p. 51).

The strengthening of organisational capacities and partnerships with journalists and media outlets are an important component in a news media landscape that is under-resourced and dominated by top-down news stories. The topic of sorcery accusation related violence provides further challenges to journalists in terms of the risk they might face when reporting certain stories. The HRDs' understanding of the issue is important in mitigating risk and undertaking ethical reporting.

Pacific community media and human rights reporting

In the case of reporting on sorcery accusations in PNG, we demonstrate what Robie (2013) would call a 'conventional or Western journalism', as opposed to the development journalism that is suggested for the South Pacific media to best contribute to social development. Development journalism, according to Robie (2013), includes certain characteristics that we have highlighted through the way we have engaged with HRDs in community and participatory media, including considering the causes of events, providing alternative solutions identified by people and community, and promoting understanding, attitude and behaviour change.

Promoting a Western model in journalism risks not taking into account relationality and context in Melanesia and therefore perpetuating a model of interpretation that regards Melanesian communities as not able to deal with their issues or that misinterprets the social issues they are facing. On a larger level, alternative models of journalism, including storytelling projects, are part of decolonial practices to engage in human rights discourses that provide a strength-based approach that builds on cultural context, instead of seeing these contexts as hindrances to the human rights agenda. Our approach has highlighted a myriad of community solutions by HRDs that have previously been absent from media reports, and this process has harnessed the strength of HRDs' support networks.

Discussions about human rights reporting have increasingly debated the mechanisms of participatory processes, including processes that use photography (Gormley & Allan, 2019) and use journalists as agents of change (Sampaio-Dias, 2016). However, it has also been pointed out that the realities of day-to-day journalism and capacities need to be considered when suggesting alternative forms of journalism. Therefore, a model for such journalism might be to encourage partnerships and joint initiatives, such as between HRDs and journalists.

Conclusion

In this article, we have described our approach to supporting media that reflect the complexities and lived experiences of sorcery accusation related violence in PNG. We have asked questions about the representation of violence and re-victimisation of those targeted by the violence. Our approach has provided an alternative way of sharing impactful narratives that build on the strength and bravery of HRDs. We acknowledge that their sharing of stories is not without risk, but our process involved careful considerations of consent. Crucial to the ability of HRDs to expose their stories, however, are the strong support networks they have, which are based on the organisations they work with. Our close collaboration with the community-based organisations was a crucial component for the development and sharing of these stories and lived experiences.

In that process, we have recognised the potential of strengthening organisational capacities to engage with media in a way that reflects their context, relationships and experiences. By supporting local organisations to build up their media capacities, they are in a better position to share their experiences and knowledge with journalists and media outlets, resulting in more contextualised and impactful reporting. This kind of community media, including the telling of stories and the distribution of stories, makes an important contribution to media for social change and reaching communities in PNG. At the same time, this can feed into national and international media representations, promoting more in-depth understandings and solutions to the issue.

Our experiences demonstrate that there are further opportunities to continue bridging communication between journalists and human rights organisations, and providing a platform for people to share their own stories. Not only does this provide content for media outlets, but it also provides spaces for reflection and opportunities for positive change, while acknowledging the relational contexts in the Pacific. Because of this, community media has a key role to play in reporting on and developing solutions to human rights issues in the Pacific.

Notes

1. See www.yumisanapstrong.org
2. Original quote was recorded in Tok Pisin: *Yes, bipo mi save sapotim tok 'sanguma,' tasol bagarap wea ol liklik pikinini kisim, mi no save nau. Mi gat ol liklik pikinini na mi ting olsem ol pikinini igat longpela laif blong ol istap na mipela imas noken bagarapim ol. Laip blong ol important na ol ikarim future blong komuniti raun.* (Male, 52)
3. Original quote was recorded in Tok Pisin: *Yes. Mi bai traim long helpim na educatim ol pipol long peles lo understandim sampla ways na pasin insait lo komuniti na explanim ways bai oli ken understandim.* (Female, 34)

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8. West Papuan control

How red tape, disinformation and bogus online media disrupts legitimate news sources

Abstract: Indonesia is ranked 124th out of 180 countries in the 2019 Global Press Freedom Index. West Papua, comprising the two Melanesian provinces of Papua and West Papua, is a significant factor is this low ranking. While other parts of Indonesia enjoy relatively free media coverage, West Papua remains the most closed region to media access, particularly to foreign media. There are patterns of threats that implicate the safety and security of local journalists in the territory. A clearing house, an intricate red-tape system, was re-introduced in May 2019 to screen foreign journalists going to the region of West Papua. Journalists require a permit to go there. Security forces monitor the journalists during their work in the region. In the past decade, two journalists have been killed, multiple journalists have been assaulted and arrested, and international journalists deported. Most of the cases remain open with no clear investigation process. Online media disrupts the work of legitimate news sources, sharing positioned disinformation to manipulate the public. There is no freedom of expression or freedom of information in West Papua.

Keywords: censorship, democracy, freedom of expression, harassment, human rights, immigration, Indonesia, journalism, media freedom, West Papua

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CIVIL RESISTANCE movements have gained traction organising protests against human rights violations in West Papua and demanding the right to self-determination. Consequently, the Indonesian government has tightened security control over West Papua by maintaining the presence of both military and police force. These state security forces have been deployed to stop rallies or discussions on human rights and/or political issues, and clamp down on the freedom of expression, association and assembly. Human rights violations and extrajudicial killings by the military and police in West Papua rarely make the headlines in the mainstream media.

In February 2006, the Indonesian Defence Minister, Juwono Sudarsono, was quoted over the deportation of five Australian journalists after being arrested in West Papua, saying: 'We believe that Indonesian unity and cohesion would be threatened by an intrusion and a foreign interest' (Five Australian journalists expelled, 2006). In May 2015, President Joko Widodo promised to open up access to West Papua for foreign media. (Setiawan, 2015). However this promise has yet to be fulfilled. There have been many cases since then where access to foreign media has been limited or refused. Further, there are several cases of foreigners visiting West Papua being deported from Indonesia on suspicion of being journalists.

In May 2019, the head of the immigration division in the regional office of the Ministry for Law and Human Rights in Papua Province reaffirmed a 'clearing house' system for any foreign journalists wanting to visit West Papua (Government keeps restrictive policy, 2019). If a permit is granted, the foreign journalist will then be supervised by the security forces during their entire working trip in West Papua. Indonesia is ranked 124th out of 180 countries in the 2019 Global Press Freedom Index. The region of West Papua is a significant factor in this low ranking. While other parts of Indonesia enjoy relatively free media coverage, West Papua remains the most closed region to media access, particularly to foreign media. There are patterns of threats that implicate the safety and security of local journalists in the territory. In the past decade, two journalists have been killed, multiple journalists have been assaulted and arrested, and international journalists deported. Most of the cases remain open with no clear investigation process. Online media disrupts the work of legitimate news sources, sharing positioned disinformation to manipulate the public. There is no freedom of expression or freedom of information in West Papua.

Key media and organisations have attempted to address this imbalance. TAPOL is a London-based human rights organisation established in 1973 that campaigns for human rights, peace and democracy in Indonesia. TAPOL has been a consistent voice campaigning for freedom of expression and freedom of assembly in the region of West Papua. *Jubi* was founded in 2001, a registered independent West Papua-based media producing printed daily news and an online portal. *Jubi* provides training for West Papuan journalists and actively advocates for freedom of expression and freedom of the press in West Papua.

West Papuans have been experiencing serious human rights violations, including torture, imprisonment and extrajudicial killings by the Indonesian security forces, both police and military (Sara, Worthington & Mambor, 2020). The West Papuans have long expressed their desire for self-determination since Indonesia took over the territory from Dutch colonial rule in 1963. It was officially incorporated into the Indonesian state in 1969 after an 'Act of Free Choice', a controversial plebiscite organised by the United Nations while only permitting the participation of 1,025 men and women (Act of Free Choice, n.d.). Simmering low level conflict between various pro-independence groups and the Indonesian army has been ongoing since then, with the continued existence of local armed groups in West Papua.

The following sections of this article discuss evidence gathered from the direct experience of *Jubi* reporters as well information that TAPOL has received directly on the ground. For the purpose of this submission, we have cross-referenced with media monitoring organisations such as Reporters Sans Frontières (RSF) and Human Rights Watch (HRW).

Evidence gathered by *Jubi* and TAPOL

Journalists in West Papua have faced serious threats in the last 10 years, and continue to do so, not only in getting access to information but also in terms of their own personal safety. These are some of the reported cases that reflect this situation:

Cases related to local journalists:

Mysterious circumstances surround the death in 2010 of journalist **Ardiansyah Matrais**, a correspondent for *Jubi* and Merauke TV. He was reported missing on 28 July 2010. On July 30, his body was retrieved from the Gudang Arang Merauke river. According to the autopsy report by the police, Ardiansyah was still alive when he was thrown into the river. The Papuan Independent Journalists Alliance (AJI Papua) suspected that Ardiansyah was tortured and killed by unknown assailants and demanded that the police in Merauke conduct a thorough investigation and bring the perpetrators to justice. However, there was never any significant effort made to investigate Ardiansyah's case.

AJI suspected that Ardiansyah's killing had to do with a series of threats against journalists in the days leading up to local elections in Merauke (AJI Jayapura, 2010; Journalist's death, 2010). In August 2010, AJI conducted its own investigation. The result showed that there were indications of torture on the victim's body. They discovered traces of strangulation on his neck, his ears had been bleeding and there were bruises over his body, indicating that he had been beaten using blunt objects. His case remains unresolved.

The *Jakarta Globe* daily and Vivanews.com correspondent **Banjir Ambarita** was stabbed while driving a motorbike in 2011. It is suspected that the motive was related to an article he had written on the sexual abuse of a detainee by three police officers (Papua-based reporter seriously injured, 2011). No further investigation was taken over his case.

Leiron Kogoya was a journalist for *Pasific Post* and *Papua Pos Nabire*. He died in 2012 when his plane was shot down by gunmen at an airport in Papua province. Although he was not specifically the target, his death served as a reminder of the dangers that journalists face in West Papua (Journalist killed as gunmen attack plane, 2012).

Abeth You is a journalist writing for *Jubi*. He was attacked by police in October 2015. At the time he was covering a demonstration on human rights violations in West Papua (RSF tells Indonesia to stop flouting journalists' rights, 2016).

Ardi Bayage reports for Suarapapua.com. He was arrested in 2016 when covering a protest during World Press Freedom Day. Bayage showed his press card to the police, but his credentials were rejected and he was accused of lying. He was held for several hours in police headquarters in Jayapura Papua (RSF tells Indonesia to stop flouting journalists' rights, 2016).

In May 2018, the *Jubi j*ournalist **Abeth You** filmed the police beating his colleague Mando Mote on his mobile phone. He was choked by a member of the police, his mobile phone was taken away and his press card was destroyed. The two journalists were attending a public debate involving local candidates in Deiyai, prior to the local election in 2018 (Polda Papua haras pecat, 2018).

Cases related to foreign journalists:

In September 2006, five Australian Channel Seven journalists were detained and put under surveillance in Jayapura, Papua province. **Naomi Robson, Rohan Travis, Peter Andrew, Paul Richard** and **David John** were detained on charges of entering the province with tourist visas. They were forced onto a flight back to Jakarta on September 14 from where they were expelled from the country. Papua police chief Major-General Tommy Jacobus told AP, 'They admitted being journalists trying to report on the situation here. It is best that we deport them'. Indonesian Defence Minister Juwono Sudarsono said in February 2006: 'We believe that Indonesian unity and cohesion would be threatened by an intrusion and a foreign interest' (Five Australian journalists expelled, 2006).

Two French journalists, **Thomas Dandois** and **Valentine Bourrat**, were detained in Papua province in August 2014. They were producing coverage about West Papua for the Franco-German TV channel Arte. They were charged with violation of immigration regulations and promoting instability. Their local guide and interpreter was also arrested and interrogated by the police for 36 hours (Two French journalists held for past five days, 2014).

On 8 January 2016, the Indonesian Embassy in Bangkok informed journalist Cyril Payen that his application for a visa to visit Indonesia and carry out reporting in Papua province had been denied. The Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs officials later informed the French Embassy in Jakarta that the denial of the visa to journalist Cyril Payen was because his previous reporting on the pro-independence movement was 'biased and unbalanced' (Kine, 2016).

French journalist **Basil Longchamp** and his camera crew were granted permission to work on a documentary in Indonesia covering West Papua in 2017. On arrival in Indonesia, they were expelled and banned from returning. The authorities accused them of showing ‘lack of coordination with relevant institutions’ (RSF asks Indonesia’s president to let journalists work, 2017).

The Australian BBC journalist **Rebecca Henschke** and her crew received an official permit to cover a military aid operation in West Papua in 2018. However, when the authorities found out about her Twitter post showing troops providing only non-nutritious foodstuffs, the journalist and her crew were expelled on the grounds that her post ‘hurt the feelings’ of the soldiers (RSF’s [sic] decries journalist’s expulsion, 2018).

Doctoral candidate in Indonesian studies at Macquarie University in Australia **Belinda Lopez** was detained in Denpasar after arriving from Bali for her honeymoon in 2018. She was also planning to visit West Papua to attend a festival. Immigration officials told her that her name was blacklisted without offering any other justification or explanation about why. Belinda Lopez formerly worked as a reporter in Jakarta. She had already been deported from West Papua once in 2016 on suspicion of being a journalist (Australian student barred, 2018; Kine, 2018).

The above examples exemplify acute risks and barriers for journalists working in West Papua. Additionally, foreigners who enter West Papua face the potential threat of being accused of carrying out journalism activities in West Papua. In 2018, **Jakub Skrzypski**, a Polish citizen was arrested initially on suspicion of carrying out journalistic activities (Indonesia jails Polish tourist, 2019). He is currently in jail in West Papua convicted of treason due to attending a meeting with National Committee for West Papua (KNPB) members. Also in December 2018, an Australian citizen, **Ronda Amy Harman** was arrested in Surabaya. She was suspected of being a journalist, trying to cover a protest during which there were mass arrests of students (Tehusijarana & Boediwardhana, 2018).

The spread of bogus online media platforms

West Papua also suffers from the existence of bogus online media. According to an investigation by *Jubi* and a Jakarta-based news website, *Tirto,* in 2018 there were around 18 online media platforms publishing hoaxes and propaganda regarding West Papua. This included quoting fictitious sources and conveying strong bias in favour of the police and the military in West Papua (Media siluman di Papua, 2018). Their work severely disrupts the work of genuine media organisations which also have an online presence. They make a major contribution to the spread of disinformation to the public regarding the issues in West Papua. They also affect the work of civil society organisations that have limited access to the region, and that rely on the online news reporting from West Papua.

This disinformation disrupted humanitarian work. Presently civil society has been facing difficulties in verifying information and human rights violations allegations taking place in Nduga regency, in the Central Highlands of West Papua. Indonesian police and military have been conducting a joint operation against the West Papua Liberation Army since December 2018. Independent sources have been very difficult to reach and the military has been the sole source of information. Any accounts differing from the military are declared as a hoax, whereas not a single press worker can access Nduga due to the lockdown. A local Papuan senator was reported to police when he stated that there were civilian deaths resulting from the operation. This makes balanced and accurate reporting from the ground impossible. It is also undermining the image of a free and fair media in Indonesia—one of the largest democratic nations in the world. There is very limited accountability on the part of the authorities towards the ongoing human rights crisis in West Papua.

International community's responses

The Universal Periodic Review is an opportunity for a member state of the United Nations to receive inputs and recommendations from other member states with regard to their human rights record. In relation to freedom of the press, in the past three cycles of Review (2008, 2012 and 2017) Indonesia has received seven recommendations from five member states. In particular, New Zealand (2017) and France (2012, 2017) called for Indonesia to respect press freedom and open access to national and international journalists to West Papua.

This development combined with the above examples show a critical pattern for media freedom in West Papua. Serious actions are necessary, particularly when viewed through a human rights lens. Indonesia is a signatory to the UN International Convention on Civil and Political Rights, which guarantees, among others, rights to freedom of expression, association, and peaceful assembly. Indonesia, as a democratic nation, needs to improve media freedom in all of the regions including West Papua. International relations can help improve Indonesian government policies particularly on this issue. For more than 70 years now, the United Kingdom has been developing strong relations with Indonesia. Therefore we recommend the following actions for the United Kingdom government to take in order to improve media freedom in Indonesia, particularly in West Papua.

Recommendations for action

Britain has taken a prominent position in promoting global media freedom as is evident from this inquiry. We therefore call on the United Kingdom to ensure freedom of the press is upheld universally, including in West Papua.

Indonesia is currently holding the rotating presidency of the UN Security Council, of which the United Kingdom is a permanent member. We call on the United Kingdom to remind Indonesia to maintain its credibility by providing access to the national and international media so that they can provide unrestricted coverage in West Papua.

The effort to address the proliferation of fake news and so-called post-truth politics requires open and equal access to verified information. The United Kingdom should press Indonesia to protect journalists working in West Papua and ensure that they are free from any harassment by security forces.

We also call on the United Kingdom to request that Indonesia brings to justice those responsible for attacks on, and killings of, journalists in West Papua.

Support local initiatives through increased development aid funding that will strengthen capacities of local organisations, media outlets, and journalists in West Papua, while enabling greater transparency and credible documentation of the ongoing human rights crisis in West Papua.

Conclusion

The summary of the human rights abuses of journalists in West Papua presented in this article is evidence press freedom is a critical issue which needs to be addressed for the Indonesian government to be held accountable. Key violations have in the past occurred under the occupying Indonesian government in Timor-Leste. The deaths of the Balibo Five journalists raised international awareness of the plight of the East Timorese. The recommendations are a start to build global support to leverage change for the West Papuans. Importantly, these need to be actioned not only by the United Kingdom but also Australia.

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This article is drawn from a joint submission by the Indonesian human rights advocacy and research group TAPOL and the Tabloid Jubi newspaper of Jayapura, West Papua, in June 2019 to the inquiry by the Commons Select Committee into the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and Global Media Freedom in an effort to combat disinformation. Pelagio da Costa Sarmento is a researcher for the London-based Indonesian human rights watchdog TAPOL. Victor Mambor is editor of the West Papuan news website Tabloid Jubi and a Jayapura correspondent of The Jakarta Post.
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THE BLACK ISLANDS

9. Mobile phone registration in Papua New Guinea

Will the benefits outweigh the drawbacks?

Commentary: The government of Papua New Guinea (PNG) has introduced a requirement for mobile phone registration. This commentary is a comprehensive analysis of the registration regulation, the process and key challenges. The article is based on close observation of developments over several years, including attendance at court cases on the issue. The commentary includes a description of the regulation, definitions of relevant terminology, a timeline of events, reflections on personal experiences, comparison to other countries, and discussion of related issues. In weighing costs against benefits, the author aims to determine the value of such a regulation. A key concern is the risk of poor and disadvantaged people being excluded from mobile phone ownership. While many countries in Africa and elsewhere have introduced similar requirements for registration with the stated objective of improving security, there is little evidence available that this measure does in fact reduce crime. Additionally, in Papua New Guinea, most people do not have any form of written identification documentation, which makes the process of mobile phone registration challenging.

Keywords: cell phones, communication, Melanesia, mobile phones, Pacific studies, Papua New Guinea, registration, security, SIM, technology, transparency

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Introduction

MOBILE phone registration is legally required in Papua New Guinea (PNG), under the *SIM Card Registration Regulation 2016*.[1] National Gazette No. G228 was signed by the Governor-General in April 2016. All mobile phone SIM cards must be registered with a service provider. A SIM is a Subscriber Identity Module linked to a user's phone number and usually looks like a small computer chip.

If consumers do not register in time, either their SIM card will be deactivated or the mobile network operator will receive a fine from the regulator (National Information and Communications Technology Authority of Papua New Guinea, or NICTA) for continuing to operate unregistered SIM cards. Registration involves a user providing to the mobile phone company their name, proof of identity and other details. In Papua New Guinea, mobile phone users need to register in person and have their photograph taken.

Proof of identity issues are a major concern, as the majority of people in PNG live in rural areas and do not have written identification such as a drivers' licence or passport. To address this challenge, the regulation allows for use of a letter from a reputable person such as a priest as a means of identification. The global peak body for mobile phone companies has suggested that the 'effectiveness of SIM registration solutions also depends on the availability and pervasiveness of national identity schemes' (GSMA, 2016, p. 4). In PNG, a scheme known as the National Identification (NID) project has been slow to become established and has only reached a fraction of the country's population.

There are 2.8 million active mobile phone SIM cards in use in PNG (Highet et al., 2019, p. 24; Watson & Park, 2019), operated by 2.5 million unique users (Highet et al., 2019, p. 18). The difference between these figures is because some people use more than one mobile phone number. For example, I have three SIM cards in PNG: a bmobile number, a work Digicel and a personal Digicel. The bulk of the mobile phones in use in PNG are with Digicel, while the recently merged bmobile/Telikom has a small proportion (Highet et al., 2019, p. 19).

Timeline

The SIM card registration deadline in PNG was initially 23 January 2018. Digicel ran promotions stating that the deadline was 31 December 2017. During December, there were large crowds of people trying to register their SIM cards at stores and makeshift registration stands.

On 23 January 2018, Sam Basil, then Communications Minister, decided to extend the deadline to 30 April 2018. This was because more than one million mobile phones were not yet registered. The PNG Council of Churches then approached NICTA and offered to help with the registration process. The two organisations held coordination workshops in all four regions of the country. Priests in rural areas could only offer residents partial registration though because of the requirement for a photograph to be taken.

On April 30, Madang MP Bryan Kramer, now Papua New Guinea's Police Minister, was granted an interim injunction by the National Court to stop the deactivation of unregistered mobile phones that evening. The stay order constrained NICTA from deactivating SIM cards and allowed 14 days for the parties to prepare for a case to be heard on 15 May 2018.

On May 15, Kramer asked the court for a further extension, as he was not prepared for the hearing. During a two-hour-long recess, the judge considered the arguments of Kramer and the regulator before he decided not to grant the extension. Kramer then withdrew the matter. Lawyers for the regulator agreed, with each party to bear their own costs. This meant that there was no longer an injunction preventing NICTA from enforcing deactivation of unregistered mobile phone SIM cards.

On 17 May 2018, then Communications Minister Sam Basil extended the deadline for registration by more than two months, to July 31 2018. A devastating earthquake that had hit several PNG Highlands provinces in February 2018 was one reason why the minister decided to further extend the registration deadline (Wani, 2018). At that time, Digicel had registered more than 1.4 million subscribers (Pokiton, 2018). That left roughly 1.1 million subscribers on that network who were yet to register. Digicel had been offering incentives to customers to register, such as free airtime (mobile phone credit).

In July 2018, then President of Karkar Local Level Government in Madang Province, late Ben Naing, said that a team from Digicel had visited Karkar Island on two occasions to register mobile phone users. The team visited several key locations on the island. Ward councillors and village leaders actively encouraged people to register their SIM cards. Earlier research in Naing's village Orora shortly after mobile network coverage reached the island found that villagers viewed mobile service as potentially life-saving during medical emergencies such as childbirth complications (Watson, 2010; see also Watson, 2011; Watson, 2013). By July 2018, Naing was confident that many people on the island had been able to register their SIM cards, although he feared that those in more remote parts of Madang Province may not have been able to.

A similar story was described by Emil Yambel, president of the Basamuk Sports Association, in July 2018. Yambel said that a Digicel team travelled to Basamuk, with transportation and accommodation provided by the Ramu nickel mine. He said that the mine's employees and some villagers registered their SIM cards. However, he was concerned that people residing in surrounding mountain villages were unlikely to have registered their SIM cards.

The date 31 July 2018 was the final day for registration and there were queues at outlets, including temporary registration stalls. Madang MP Bryan Kramer filed proceedings in court late in July, attempting to secure a stay order to prevent deactivation of SIM cards, but this was denied. On 1 August 2018, unregistered SIM cards were deactivated in the capital city Port Moresby and other major urban centres. Customers who woke up to find that their mobile phones were not working queued at outlets to register and thus reactivate their SIM cards.

The regulator NICTA decided to divide the country into three kinds of geographies, which would be handled differently. Unregistered SIM cards in urban areas (cities and provincial capitals)[2] were deactivated on August 1 and users in those places had 30 days to re-claim their phone numbers. Mobile phone users in district towns had until 31 December 2018 to register their SIM cards. Consumers in rural areas had until 30 April 2019. The regulator's intention was to allow people in district towns, rural and remote areas more time to register.

A new date of 1 January 2019 was set as the cut-off date for district towns, including Arawa and Buin in the Autonomous Region of Bougainville, Chuave and Kerowagi in Chimbu Province, Bogia and Gusap in Madang Province, Malalaua in Gulf Province, Namatanai in New Ireland Province, and similarly sized district centres in most other provinces.

There was no evidence of deactivations in district towns in January 2019. NICTA intended to meet with the telecommunication companies during that month. However, the meeting and deactivations did not go ahead because the Ombudsman Commission filed a Supreme Court reference questioning the constitutionality of SIM card registration. Throughout 2019, there were nine mentions of the reference in the Supreme Court, with NICTA and the state establishing themselves as respondents.

The reference was heard by a full bench of the Supreme Court on 18 December 2019, from 1.30 pm until 3 pm. The five judges sitting were justices Salika, Kandakasi, Cannings, David and Hartshorn. They did not reach a decision as such. Instead, they declined to give an opinion regarding questions asked of the court by the Ombudsman Commission.

The court proceeding was Supreme Court Reference 1/2019, which was instigated by the Ombudsman Commission as a special reference pursuant to section 19 of the Constitution. In essence, what this meant was that the Ombudsman Commission questioned the constitutionality of mandatory SIM card registration. Deactivation of unregistered SIM cards was on hold for most of 2019 while this matter was awaiting resolution.

The SIM card regulation stemmed from the *NICTA Act,* as the enabling or parent act. The Commission tried to argue that the regulation restricts certain freedoms enshrined in the constitution and therefore such a regulation should have to go through parliament. The Commission's first question of the court did not specify any act or regulation, but instead asked the court to consider whether or not a regulation which impacts upon freedoms should be passed by a majority in Parliament even though it is linked to an act which has been through the same process. Two further questions were submitted by the Commission to the court, but these were not discussed in detail because judges interrupted the Commission's presentation to ask about the express rights being infringed.

Lawyer Charles Kaki from Kawat Lawyers was representing NICTA. He said that the first question was too general and stated that the second and third questions stemmed from the first question. He said that the submission was incompetent and suggested that perhaps the court could direct the Ombudsman Commission to re-frame the questions. Lawyer Tauvasa Tanuvasa Chou-Lee, the Solicitor General of Papua New Guinea, suggested that the court should decline to answer the questions raised by the Ombudsman Commission. The judges conferred among themselves and then announced that they had decided to decline to give an opinion on the three questions put to them. They said that the questions had no immediate relevance to circumstances in PNG.

Following the court case, the new Communications Minister, Timothy Masiu, seemed to be concerned about the ability for mobile phone users in rural areas to register their SIM cards. He then announced that 31 March 2020 was the new deadline. Late in March, Masiu granted a four-month-long extension of the deadline, to 31 July 2020, due to the global Covid-19 pandemic (Gware, 2020; Moi, 2020).

Personal experience

In December 2017, I was reminded about the need to register my SIM cards through promotional messages, such as advertisements on radio and television produced by mobile phone companies and NICTA. I registered a bmobile SIM card easily and quickly at a bmobile retail outlet in Port Moresby. A staff member completed my details using a tablet. Information required included my name, address, sex, and date of birth. I was given the impression that it was not possible to leave any fields blank. I used my PNG driver's licence as proof of identity.

I also needed to register a Digicel SIM card, but there were always queues at Digicel outlets and the registration process itself also seemed lengthier. I had to complete a paper form and then a staff member entered all my details onto a tablet while I waited. My photograph was taken and a confirmation code was sent to my mobile phone. I needed to provide this code in order for the registration process to be complete. I wanted to leave some fields blank, but was told by the staff member that if I did so my registration would not be accepted as valid. There were some questions about Digicel services, such as mobile money, which had been included. Again, I used my PNG drivers' licence as proof of identity. I did not need to register my third SIM card because it was managed by my employer.

For me, the registration process was time-consuming. It raised questions about privacy and data security because personal details such as my date of birth were entered into databases belonging to commercial entities. For an illiterate or semi-literate PNG citizen with no driver's licence or other form of written identification, the process may be challenging and confronting.

Comparisons to other countries

In various countries, SIM card registration has been introduced. Governments often adopt such a policy in order 'to help mitigate security concerns and to address criminal and anti-social behaviour' (GSMA, 2016, p. 2; see also Mamabolo, 2017). In Papua New Guinea, similar motivations for the policy have been expressed (Loop Technology, 2018). A concern though is that 'to date, there has been no empirical evidence that mandatory SIM registration directly leads to a reduction in crime' (GSMA, 2016, p. 2; see also Mamabolo 2017). Indeed, in Mexico, the theft of handsets increased after a similar policy was introduced, likely because 'criminals stole handsets to avoid the risk of being traced by security authorities' (GSMA, 2016, p. 17). Mexico subsequently abandoned their SIM registration policy and later introduced a scheme for registering handsets. Several countries in Latin America have opted for handset registration in order to address handset theft (GSMA, 2016, pp. 22-23).

Papua New Guinea's neighbour Indonesia instigated a similar exercise of SIM card registration. The deadline was 28 February 2018, at which time more than 100 million SIM cards were partially blocked, before a further deadline of 30 April 2018. In that case, registration could be done online, through text messaging, at a call centre, or in person. It was relatively easy for Indonesian consumers to register their mobile phones as each person has both a family identification number and a personal identification number.

In Uganda, a similar process has been conducted and mobile operators have been able to confirm a user's identity by interfacing with a national identification database (Mpairwe, 2018). In addition to Uganda, numerous countries in Africa have introduced compulsory SIM card registration (Mamabolo, 2017). According to Gillwald, this process has been locking poor people out of mobile phone ownership (quoted in Mamabolo, 2017). Gillwald has argued that 'despite little evidence that mandatory SIM registration contributes to safeguarding our digital security or physical safety, it has become a universal regulatory standard in Africa to facilitate the monitoring and interception of communications' (n.d., n.p.).

Related issues

For all the effort being made by consumers and telecommunication companies, I wonder about the extent to which the process will lead to tangible benefits for the country. Certainly, the exercise is costing the operators money, as has also been observed elsewhere (Song, 2016). In some countries, for instance Nigeria, the regulatory body shouldered initial registration costs (GSMA, 2016, p. 23).

There is a risk that vulnerable or socially marginalised people are excluded from the opportunity to own and use mobile phones. The staged approach to deactivations has given rural and remote users more time to register, but for many of these people the registration of SIM cards is challenging. In many cases, people need to travel to a town to register their SIM cards, thus incurring transportation costs. While registration is supposed to be free-of-charge, sources suggest that sub-contractors in some provinces have been charging consumers money to register.

When similar initiatives have been introduced in other countries, deadlines have been extended, but nonetheless SIM cards have been deactivated after the final deadline. Deactivation would likely result in decreased revenue for operators and for the government through taxes. But perhaps more importantly, this policy could lead to an absence of two-way communication in disadvantaged communities in PNG. If the few active mobile phones in certain remote villages are cut off, this could have negative implications regarding time-critical emergency communication, such as for childbirth complications (Watson et al., 2015) and natural disasters (Watson, 2012). Citizens in such places may need to overcome this hurdle in order to ensure that they are not left even further behind.

Conclusion

Countries usually state that security is the impetus for the introduction of mandatory SIM card registration, although there is little evidence to show that it addresses crime (see 'Comparisons to other countries' section above). Numerous countries have introduced such a process, with seemingly better success where there is an existing national identification database (see GSMA, 2016, p. 4).

There has also been a monetary cost incurred by users when registering SIM cards, including transportation costs (see 'Related issues' section above). There have been concerns expressed by some users about the security of personal data in the databases held by telecommunication companies. Comments on my analysis have referred to religious and spiritual beliefs held by some groups within PNG, which could cause reluctance to share personal data. Customer anxiety could perhaps be eased through increased transparency about data use.

Will the benefits outweigh the drawbacks? Compulsory registration may mean that certain citizens are able to ask the police to pursue criminals who have been harassing them through their mobile phones. My concern though is that the process may lead to the deactivation of many mobile phones because enforcement of SIM card registration on the African continent has had negative effects, especially regarding poor people's access to mobile phones (Mamabolo, 2017).

Notes

[1] This article is the only comprehensive analysis of mandatory SIM card registration in Papua New Guinea. Earlier work appeared in *Devpolicy* blog posts.

[2] Apart from those provincial capitals impacted on by the February 2018 earthquake: Wabag (Enga Province), Tari (Hela Province) and Mendi (Southern Highlands). They were given until 31 December 2018.

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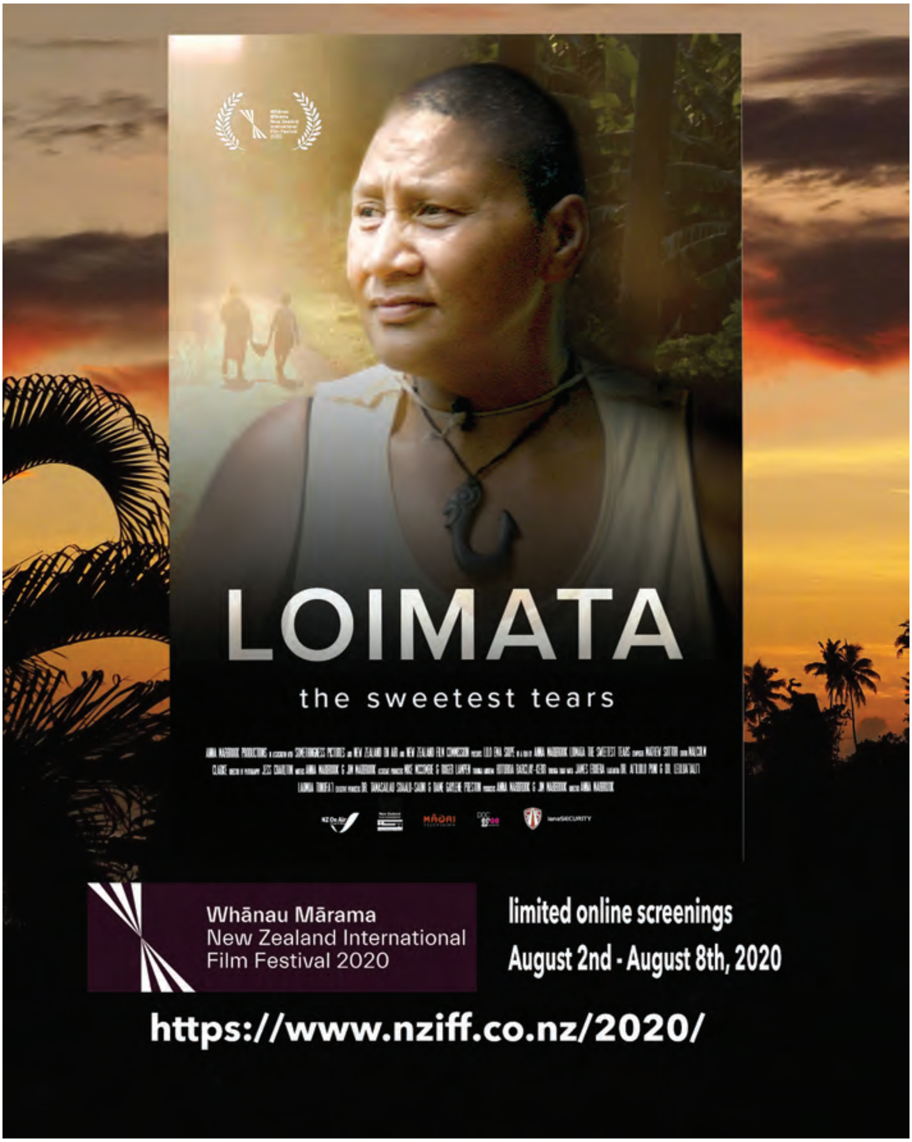
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10. West Papuan journalists today

An alternative human rights perspective from Indonesia

Abstract: This article examines the curiosity of journalists in West Papua about the notion of human rights. The selection of this theme as a focus of research can be seen as a concern for the role of journalists in the enforcement of human rights. The selection of West Papuan journalists for research departs from the position of journalists as perpetrators of journalism activities. The author has proposed four disciplines of writing news about human rights violations in West Papua: 1) the level of curiosity of the notion of human rights by West Papuan journalists, 2) the intellectual attitude of West Papuan journalists, 3) the terms of reference for practising journalism skills in writing news about human rights violations in West Papua, and 4) news about human rights violations in West Papua. To test the level of curiosity about human rights of West Papuan journalists, the author carried out indepth interviews with Benny Mawel (a journalist with tabloidjubi.com) and Arnold Belau (a journalist with suarapapua.com). The findings are discussed in terms of journalists as professionals. The author argues that that the focus on the notion of human rights in West Papua has begun to diminish.

Keywords: ethics, interviews, human rights journalism, human rights violations, Indonesia, journalism skills, West Papua, media ethics

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Introduction

MUCH news has focused on human rights violations in West Papua in recent times. Regarding so much news as additional information about human rights violations in West Papua is certainly not wrong. However, the flood of information does not automatically turn into knowledge. In order to become knowledge, news, besides having to present information (*the facts*), also needs to present a reason (*why*).

Following this logic, the question arises whether the news of human rights violations in West Papua has become knowledge for an audience. It is not easy to answer this question without comprehensive research. What is clear is that news about human rights violations in West Papua is starting to show accountability to the conscience. As an example, consider the news item entitled 71 Years of Human Rights Day, A Blurred Portrait of Human Rights Violations in Papua (Ceposonline.com, 2019). It was stated that among other things the most violated are the right to life and the right to education. The news item added:

> In addition, the matter of civil and political rights in 2019 also experienced gloom where there was mass violence that occurred throughout Papua and even West Papua.[1] The situation of civil and political rights throughout 2019 illustrates the opaque situation because there was violence that occurred in a mass, massive and prolonged manner.

This quote shows that Ceposonline.com is free to report information in accordance with the facts in the field and its values. It was not worried about the attitude of the authorities after reading this news. It also does not care the audience would consider this news 'bad news'. The important thing is that it has conveyed information in accordance with its conscience.

In fact, newspapers in West Papua do not need to worry about government control. Since 23 September 1999, the Indonesian government no longer has the right to control the Indonesian press. This is confirmed by Law No. 40 about the press. Article 4 Paragraph 2 of the law states: 'The national press is not subject to censorship, banning or broadcasting prohibition'. Besides that, Article 3 Paragraph 1 of the Law states: 'The national press has a function as a medium of information, education, entertainment, and social control.' This confirms that newspapers in West Papua may exercise social control.

This fact can apparently be read as newspapers in West Papua can freely report news about human rights violations in West Papua. They can report the news of human rights violations in West Papua continuously in accordance with the existing reality. If this is the case, journalists in West Papua need to have great curiosity about the idea of human rights in West Papua. Without great curiosity, the practice of human rights journalism in West Papua cannot breathe. The problem that then arises is, do journalists in West Papua have great curiosity about the idea of human rights in West Papua?

This article seeks to answer that question based on interviews with journalists from tabloidjubi.com and suarapapua.com who are used to writing news about human rights violations in West Papua.

Literature review

Ashadi Siregar, a retired lecturer at Gadjah Mada University, Yogyakarta, writes:

> A journalist, in addition to mastering the standard technical skills in the field of journalism, must also know the position of the profession he runs in his audience. Then he also needs to have an awareness of the extent and scope of recipients of the information he conveys. This broad awareness of the target audience will make reporters maintain the nature of their information (1985, p. 7).

This quote shows that a journalist needs to know: 1) his position, 2) the position of the news audience, and 3) the nature of his information. Fulfillment of these three aspects would make the news he or she writes useful for the audience. These benefits should be seen from the side of audience, not from the side of journalists.

In other contexts, the fulfillment of the three aspects above makes journalists not lose their connection with their social environment. They become more responsible for their professional actions. They can also distinguish which news is important to write and which is not. This is why journalists must have a moral framework. This framework, according to Ana Nadhya Abrar, comprises 1) ethical values, 2) a code of ethics, 3) a media company code, and 4) a penal code (2015, p. 68)

However, every journalist's professional activity results from this process. One important element, argues Oscar Motuloh, is curiosity. He continues:

> Because of journalist curiosity, journalism still breathes. It enters into every shutter and sense of journalism, from the mainstream to the current convergence, from the elegant to the coward, from the banal to the scandal, and from mysticism to politics. (2019, p. 228)

In line with this view, Elizabeth Winda, a *Bisnis Indonesia* journalist (2015), quotes Amanda Kusuma's opinion, in saying that high level of curiosity is the main basis of being a journalist. Therefore, without a greater curiosity reporters cannot do their jobs properly. This also applies to human rights journalists. This fact is implied through the meaning of human rights journalism as written by Ibrahim Seaga Shaw as follows:

> Human rights journalism can be defined as a diagnostic style of reporting which offers a critical reflection of the experiences and needs of the victims and perpetrators of (physical, cultural and structural) human rights violations. (2011, p. 107)

This quote shows that human rights journalism strives to understand the reasons for these violations in order to prevent further violations and to solve current ones in ways that would not produce more violence. Because of this, a human rights journalist is an intellectual. He or she does not only react to human rights violations. They do not just fulfill the media rules without a serious reflection process.

According to Mohamad Sobary (1995), intellectuals are people's recognition of commitment, one's behavior in thinking. He continues:

> They respond to the reality around them by processing thought and taste. They always ask, are anxious, and kept trying, without feeling satisfied, to get answers to all the metaphysical and socio-cultural puzzles around them. (1995, p. 190)

This quote shows that an intellectual person has dynamic anxiety and is driven by inquiry. He does that regularly to make changes. So human rights journalists are expected to have an intellectual attitude like this. The intellectual attitude of human rights journalists will be reflected again in the face of reality. In this context, Ashadi Siregar writes:

> Reality basically comes from human life in the middle of nature. Not all reality can be faced directly by journalists. In practice he will use more human beings as a source of the reality he is processing. For that, he needs to have a critical attitude that never stops. (1985, p. 10)

This quote shows that a human rights journalist cannot just choose the news story. He must choose a news source in accordance with the direction of the news to be written. He must reject news sources that mislead the audience's understanding of human rights violations. Even if he is forced to choose a source of news that is credible but misleading, he must have the courage to include sources that can provide a true picture of reality.

The selection of sources like this was carried out in the news item 'Check the Facts of Mahfud MD Claim: There were no Human Rights Violations in the Jokowi Era?' (tirto.id, 2019). The news item stated that the Coordinating Minister for Politics and Security, Mahfud MD, issued a statement that human rights violations had never happened during President Joko Widodo's leadership of Indonesia since 2014. The news item added:

> As quoted by CNN Indonesia, Mahfud said human rights violations did not occur during the riots in Papua and West Papua. He reasoned that the riot was a riot between the audience and the audience. The authorities, he continued, were deployed to sort out the victims and rioters. (tirto.id, 2019)

Even though Mahfud MD's opinion is misleading, the media cannot possibly ignore the information it conveys. He is a minister coordinator. This position has a significant news value. However, to compensate for the erroneous opinion, tirto.id conveyed information from other sources, namely from the Universal

Declaration of Human Rights. The news item continued:

> When referring to the general understanding in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as quoted from the United Nations website, human rights include 'the right to life and freedom, freedom from slavery and torture, freedom of opinion and expression, the right to work and education, and many again. Everyone has the right to these rights, without discrimination.'
>
> In 1976 the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) emerged. Both of these agreements mentioned in more detail related to basic human rights in the economic, social, cultural, and civil and political fields. If it refers to the understanding of the United Nations, human rights violations are not limited to physical violence. (tirto.id, 2019)

To prove that human rights violations occurred in Indonesia during 2018, tirto.id cited the Annual Report of National Commission on Human Rights 2018. According to the report, the National Commission on Human Rights handled various reports on human rights violations. The news item stated:

> [The] National Commission on Human Rights also noted that in the cases they handled, the police were the party most often complained [about] to their institutions with a total of 1,670 files. Corporations and local governments followed with 1,021 files and 682 files respectively.
>
> While related to the classification of rights that were violated from cases that were complained to [the] National Commission on Human Rights, overall there were 11 rights that were violated. The right to justice is the most violated right with 463 cases. The right to welfare followed in second place with 330 cases, then the right to social security of 57 cases, and the right to life of 38 cases. (p. 16) (tirto.id, 2019)

The tirto.id news reported item implies that human rights journalists must have an adequate curiosity about the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights. However, for human rights journalists in West Papua, curiosity about the above needs to be supplemented by adequate curiosity about the UN Resolution No. 2054, the Act of Free Choice, the *Uti Juris Possidetis* Principles, the Right to Self-Determination, the Non-Self-Governing Territory, Indonesia's Authority over West Papua, the West Papuan People's Congress, and the Political Status of West Papua.

Still regarding the news reported by tirto.id, is the news one of the best practices of news on human rights violations in West Papua? It is not easy to answer this question without considering the condition of the audience. The audience, said John Hartley (2007), is a redactional society. 'Journalism has begun to change from news-gathering to a redactional function: a prime job of the journalist is to shift existing data and make sense of that for audience, not to generate new information.' (p. 19).

This quote implies that human rights journalists need to respect the information that the audience has. Journalists no longer need to add new information. What needs to be done is to deal with the information that the audience has in a more relaxed manner so as to expose the lies that surround human rights violations. In doing so, lies that are often maintained as public opinion can turn into truth.

During this time, the practice of human rights journalism, said Ibrahim Seaga Shaw, followed four orientations, 1) solution rather than [being] victory oriented, 2) truth rather than propaganda oriented, 3) people rather than elite oriented, and 4) win-win rather than win-lose oriented. However, he proposes four other orientations, such as the following:

> These are: global rather than selective reporting, a bias in favour of vulnerable voices, a proactive (preventive) rather than reactive (prescriptive) approach to reporting, and an attachment to, rather than a detachment from, victims of violence. It is also human rights orientated (2011, p.116).

At this point a question arises, which orientation will this research choose? Human rights reporters in West Papua are seen as not reporting comprehensive human rights violations in West Papua. As a result, the news of human rights violations in West Papua was very boring. The audience cannot read the solutions offered. The audience also cannot read the complexity inherent in human rights violations in West Papua.

Maybe the press in West Papua does not have journalists who have the qualifications to produce such news. If this reality is true, they need to adopt the four human rights journalism orientations offered by Ibrahim Seaga Shaw. This article also adopts the four human rights journalism orientations.

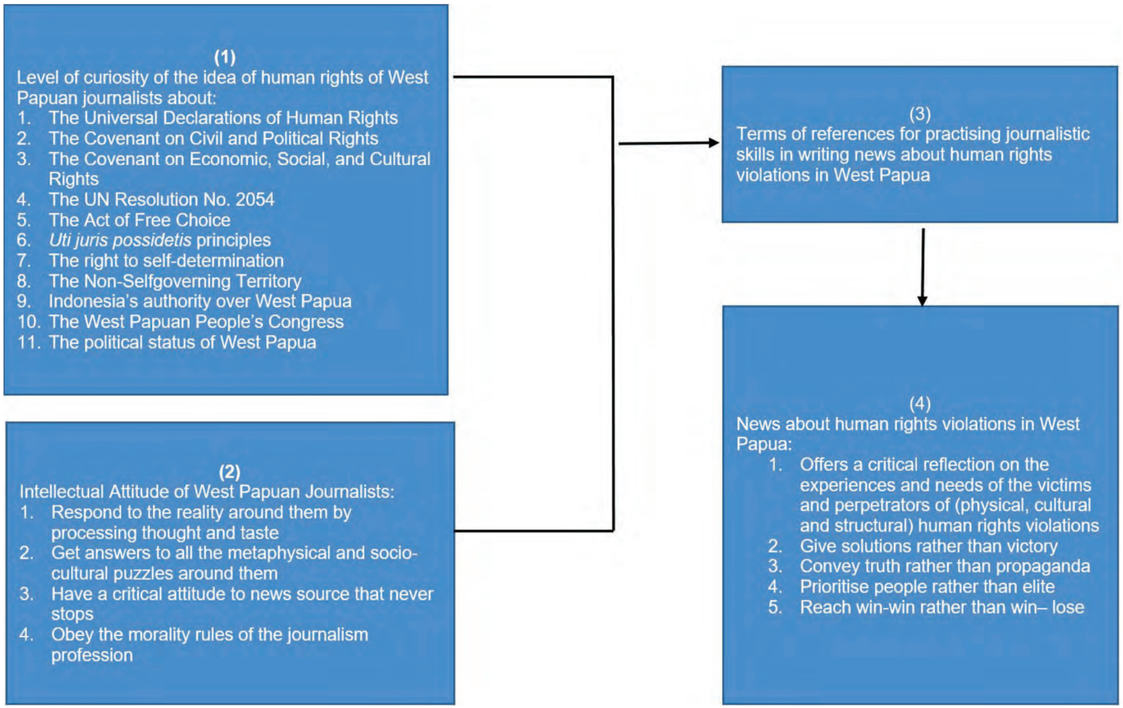
If the news of human rights violations in West Papua has fulfilled the four orientations above, the news becomes more calming. It will encourage its audience to be wiser in dealing with problems caused by human rights violations in West Papua.

Methodology

Based on the above explanation, the author can make the level of curiosity of the idea of human rights of West Papuan journalists as the first discipline in writing news about human rights violations in West Papua. This level can be described as:

The scheme (Figure 1) shows four disciplines that can be investigated regarding the role of human rights journalists in reporting news of human rights violations in West Papua. Disciplines 1, 2 and 3 contribute fully in creating news

Figure 1: Writing news about human rights violations in West Papua—a discipline scheme



(1)
Level of curiosity of the idea of human rights of West Papuan journalists about:
1. The Universal Declarations of Human Rights
2. The Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
3. The Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights
4. The UN Resolution No. 2054
5. The Act of Free Choice
6. *Uti juris possidetis* principles
7. The right to self-determination
8. The Non-Selfgoverning Territory
9. Indonesia's authority over West Papua
10. The West Papuan People's Congress
11. The political status of West Papua

(2)
Intellectual Attitude of West Papuan Journalists:
1. Respond to the reality around them by processing thought and taste
2. Get answers to all the metaphysical and socio-cultural puzzles around them
3. Have a critical attitude to news source that never stops
4. Obey the morality rules of the journalism profession

(3)
Terms of references for practising journalistic skills in writing news about human rights violations in West Papua

(4)
News about human rights violations in West Papua:
1. Offers a critical reflection on the experiences and needs of the victims and perpetrators of (physical, cultural and structural) human rights violations
2. Give solutions rather than victory
3. Convey truth rather than propaganda
4. Prioritise people rather than elite
5. Reach win-win rather than win– lose

about human rights violations that meet the criteria as written in the discipline 4. However, each discipline can be studied independently.

This research examines the first discipline because it is more strategic. Journalists' curiosity about the idea of human rights greatly affects the news narrative of human rights violations that they write. It can be a guide in the writing of news about human rights violations in West Papua. In addition, it can guide journalists to write conclusions from the news they report.

To determine respondents, the author first observed the constellation of newspapers published in Jayapura. According to Stanley Adi Prasetyo, when he was chairman of the Press Council, there were five newspapers that were news publishing pioneers in Jayapura: *Cenderawasih Pos, Tifa Papua, Jubi, Suara Papua* and *Papua Post*. He continues:

> The *reformasi* era, like other regions, gave birth to many new newspapers. It's easier for people to set up newspapers. Then popped up one by one newspapers in Papua. Interestingly, the birth of these new newspapers originated from two media which have long existed in Papua: *Tifa* and *Cenderawasih Pos*. Some of the managers came out and founded new media. When this survey was conducted there were five media being published in Jayapura: *Cenderawasih Pos, Tifa Papua, Jubi, Suara Papua* and *Papua Post*. (Prasetyo, 2018)

However, following the social development of the readership, some newspapers turned to online editions, such as *Tifa Papua*, which became tifapapua.com; *Suara Papua* became suarapapua.com and *Jubi* became tabloidjubi.com. Among the three online publications, tabloidjubi.com and suarapapua.com are the most widely reported news outlets about human rights violations in West Papua. According to Reynelda Beatrix Ibo, Benny Mawel from tabloidjubi.com and Arnold Belau from suarapapua.com had been blacklisted by the government (Ibo, 2020). That is why the author chose these two journalists as respondents for this study. Both of them are experienced in writing news about human rights violations in West Papua, and are also known as brave journalists.

With both of these journalists, the author conducted indepth interviews about the discipline. The results of the interviews were confirmed to the concept of journalists as professionals.

Results and discussion

Results

Benny Mawel seeks to know more about the idea of human rights originating from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the UN Resolution No. 2054, the Act of Free Choice, the *Uti Juris Possidetis* Principles, the Right to Self-Determination, Territories Without Self-Government, Indonesia's Authority over West Papua, West Papua People's Congress, to the Political Status of West Papua (see Figure 1-1). However, he believes that he did not need special time to find out. The most important thing for him is to work in accordance with the moral rules of journalism, namely the journalism code of ethics and Law No. 40 of 1999 concerning the press (Mawel, 2020).

When he imagined that he had adequate knowledge about all of the above human rights ideas, he believed he would no longer be a journalist, but a human rights activist and a political activist (Figure 1-2). 'If I understand that, I am a human rights activist and political activist. I am no longer a reporter. So far, I have interviewed my informants with various questions about the things mentioned above,' he said (Mawel, 2020).

Mawel considered that he did not need to understand deeply the history of human rights in West Papua. His knowledge was enough, which was to facilitate the person being interviewed. 'I wrote the results of the interviews,' he added (Mawel, 2020).

'Is my attitude wrong?' Mawel asked. He answered himself, 'No. I want to be a professional journalist. To become a professional journalist, the instructions are there, Law No. 40/1999 concerning the press and journalistic code of ethics' (Mawel, 2020).

Armed with the journalistic skills and the moral rules of journalism, Benny dared to write any news about human rights violations in West Papua. Strictly speaking, he has no fear.

For Arnold Belau, human rights violations in West Papua are not solely the monopoly of the Indonesian military and the Indonesian police. Reports in circulation indeed show civilian casualties, murder, torture, detention without basis, missing persons and rape. However, many public facilities were burned, such as school buildings. This is a violation of human rights that fosters a culture of fear that is very frightening. 'Well, I want to show this culture of fear through the news that I wrote' (Belau, 2020).

To achieve this desire, Belau felt the need to understand Law No. 39/1999 concerning human rights. 'The law guarantees the implementation of human rights such as the right to life, the right not to be tortured, the right to a fair and just legal process. If anyone violates these rights in Papua, I must write it in my newspaper. I am not afraid to write it,' he added (Belau, 2020).

In reporting on human rights violations in West Papua, Arnold Belau continued to uphold the professional attitude of journalists. He must comply with the existing news coverage, starting from Law No. 40/1999 to the journalism code of ethics. 'Did my news educate the public? I'm sure not yet. So I am still looking for a news format on human rights violations in West Papua that educates the public,' he added (Belau, 2020).

Belau believed his curiosity towards the idea of human rights originating from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, the UN Resolution No. 2054, the Act of Free Choice, the *Uti Juris Possidetis* Principles, the Right to Self-Determination, the Non-Self-Governing Territory, Indonesia's Authority over West Papua, the West Papuan People's Congress, to the Political Status of West Papua is no longer large. For him, adequate knowledge about all that could even endanger him. He became unfocused in writing news on human rights violations in West Papua. 'Understanding of Law No. 39/1999 on human rights is enough to capture the phenomenon of human rights violations in West Papua,' he added (Belau, 2020).

What stimulates Arnold Belau to write news of human rights violations in West Papua? He admitted that the responsibility for writing about human rights violations in West Papua was the responsibility of his profession. He is obliged to convey information about human rights violations in West Papua to the audience on an ongoing basis. He is not at all afraid of reporting such news in West Papua. However, before writing the news, he must first cross-check the validity of the information. 'It is in this context that I see my work as intellectual,' he added (Belau, 2020).

Belau agreed with the opinion that journalists were intellectuals. However, he admitted that some journalists write news by 'action-reaction', and fulfill administrative obligations without a serious reflection process. 'That is why inaccurate news often appears, data or quote errors occur,' he added (Belau, 2020).

Arnold Belau also admitted that he had subjectivity in reporting human rights violations in West Papua. He was unable to eliminate it altogether. However, he always tried to minimise that subjectivity. 'I want to maintain my credibility and the credibility my media. This is where the real professionalism is,' he said (Belau, 2020).

Discussion

The results of the interview as a writing genre

Interviewing is one technique to collect facts. The process involves two parties, the interviewer (journalist) and the person being interviewed (the resource person). The interaction between the two determines the interview results. The stimulation of the interviewer is expected to stimulate the news source. So the actual results of the interview are the results of the collaboration of journalists and resource people. Journalists and resource persons are resource people.

If Benny Mawel presents his interview about human rights violations in West Papua with the resource person in the form of 'Question and Answer, or Q&A', this is a writing genre (Figure 1-3). It was indeed not Benny Mawel's byline writing. However, it cannot be underestimated. It can probe the thoughts of the interviewer and the interviewee. It can explain to the reader about human rights violations in West Papua.

We have certainly read the 1963 Alex Haley interview with American black revolutionary Malcolm X (1925-1965) in *Playboy* magazine. The result is a never-dry source of the philosophy of rebellion, motivation, and ideology of the black student uprising against slavery and the oppression by white Americans. The results are written in the form of 'Q&A'.

However, Mawel never wrote news about human rights violations in West Papua in the form of 'Q&A'. He wrote the results of his interviews with speakers embedded in the body of the news. As a result, the news cannot be a source of information about the philosophy, motivation, and history of human rights violations in West Papua.

To be able to write the results of the interview as a genre of writing, Mawel certainly needs to have more human rights ideas. The source of the ideas varied, ranging from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, the UN Resolution No. 2054, the Act of Free Choice, the *Uti Juris Possidetis Principles*, the Right to Self-Determination, the Non-Self-Governing Territory, Indonesia's Authority over West Papua, the West Papuan People's Congress, to the Political Status of West Papua.

Even if Benny will not write the results of the interview as a genre of writing, knowledge about the things above can also be used as a guide to see the connection of an incident of human rights violations in West Papua with other human rights violations. Actually, a human rights violation event in West Papua never stands alone. It has a connection with the past and will reach into the future.

Educating the audience

Arnold Belau's acknowledgment that his great curiosity about the idea of human rights originated from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, the UN Resolution No. 2054, the Act of Free Choice, the Uti *Juris Possidetis Principles*, the Right to Self-Determination, the Non-Self-Governing Territory, Indonesia's Authority over West Papua, the West Papuan People's Congress, and the Political Status of West Papua poses risks to themselves. That knowledge actually helped him capture the process of human rights violations in West Papua. He will also be more critical in facing human rights violations in West Papua. He can even increase his intellectual attitude.

If Belau wants to enlarge his curiosity about these issues, of course he must learn. It is not easy for him to learn anymore. In addition to the time taken to pursue deadlines, he also has to go out into the field, cover both sides and cross-check confirmation. This is from Belau's side. In terms of the audience, it is different. The audience does not care about all of Arnold's technical issues. What is important for them is getting the right information which in turn can be used to make decisions on how to deal with the state.

Actually, the audience does not need heavy information. They just want to know the extent to which Indonesia recognises human rights, starting from the right to express an opinion, the right to associate, the right to education, the right of equality before the law and the basis for the birth of all rights. However, human rights violations that have occurred in West Papua made them sceptical of the fulfillment of their human rights. This is where the role of Arnold Belau actually becomes very important. He can present complete information about the relationship of all these things. He provides intelligent and critical information to the audience. He does not merely convey information, but more than that, he needs to educate the audience.

Journalists as professionals

Benny Mawel does not want to be a human rights and political activist. He wants to be a professional reporter only. This opinion certainly needs to be respected. However, the reasons need to be discussed further.

The essence of political activism, writes Daniel Dhakidae, is contestation with power so that power does not rise through the sky. This, of course, carries risks. What are the risks? Dhakidae asked, 'Prison must always be imagined to be a home' (2009, p. xviii). When Benny Mawel said he did not want to be a political activist, this indicated that he did not want to take the risk mentioned by Dhakidae.

However, Mawel's choice to become a professional journalist does not mean he faces no risk. Risks from his side include that he understands political life in West Papua and Indonesia. If he closes his eyes to that condition, it means he does not care. At first this ignorance will not bother him. However, over time it will make him feel uncomfortable. He must fight with himself.

If his knowledge of the current political situation in West Papua and Indonesia is used to enrich the news about human rights violations in West Papua, the news has a perspective. The audience has become increasingly familiar with the relationship of human rights violations in West Papua to political conditions.

From the audience side, the professional attitude of Benny Mawel must present meaningful news. If the audience does not understand it, they will be disappointed. If the disappointment happens repeatedly, it is not impossible that the people no longer want to read the news written by Benny Mawel. They no longer want to provide information to Mawel.

Arnold Belau also did not mix being a political activist and being a journalist. He consistently goes through his role as a journalist professional. In carrying out this profession, Belau is always considered capable of getting things done. However, in the practice of daily journalism, getting things done is a euphemism that complies with whatever principles are ordered by the media. Media orders are often the same as those of the authorities. Then the battle is inevitable.

The fight does not stop there. There is another battle, which is winning the hearts of the audience. It was not enough to just convey information in the form of a portrait of the reality of human rights violations in West Papua. He needs to select events related to the past and shape the future. He needs to capture the process of people's life in West Papua.

People's life in West Papua, according to Todung Mulya Lubis, has fallen into a severe backwardness. They seem to have no more pride (2005, p. 268); though they have given more than 40 years to Indonesia to make them as countrymen. The opportunity was not used, not to say misused. Then it is the duty of Arnold Belau and other West Papuan journalists to raise the dignity of the people of West Papua.

It is in this context that West Papuan journalists deal with their intellectual attitude. He must doubt the public policies that underlie human rights violations in West Papua. They must test every public policy. The attitude of believing in the policy, in essence, makes them arbitrary. More than that, their intellectual enthusiasm is loose. In fact, the intellectual spirit in the work of journalism, as Arnold Belau said above, should not be slack.

In the near future, this effort will change the position of journalists in West Papua to help those whose rights have been violated in West Papua. To aid those whose rights have been violated, said Henry Shue, as quoted by Jack Donolly, is the task of many parties (2006, p. 606).

Based on the above facts, the professional attitude of human rights journalists in West Papua is not only daring to write news because it carries out journalistic skills that is guided by moral values of journalism, but also presents intellectuality in the news they write. Courage is one of the innate qualities of journalists. Borrowing the opinion of Jeremy Paxman, Marie Kinsey (2005) says that journalists are members of the 'awkward squad'.

In practice, human rights journalists need to provide a political perspective on the news of human rights violations they write, elevating the dignity of the Papuan people to create meaningful news for the people of West Papua. It is this professional implementation of journalists who can produce news as written in discipline (Figure 1-2) of the news writing scheme on human rights violations in West Papua.

Making a balance

After Suharto stepped down as President, there was a demand from the people in West Papua for the press to carry out its traditional functions. Among all the functions, the most awaited in the community is the watchdog function. The function of the press like this can only be carried out by the press when it plays the role as a social institution (Abrar, 2011, p. 8). The press now has a prominent position in West Papua as an economic institution. Abrar writes:

> In the position as an economic institution, press activity serves advertisers, the function of the press is entertaining, the purpose of the press is to make the press an industry, the obligation of the press is to serve the wishes of the public and the content of the press is factual and fictional. (2011, p. 8)

If the press in West Papua wants to prioritise the watchdog function, it means it must make a balance. The press must give the same attention to the press as an economic and social institution. Could that happen? It is possible, as long as the press strives to achieve the ideal goals of journalism. Various opinions say that the ideal purpose of journalism is to serve the right to know of the audience. Jeffrey Olen wrote, 'Our main task is to serve the right to know of the audience.' (1988, p. 7). Morris Wolfe wrote, 'Because the press is a social institution, journalists must care about the right to know of the community' (1993, p. 95).

In the current condition, the people of West Papua really want a resolution of human rights violations in West Papua. The violations, according to Yan Christhian Warinussy, (2017) are more than 50 years old.

However, according to Neles Tebay, the people of West Papua have experienced human rights violations since 1963 until now. 'The issue of human rights violations in West Papua has not become a major issue in the major media in Jakarta,' he added (VOA Indonesia, 2017).

Therefore, this is an opportunity for the press in West Papua to make human rights violations in West Papua a major issue. To encourage West Papuan journalists to write more educative human rights violations, the authors propose technical guidelines as outlined in this article.

Conclusion

From the point of view of democracy and human rights, expressing an opinion is universally recognised. Usually the manifestation of expressing that opinion can be through written, oral and other means. Benny Mawel and Arnold Belau have expressed their opinions about the professionalism of human rights journalists in West Papua verbally. In building their professionalism, they feel no need to build greater curiosity about the idea of human rights originating from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the UN Resolution No. 2054, the Act of Free Choice, the *Uti Juris Possidetis* Principles, the Right to Self-Determination, the Territories Without Self-Government, Indonesia's Authority over West Papua, West Papua People's Congress, and the Political Status of West Papua. What is important for them is to practise the journalistic skills guided by the moral framework of journalism in writing facts and data about human rights violations in West Papua.

However, from the point of view of journalism, the above attitude is not enough. Benny Mawel and Arnold Belau need to increase their curiosity about the idea of human rights originating from many sources (see discipline 1 in Figure 1). Another reference is to embody their intellectual attitude to the news they write (see discipline 2). If these two disciplines have become their references in writing news about human rights violations in West Papua using journalistic skills, they will produce news as illustrated in discipline 4.

If this conclusion is seen as something lacking with West Papua journalists in reporting news about human rights violations in West Papua, surely it is necessary to improve the news writing. However, improvements will not occur only through an appeal. Opportunities for improvement must be created by those who pay attention to the news about human rights violations in West Papua. No matter who the party is and what they do, it will be more valuable to improve the news of human rights violations in Papua. To begin, the author suggests that Papua Institute of Science and Technology publish the guidelines for writing news about human rights violations in West Papua.

Note

1 After the 1969 Act of Free Choice, West Papua became part of Indonesia as the easternmost province of Indonesia. However, in 2003 Indonesia divided the province into two provinces, Papua and West Papua. West Papua in this article refers to the West New Guinea region.

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11. A crucible for bottom-up regionalism?

The digital renaissance: West Papuan media suppression and social media in the Pacific

Commentary: West Papua has one of the most repressive media landscapes in the world. Consequently, West Papuans have increasingly harnessed social media platforms to broadcast human rights violations committed in West Papua. Through this, Pacific Islanders around the region are increasingly leveraging social media as a political tool for showing solidarity and support for West Papuans. As a result, in recent years there has been a regional groundswell in support for West Papuan demands for self-determination, with prominent political figures such as former Prime Minister Peter O'Neill of Papua New Guinea, and Gordon Darcy Lilo alluding to the awareness on West Papuan issues that have been raised through social media. This commentary explores how the rise of West Papua solidarity is resulting in a heightened Pacific regional consciousness at the community level.

Keywords: bottom-up regionalism, censorship, digital politics, Melanesia, Pacific regionalism, West Papua, social media

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Introduction

FROM tribal lore to the printing press, to the present era of instantaneous electronic communication, the ability of governors and the governed to access information has had profound socio-economic and political ramifications. Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) are the latest evolution of mass communication, and offer vast potential to transform governance and the dialogue between citizens and governments. Globally, ICTs and social media, in particular, have been harnessed by citizens as an activist means to demand greater accountability and transparency (Taki, 2013). In the Pacific, a digital revolution has resulted in drastic changes in the means by which Pacific islanders communicate, access information, and engage in public/political discourse (Cave, 2012). Research has demonstrated that in the Pacific, social media has become a means of communication, disaster awareness, political debate and activism, and even identity formation and rejuvenation (Brimacombe, Kant, Finau, Tarai, & Titifanue, 2018; Finau et al., 2018; Titifanue, Tarai, Kant, & Finau, 2016; Titifanue, Varea, Varea, Kant, & Finau, 2018; Webb-Gannon & Webb, 2019). This commentary argues that as the Pacific Region undergoes its digital revolution, issues such as the Free West Papua Movement act as a catalyst for regional concern and action at the community level.

State-led versus bottom-up regionalism

Wiwasukh (2008) argues that regionalism is typically associated with 'states linked together by a geographical relationship and by a degree of mutual interdependence' (p. 2). For the Pacific, regionalism tends to bring to mind state-led organisations such as the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, Melanesian Spearhead Group, and the Polynesian Leaders Group. Such state-led movements tend to typify Hau'ofas (1994) description of being '. . . the preserve of politicians, bureaucrats, statutory body officials, diplomats and the military, and representatives of the financial and business communities . . .' (p. 148).

What often goes unnoticed is the capacity of Pacific Islanders' to 'maintain bottom-up and informal modes of regional identification and connection and a concern with what ordinary people are actually doing' (George, 2011, p. 38). Hau'ofa (1994) argues that these at times can result in 'surprising and dramatic results . . .' (p. 148). This can be evidenced by instances where a bottom-up push from citizens have instigated and complemented regionalism (George, 2011). A case in point for the Pacific is the Nuclear-Free and Independent Pacific movement where citizens, and NGOs lobbied and supported their governments in taking a stance against nuclear testing in the Pacific.

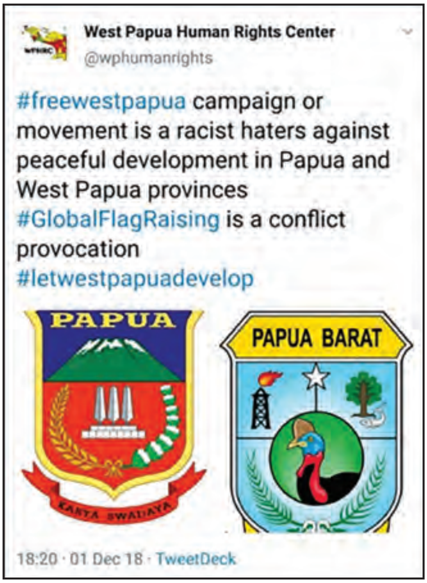
Media suppression, the rise of citizen media, and Indonesian pushback

Since being politically integrated with Indonesia in 1969, West Papuans have undergone many tribulations. Upon attaining control over West Papua, the Indonesian government has carried out political suppression, with human rights defenders being regularly intimidated and harassed (Amnesty International, 2013). Contemporary sources estimate that since Indonesia has attained control, as many as 500,000 West Papuans have been killed by Indonesian security forces (Robinson, 2012). Gaining accurate information on events within West Papua has been hindered by the West Papuan media landscape. Blades (2018) notes multiple incidents of journalists being 'assaulted, threatened, or arrested' (p. 37). Furthermore, until May 2015, foreign journalists were in practice, barred from entering West Papua (Mitchell, 2015). Blades (2016) notes that while there was technically no ban on journalists entering West Papua, journalists needed to secure 'approval from 12 separate state agencies' (p. 14).

For decades, West Papuan activists have tirelessly worked towards raising regional and global awareness of the realities within West Papua. However, the aforementioned media landscape greatly hindered their efforts. This media vacuum led to West Papuans turning to alternate media like social networking sites. Facebook and Twitter, in particular, have become prominent platforms for activists raising issues on West Papua and articulating these issues to a wider regional and global audience (Titifanue et al., 2016). The effectiveness of citizen media and social media has been profound. In an analysis of activism in West Papua, Macleod (2016) highlights how the advent of social media has made the revelation of events in West Papua to be almost instantaneous. Comparing a 1998 attack by the Indonesian military with the 2010 occupation of the provincial Parliament, and the 2011 attack by Indonesian armed forces on protesters, Macleod (2016) notes that 'the social media revolution had well and truly arrived in West Papua' (p.48). In essence, he notes that in 1998 it took weeks and months for information of the attack to be spread. While in 2010 and 2011, despite the absence of international media, news was spread in real-time by citizens harnessing mobile technologies and social media.

As the adage by Oscar Wilde goes, 'you can always judge a man by the quality of his enemies'. With the growing effectiveness of social media in informing the world of events within West Papua, systematic efforts have been made to limit internet accessibility and subvert the online narrative from supporters of West Papuan independence and human rights. In August 2019, violent demonstrations took place with activists describing such demonstrations as being the largest to occur in years (Lamb & Doherty, 2019). Over the course of these protests, the Indonesian government slowed the internet in parts of West Papua, with the Indonesian Communications and Information Minister informing reporters that this was to 'filter information and prevent the spread of rumours' (Firdaus, 2019). In the case of West Papuan citizen media, their effectiveness can be gauged by the strength of the pushback by Indonesian online propaganda. In September 2019, Bellingcat, an investigative journalism website, revealed that there existed an active social media bot network disseminating pro-government propaganda (Strick, 2019). Building off the Bellingcat research, the BBC and the Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI) carried out a joint investigation to analyse what it described as a 'well-funded and co-ordinated information campaign aimed at distorting the truth about events in Indonesia's West Papua province…' (Jones, 2019, para. 1). Strick and Syavira (2019) report that the investigation found a network of Twitter accounts that all used 'fake or stolen profile photos' (para. 10). This snowballed into the discovery of a network of accounts spread across four social media platforms and which were traced back to a Jakarta-based media company. These accounts actively engaged in a process known as 'hashtag hijacking' whereby they would appropriate hashtags used by groups supporting West Papuan independence and human rights. The authors of this commentary have observed that hashtags such as #freewestpapua, #merdeka, #letwestpapuadevelop, and #globalflagraising, have been among those that pro-Indonesian pages have attempted to appropriate. In 2018, a Twitter page titled 'West Papua Human Rights Centre' went so far as to describe the Free West Papua Campaign as hate against peaceful development in West Papua (Figure 1).

More recently, pages in opposition to the Free West Papuan movement have also hijacked non-West Papua related hashtags that are trending both regionally and globally. Such hashtags include #coronavirusoutbreak, #bluepacific, and #pacificresilient (see figure 2).


West Papua Human Rights Center
@wphumanrights

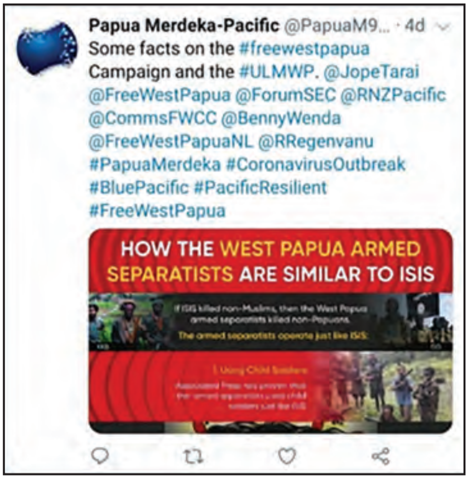
#freewestpapua campaign or movement is a racist haters against peaceful development in Papua and West Papua provinces #GlobalFlagRaising is a conflict provocation #letwestpapuadevelop

18:20 · 01 Dec 18 · TweetDeck

Figure 1: Tweet in opposition to Free West Papua Campaign

Bottom-up regionalism: Regional consciousness through adversity?

As aforementioned, there have been instances in the Pacific region where moral outrage at the community level has instigated and complemented action at regional levels. For the Pacific, a key historical example is the Nuclear-Free and Independent Pacific (NFIP) movement. Prominent journalist Nic Maclellan (2017, p. 5) observed that the NFIP was a contrast to most other international organisations, which focussed upon more scientific impacts of nuclear testing (health, environment etc.). NFIP, in contrast, worked to create a synergy between other broader Pacific led campaigns relating to self-determination, and decolonisation. In essence, NFIP was founded in 1975 during a period


Papua Merdeka-Pacific @PapuaM9... · 4d
Some facts on the #freewestpapua Campaign and the #ULMWP. @JopeTarai @FreeWestPapua @ForumSEC @RNZPacific @CommsFWCC @BennyWenda @FreeWestPapuaNL @RRegenvanu #PapuaMerdeka #CoronavirusOutbreak #BluePacific #PacificResilient #FreeWestPapua

HOW THE WEST PAPUA ARMED SEPARATISTS ARE SIMILAR TO ISIS
If ISIS killed non-Muslims, then the West Papua armed separatists killed non-Papuans.
The armed separatists operate just like ISIS:
1. Using Child Soldiers

Figure 2: Tweet in opposition to Free West Papua narrative using popular trending hashtags.

when independence and decolonisation movements had significant momentum in the Pacific region. Nuclear testing thus ignited moral outrage among Pacific peoples and caused a groundswell in regional consciousness. Maclellan (2005) also argues that opposition to nuclear testing emerged from:

> … the feeling of being people of the Pacific and not just in the Pacific. That sense of belonging—of looking to the skies, seeing the Southern Cross, and feeling at home—underlies much of the regional opposition to France's nuclear policy (and this emotion against 'outsiders' rings just as true in Australia and New Zealand as in the Islands. (p. 365)

It was also during this period that the Pacific's regional university was founded. The University of the South Pacific at this time became a hotbed of debate on key issues of Pacific concern. Hau'ofa (1993) described the university as 'like a kind of microcosm of the Pacific at large . . . The debates reflected not only the national issues of various islands but also the larger regional issues of nuclear testing …' (p. 81).

Bottom-up regionalism: Social media a crucible for regional consciousness?

Interest and action on decolonisation and self-determination agendas were on the wane. Hau'ofa's aforementioned observations are taken from an essay (ironically titled 'A Beautiful Cemetery') published in USP's 25th Anniversary book. In his essay, Hau'ofa (1993) further noted how 'there are big things happening now . . . But there is nothing on culture and the larger issues about where we are going' (p. 82). However, from the late 2000s and early 2010s, there has been a resurgence in community interest in these topics.

As aforementioned, the digital revolution has contributed to easing the means by which Pacific Islanders can access information. The surge of West Papua related content on social media can be attributed to this. Robie (2014, 2017) argues that social media has contributed to a 'dramatic upsurge of global awareness about West Papua' (2017, p. 161). Macleod, Moiwend, and Pilbrow (2016) note that there has been a rise in 'ordinary peoples support for freedom' (p. 19).

Maclellan (2015, p. 271) notes that through social media helping spread information from inside West Papua, a debate over relations with Indonesia has been forced onto the agenda of Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) summits. Macleod (2016) attributes the rise of social media to what he describes as 'an extraordinary speech' (p. 48) where former Papua New Guinea Prime Minister Peter O'Neill embraced West Papuans as 'our people' (p.48). Interviews carried out by Titifanue et al. (2016) with individuals who had been advocates for a stop to human rights violations in West Papua, revealed quotes such as 'at no time in the past have discussions on West Papua matched the amount of talking that is happening online right now about the situation over there' (p. 267).

This social media groundswell has contributed to a heightened regional consciousness. In 2015 members of the 'We Bleed Black and Red' movement joined with USP students to call for a fact-finding mission to West Papua. In a photoshoot that prominently figured the *Morning Star* flag and the flags of Pacific Islands countries, the hashtag #indonotnesia featured prominently as did the messages of 'Melanesia is not Indonesia, and Indonesia is not Melanesia'. This play on the terms of Melanesia, Polynesia and Micronesia acted to assert a 'Nesian' identity that are reminiscent of Maclellan's (2005) observation of the Pacific peoples taking an anti-nuclear stance and being driven by 'the feeling of being people of the Pacific and not just in the Pacific' (p. 365).

Conclusion

While rare, there have been instances in the Pacific where concerted efforts at the community level have driven and complemented political action at a regional level. For the Pacific region, the advent of such 'bottom-up' regionalism can be found in the Nuclear-Free and Independent Pacific movement. There are synergies between the regional groundswell in expressing outrage over the issue of nuclear testing, and the contemporary issue of West Papuan self-determination and human rights. In each case, the Pacific peoples have rallied in outrage on an issue linked to decolonisation and self-determination themes. Additionally, in the case of each movement, the outrage of Pacific peoples centres around the notion of 'outsiders' imposing their will upon Pacific/'Nesian' peoples. However, there are marked differences in campaign typology. In the case of the NFIP movement, Pacific Islanders were working in concert with their governments in advocating for a nuclear-free Pacific. In the case of the Free West Papua Movement, there has been a great surge in interest at the community level. However, this is not always reflected at national levels with Pacific Island governments (apart from Vanuatu) having differing stances in relation to the matters of self-determination, and human rights in West Papua.

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12. Some aspects of climate change communication and effectiveness in PNG

Abstract: This article examines some aspects of climate change communication in Papua New Guinea (PNG), particularly the use of Tok Pisin language. To place the issue in a broader, global context, the article compares the situation in PNG with that of the use of Pidgin English in Nigeria. The article argues that a major project needs to be undertaken to determine the effectiveness of this communication. It suggests drawing on the experience of both the Bougainville Audience Study and the BBC Trusts' examination of climate change in Nigeria.

Keywords: BBC, climate change, Climate Change Development Authority, communication, Nigeria, Office of Climate Change and Development, Pidgin English, Radio Australia, Tok Pisin, *Wantok*

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Associate Editor, Pacific Journalism Review

> *. . . . tude ol pipel i pilim bikpela hevi tru . . . . ol i luksave tu long ol bagarap klaimet senis i ken kamapim.*
> Today everybody is sad. They understand the damage climate change can cause. (Solomon, 2019b)

Introduction

LIKE the rest of the Pacific, Papua New Guinea (PNG) faces sea level rises, increased ocean acidification, more intense cyclones and periods of heavy rainfall as a result of global warming (Pacific-Australia Climate Change Science, 2016; de Jong, 2019). For many Papua New Guineans global warming is a reality they are unlikely to debate.

For them, changes in climate, the increasing frequency of cyclones, erosion and the loss of habitats are visible every day. The PNG government appears set on a broad path of environmental and resource management and adaptation, but people, especially the *grassruts*, need to know what to do and how seriously to take the changing climate. This article sets out to sketch the range of messages being communicated to the people by different actors and asks how we can determine whether those messages are getting through and being understood.

Climate change as a specific topic is of comparatively recent origin. The ABC-commissioned report *Citizens Access to Information in Papua New Guinea* (2012), for example, used the word environment, but not climate change. The report, produced by Intermedia Europe, found that more women than men regarded the environment as an important topic, but nearly half those surveyed said they did not know much about it. The report found information on the environment was of most concern to the residents of the Papua region, where almost a fifth of all respondents named it as one of the three important information issues for them personally (Intermedia Europe, 2012).

This article can only look at a small part of climate change communication in PNG. Many websites appear to be out of date or only intermittently updated, online archives empty and there is often more evidence that a particular communications project was intended than that it was ever completed. Assessments of how successful those communication projects have been almost non-existent because different parties appear to run their own projects with little co-ordination.

However, a number of models exist which could be used as the basis of a detailed province-by-province examination of a range of associated issues, including language, the trustworthiness of sources and the effectiveness and accessibility of different media. These range from single country projects such as the BBC World Trust's report on climate change in Nigeria to multi-national reports such as Di Gregorio et al's (2014) analysis of REDD+ stories in the national media of seven countries, including Papua New Guinea.

Of perhaps more direct benefit as a template for a provincial-level survey of communication effectiveness is Thomas et al.'s (2019) second Bougainville Audience Study. This was undertaken to gauge the response of 1,000 Bougainvilleans to information on the Bougainville Peace Agreement and related issues. These will be discussed in detail in the recommendations.

The government body originally charged with overseeing PNG's response to climate change, the Office of Climate Change and Development (OCCD) undertook an intensive period of consultation with a broad range of stakeholders, including government, NGOs and villagers and visiting 19 of the 22 provinces in the country. This was described as 'an overwhelming achievement for the organisation which still has a mammoth task ahead in reaching the local people in the remote areas of the country' (PNG Second Communication, 2014).

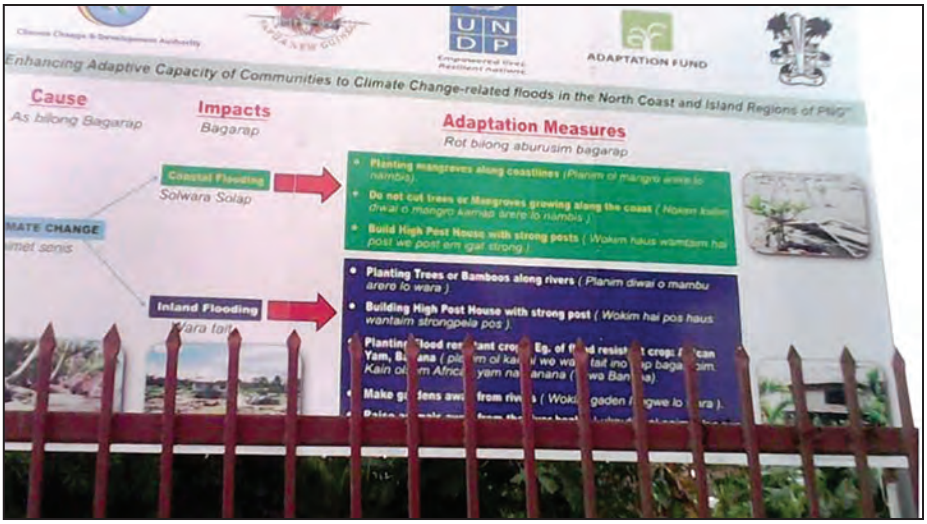
The OCCD acknowledged that introducing concepts of sustainable development as part of an overall plan of climate change mitigation and adaptation measures would require a continuing campaign to change people's minds about land use and persuading them to think in the long term. Methods involved or proposed included a cartoon competition for University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG) students. The OCCD also held workshops on climate change for UPNG students with the idea that they would go back to their villages and help their communities (PNG Second Communication, 2014).

Also proposed was a 10-episode radio drama in Tok Pisin to make climate change topics easier to understand. Radio dramas have worked well in other countries, including the Caribbean and West and Central Africa with reports of a marked increase in people's knowledge of climate change (Robbins, 2011; Perez-Teran et al, 2015).

Other, more traditional methods, have included the setting up of a billboard by the Madang Climate Change Committee. While it is in Tok Pisin and English, it is hidden behind a fence and bushes. This may have been done to prevent it being covered in *buai* (betel nut) spit or vandalised, but the text may be too small for some people to read at a distance (EMTV, 2016).

A climate change resource book proposed for schools by the OCCD, containing activities, quizzes and information, was delivered after a collaboration with the Wildlife Conservancy Society and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The books appear to have been distributed to schools in stages over several years (Kisselpar, 2015; *Post-Courier*, 2017).

One of the mainstays of PNG's sustainability programme has been the REDD+ process for reducing deforestation and forest degradation and promote sustainable use of forest resources. In contrast to the very broadly aimed intentions of the original OCCD communication programme, the REDD+ mechanism is more carefully targeted and declares that 'Technical terminology about climate change and REDD+ should be explained in simple language and appropriate. All communication materials should be translated into Tok Pisin and English at a minimum' (REDD+, 2017).


UNDP
ADAPTATION FUND
Enhancing Adaptive Capacity of Communities to Climate Change-related floods in the North Coast and Island Regions of PNG
Cause
As bilong Bagarap
Impacts
Bagarap
Adaptation Measures
Rot bilong aburusim bagarap
Coastal Flooding
Solwara Solap
MATE CHANGE
imet senis
Inland Flooding
Planting mangroves along coastlines (Planim ol mangro arere lo nambis)
Do not cut trees or Mangroves growing along the coast (Nokem katim diwai o mangro kamap arere lo nambis)
Build High Post House with strong posts (Wokim haus wantaim hai post we post em igat strong)
Planting Trees or Bamboos along rivers (Planim diwai o mambu arere lo wara)
Building High Post House with strong post (Wokim hai pos haus wantaim strongpela pos)

EMTV NEWS

Figure 1: A Madang Climate Change Committee billboard IN 2016.

The REDD+ policy document talks about the importance of social media, but as we shall see later on in this article, the evidence from the Bougainville Audience Study (Thomas et al, 2019) shows that this may not be the case outside urban areas. It is also curious that while emphasising the role of Tok Pisin, the REDD+ communications policy does not mention *Wantok,* PNG's only Tok Pisin language newspaper (REDD+, 2017). As a newspaper with a strong history of developmental journalism, *Wantok* provides regular coverage of climate change and environmental issues. On May 2019, for instance, the newspaper carried a story by veteran journalist and former *Wantok* editor Anna Solomon explaining REDD+:

> *REDD+ i tok save long yumi no ken bagarapim nabaut ol bus na diwai bilong yumi. Yumi mas mekim ol wok bilong lukautim gut bus na planim bek ol diwai long kisim ples bilong ol dispela yumi katim, Sapos yumi mekim olsem bai graun i no inap sot long ol diwai na kabon stok.* (Solomon, 2019a)
>
> REDD+ explains how we should not damage the bush or trees. We must look after the bush and replant any trees we cut down. If we do this we won't be short of trees that absorb carbon.

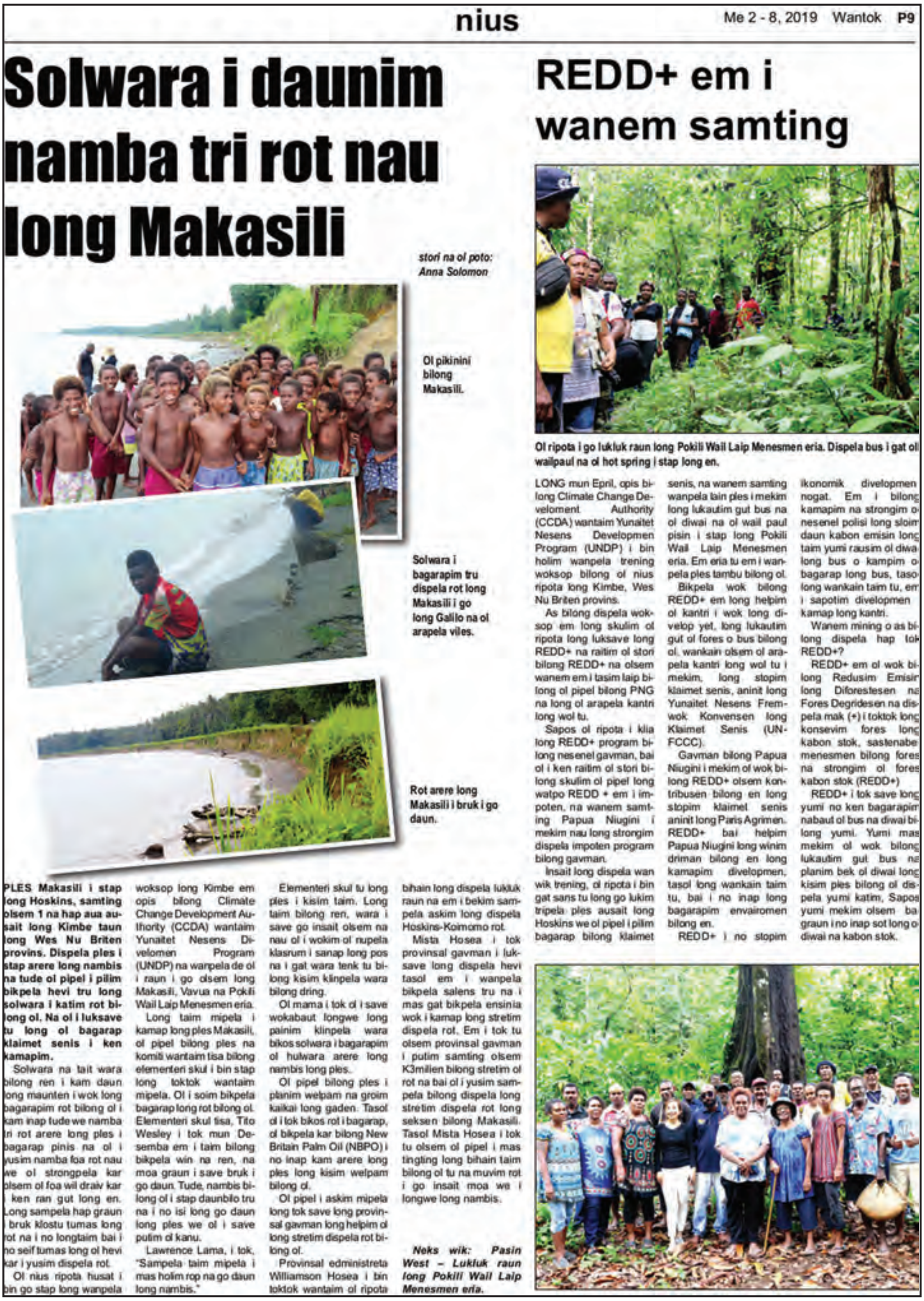
The same page also carried a report on how a combination of tidal erosion and heavy rain—symptoms of climate change—destroyed coastal roads and poisoned freshwater supplies in West New Britain:

> *Solwara na tait wara bilong ren i kam daun long maunten i wok long bagarapim rot bilong ol I kam inap tude we namba tri rot arere long ples i bagarap pinis na ol i yusim namba foa rot nau we ol strongpela kar olsem ol foa wil draiv kar i ken ran gut long en.* (Solomon, 2019b)
>
> Waves and floodwater brought about by rain in the mountains have destroyed a third road. A fourth road is passable using four wheel drive vehicles.

Despite the array of communications programmes and the number of actors involved, Bosip (2012) expressed concern about the fate of climate change mitigation projects, saying that people in different parts of PNG needed information on what worked elsewhere in the country. Writing almost a decade later, Jacobs et al. (2020) have expressed equal concerns about the viability of climate change related programmes due to a lack of infrastructure and poor governance:

> Issues of governance, such as a lack of funding or funding delays, leadership and administrative instability and communication weaknesses to other layers of government were identified as obstacles to effective action

WANTOK



nius Me 2 - 8, 2019 Wantok P9

Solwara i daunim namba tri rot nau long Makasili

stori na ol poto: Anna Solomon

Ol pikinini bilong Makasili.

Solwara i bagarapim tru dispela rot long Makasili i go long Galilo na ol arapela viles.

Rot arere long Makasili i bruk i go daun.

PLES Makasili i stap long Hoskins, samting olsem 1 na hap aua ausait long Kimbe taun long Wes Nu Briten provins. Dispela ples i stap arere long nambis na tude ol pipel i pilim bikpela hevi tru long solwara i katim rot bilong ol. Na ol i luksave tu long ol bagarap klaimet senis i ken kamapim.

Solwara na tait wara bilong ren i kam daun long maunten i wok long bagarapim rot bilong ol i kam inap tude we namba tri rot arere long ples i bagarap pinis na ol i yusim namba foa rot nau we ol strongpela kar olsem ol foa wil draiv kar i ken ran gut long en. Long sampela hap graun i bruk klostu tumas long rot na i no longtaim bai i no seif tumas long ol hevi kar i yusim dispela rot.

Ol nius ripota husat i bin go stap long wanpela woksop long Kimbe em opis bilong Climate Change Development Authority (CCDA) wantaim Yunaitet Nesens Divelomen Program (UNDP) na wanpela de ol i raun i go olsem long Makasili, Vavua na Pokili Wail Laip Menesmen eria.

Long taim mipela i kamap long ples Makasili, ol pipel bilong ples na komiti wantaim tisa bilong elementeri skul i bin stap long toktok wantaim mipela. Ol i soim bikpela bagarap long rot bilong ol. Elementeri skul tisa, Tito Wesley i tok mun Desemba em i taim bilong bikpela win na ren, na moa graun i save bruk i go daun. Tude, nambis bilong ol i stap daunbilo tru na i no isi long go daun long ples we ol i save putim ol kanu.

Lawrence Lama, i tok, "Sampela taim mipela i mas holim rop na go daun long nambis."

Elementeri skul tu long ples i kisim taim. Long taim bilong ren, wara i save go insait olsem na nau ol i wokim ol nupela klasrum i sanap long pos na i gat wara tenk tu bilong kisim klinpela wara bilong dring.

Ol mama i tok ol i save wokabaut longwe long painim klinpela wara bikos solwara i bagarapim ol hulwara arere long nambis long ples.

Ol pipel bilong ples i planim welpam na groim kaikai long gaden. Tasol ol i tok bikos rot i bagarap, ol bikpela kar bilong New Britain Palm Oil (NBPO) i no inap kam arere long ples long kisim welpam bilong ol.

Ol pipel i askim mipela long tok save long provinsal gavman long helpim ol long stretim dispela rot bilong ol.

Provinsal edministreta Williamson Hosea i bin toktok wantaim ol ripota bihain long dispela lukluk raun na em i bekim sampela askim long dispela Hoskins-Koimomo rot.

Mista Hosea i tok provinsal gavman i luksave long dispela hevi tasol em i wanpela bikpela salens tru na i mas gat bikpela ensinia wok i kamap long stretim dispela rot. Em i tok tu olsem provinsal gavman i putim samting olsem K3milien bilong stretim ol rot na bai ol i yusim sampela bilong dispela long stretim dispela rot long seksen bilong Makasili. Tasol Mista Hosea i tok tu olsem ol pipel i mas tingting long bihain taim bilong ol tu na muvim rot i go insait moa we i longwe long nambis.

Neks wik: Pasin West – Lukluk raun long Pokili Wail Laip Menesmen eria.

REDD+ em i wanem samting

Ol ripota i go lukluk raun long Pokili Wail Laip Menesmen eria. Dispela bus i gat ol wailpaul na ol hot spring i stap long en.

LONG mun Epril, opis bilong Climate Change Development Authority (CCDA) wantaim Yunaitet Nesens Developmen Program (UNDP) i bin holim wanpela trening woksop bilong ol nius ripota long Kimbe, Wes Nu Briten provins.

As bilong dispela woksop em long skulim ol ripota long luksave long REDD+ na raitim ol stori bilong REDD+ na olsem wanem em i tasim laip bilong ol pipel bilong PNG na long ol arapela kantri long wol tu.

Sapos ol ripota i klia long REDD+ program bilong nesenel gavman, bai ol i ken raitim ol stori bilong skulim ol pipel long watpo REDD + em i impoten, na wanem samting Papua Niugini i mekim nau long strongim dispela impoten program bilong gavman.

Insait long dispela wan wik trening, ol ripota i bin gat sans tu long go lukim tripela ples ausait long Hoskins we ol pipel i pilim bagarap bilong klaimet senis, na wanem samting wanpela lain ples i mekim long lukautim gut bus na ol diwai na ol wail paul pisin i stap long Pokili Wail Laip Menesmen eria. Em eria tu em i wanpela ples tambu bilong ol.

Bikpela wok bilong REDD+ em long helpim ol kantri i wok long divelop yet, long lukautim gut ol fores o bus bilong ol, wankain olsem ol arapela kantri long wol tu i mekim, long stopim klaimet senis, aninit long Yunaitet Nesens Fremwok Konvensen long Klaimet Senis (UNFCCC).

Gavman bilong Papua Niugini i mekim ol wok bilong REDD+ olsem kontribusen bilong en long stopim klaimet senis aninit long Paris Agrimen. REDD+ bai helpim Papua Niugini long winim driman bilong en long kamapim divelopmen, tasol long wankain taim tu, bai i no inap long bagarapim envairomen bilong en.

REDD+ i no stopim ikonomik divelopmen nogat. Em i bilong kamapim na strongim o nesenel polisi long sloim daun kabon emisin long taim yumi rausim ol diwa long bus o kampim o bagarap long bus, taso long wankain taim tu, em i sapotim divelopmen kamap long kantri.

Wanem mining o as bilong dispela hap tok REDD+?

REDD+ em ol wok bilong Redusim Emisin long Diforestesen na Fores Degridesen na dispela mak (+) i toktok long konsevim fores long kabon stok, sastenabe menesmen bilong fores na strongim ol fores kabon stok (REDD+)

REDD+ i tok save long yumi no ken bagarapim nabaut ol bus na diwai bilong yumi. Yumi mas mekim ol wok bilong lukautim gut bus na planim bek ol diwai long kisim ples bilong ol dispela yumi katim. Sapos yumi mekim olsem ba graun i no inap sot long o diwai na kabon stok.

Figure 2: A page from *Wantok* newspaper, 2 May 2019.

and must be resolved for successful adaptation to climate change. (Jacobs et al., 2020)

The OCCD's successor body, the Climate Change Development Authority (CCDA) (CCDA About Us, n.d.) has as its stated objective 'to build a climate resilient and carbon neutral pathway for climate compatible development in Papua New Guinea.' (CCDA National Communication, n.d.). Its communication strategy appears to mirror that of the OCCD and to be just as diffuse, including:

> Competitions (quiz, essays, debate), National and international events such as World Environment Day and International Natural Disaster Reduction Day, a university student-led awareness initiative, resource material development for primary and secondary schools, school visits and national consultations. (CCDA National Communication, n.d.)

One noticeable theme in reports on climate change communication in the Pacific and other parts of the world – see, for instance, Nosk-Turner (2014)—is that local people do not understand the science of climate change. However, all the evidence is that the local people being reported on appear to be perfectly well aware that climate change is happening and are adapting to it—or in the case of the New Guinea Highlands, finding new opportunities in it (Barnett-Nagshineh, 2015). This indicates that in a part of the world where the effects of climate change are so obvious, we have moved well beyond the point where people need to understand why it is happening and that concerns about whether or not the science has been communicated is perhaps misplaced. Emphasis on mitigation and survival, the key focus of the PNG's government, appears to be more important.

While the role of the news media in reporting on climate change and fulfilling a development role cannot be underestimated, neither can the use of Tok Pisin to convey climate change communication, something that has been acknowledged by many actors. However, changes to PNG's media landscape are mirrored in the changing nature of Tok Pisin and this may pose challenges to effective communication.

The current state of PNG media and Tok Pisin

According to the 2013 Pacmas report (Tacchi et al, 2013), Papua New Guinea's mainstream media, including radio, television and print, is the most vibrant and diverse in the region. Media penetration is highest in urban areas where the English-speaking population is found. The rapidly increasing mobile telecommunications sector and emergence of online media were significant factors. According to the latest figures available, which are for 2014, mobile phone subscriptions were 44.9 per 100 people, with 9.4 percent of the population using the internet (UN Statistics, n.d.). However, mobile phone use, while significant, faced challenges of poor reception and reliable electricity supplies to re-charge batteries.

Despite this, for many people mobile phones are their chief method of communication. People may still buy a copy of Wantok and read it out to their illiterate friends in the village, but many younger people in the village will have received their news from sources of varying reliability and using non-standard Tok Pisin on their mobile phone.

Research by Intermedia Europe (2012) found that while radio has traditionally been the dominant platform, more households now had access to mobiles than to radio. Many people were using their mobile devices to listen to radio programmes (Cave, 2011). Intermedia Europe also found that in PNG, mobiles were a common way to access the internet, particularly Facebook (Nosk-Turner et al, 2014).

The Intermedia Report made the important point that in Papua New Guinea whether people have access to the media is largely determined by geography rather than other factors, such as age, gender and education (Disaster report). It argued that regions could be termed ‘media-rich’ or ‘media dark’ (Intermedia Europe, 2012).

> In PNG, media dark areas are predominantly located in the islands. TV and newspapers are mainly accessed in urban areas, so that radio and word of mouth remain a significant source of information, especially via family members and friends who travel between provinces in PNG. (Intermedia Europe, 2012)

Literacy rates in Papua New Guinea remain generally low, with the latest available UNESCO figures showing 67.9 percent for people between 15-24 years (UNESCO Country Statistics, n.d.) and the distribution of print media appears to remain confined largely to urban areas, as does television. The one regular print medium in Tok Pisin remains Wantok niuspepa, which was started by Father Francis Mihalic in 1970. While Mihalic said explicitly that he never intended Wantok to become the standard of Tok Pisin usage it has always been regarded as that, since journalists and subeditors are expected to use his dictionary as their guide. (Cass, 2011; 2014)

However, the version of Tok Pisin that is heard on the radio may be significantly different and the versions that are used in digital platforms, streaming services and text services may be even more different. While Tok Pisin was often lambasted, wrongly, as being a broken or baby English, it in fact had quite complicated linguistic rules and a small, but highly flexible vocabulary based around English and German (Cass, 2011; 2014).

Current developments may mean that Wantok remains an island of relative linguistic solidity in the changing fortunes of Tok Pisin, something similar, perhaps to Bokmål and Nynorsk in Norway, which are standardised written versions, but where there is no official spoken version of Norwegian. A similar situation applies to the official written and spoken version of Fijian, which was created by Methodist missionaries from the Bauan dialect. A variety of regional dialects, often mutually incomprehensible, remain.

Tok Pisin appears to be experiencing a period of de-creolisation in which the variant of Tok Pisin spoken varies quite markedly from region to region. This was already noticeable in the 1990s when there were quite easily detectable differences between Tok Pisin as spoken in Rabaul (which my Tolai interlocutors described as 'real' Tok Pisin), the heavily Anglicised version spoken in Port Moresby (which I dubbed Waigani Pisin—as in 'dispela five yia development plan') and the machine gun fast Highlands variety (Cass, 2000).

Anybody contemplating using Tok Pisin as a medium for communicating climate change information has to make a choice about which version to use, and where. The standard Mihalic/Wantok version is the easiest to use since it has a set orthography. It may not, however, be immediately comprehensible to a person used to reading Tok Pisin as text messages or in very different forms online, or illiterate audiences who may hear different versions of Tok Pisin on the National Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) and commercial networks.

Zimmerman (2010) reports a complaint that many radio announcers mixed too much English into their Tok Pisin and were therefore hard to comprehend. She argues that the language in Wantok must have changed, saying:

> One cannot expect a medium reporting on current events in a creole language to use a variety of over 30 years ago . . . . Addressing contemporary issues therefore necessitates the 'invention' of new words, although at least they are largely adapted to conform to Tok Pisin pronunciation and spelling. (Zimmerman, 2010)

Wanamp and Wakei (2014) on the other hand, say that Tok Pisin is influencing English. They speak of a need to re-standardise Tok Pisin, but admit that the creation of new words and new forms of Tok Pisin are attractive to younger users.

> With the onslaught of modern technology, global changes and English, young people are coining new words and creating 'short cuts' which drastically affect their English proficiency skills. It is difficult to stop these influences that Tok Pisin has upon English and local vernacular. (Wanap & Wakei, 2014)

Radio Australia also broadcasts to Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu and Solomon Islands, in Tok Pisin, despite the fact that the neighbouring countries have their own variants, Bislama and Solomon Islands Pidgin. This means that PNG listeners can receive climate change news about PNG but also about their neighbouring states. This can range from general stories such as a report on former Kiribati President

Anote Tong's address to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (Radio Australia, 2018) to country-specific reports, such as one on Vanuatu joining the international climate change strike (Graue, 2018).

Nigeria

Pidgin languages, whether creolised or in a state of flux, exist as lingua franche in many countries. Among the regions where English-based Pidgins are found is West Africa, particularly in Nigeria, but spreading to Mauritania in the north and Cameroon in the south.

Nigeria provides a mirror image of Papua New Guinea as a country where a substantial part of the population speaks Nigerian Pidgin English (hereinafter NPE) but where the language is despised and discounted by the English speaking elite and where historical circumstances and the lack of a champion—as Tok Pisin had with Father Mihalic—means that it has no set rules and appears to remain unregarded as a language in which climate change communication information could be transmitted.

That West African Pidgins are effective has been shown by research done on radio broadcasts used to communicate climate change information in West and Central Africa, a medium suggested by the PNG's OCCD . Among the countries targeted was Cameroon, which has an estimated two million speakers of a Pidgin closely related to NPE. As in PNG, it was noted that mobile phones are being used as radio receivers in the target area (Ojedele, 2016).

The official language of Nigeria is effectively English, which is mainly spoken in urban areas and is described by Olusola (2007) as being seen by the masses as an elite language. The three main language groups in Nigeria are Yoruba, Ibo (also spelt Igbo) and Hausa, while another 400 languages are also spoken in the country. NPE is widely used by the population and the media, but because it is looked down on, its full potential is not realised. Put into a PNG context, it would be like deciding that all climate change communication had to be done in Engan, Huli and Melpa (Hopwood, 2018).

According to Akinnaso (1990) Nigerian Pidgin is stigmatised because it is viewed as a corrupt form of English and is linked to illiterate 'uneducated' people. It is also seen as a threat to standard Nigerian English which is taught in schools and used in formal communication. Akinnaso describes post-colonial language policies in Nigeria as dominated by politics and identity, clashes between regionalism and federalism and other considerations. While most of these battles were dealt with long ago, they meant that NPE was never considered in education planning.

Olusola (2007) argues that the perspective of English as an urban/elite language makes it ineffective in communication environmental material. Akande and Salami (2010) argue that while Nigerian Pidgin is actually spoken by people of all education standards and professionals, it is regarded with some horror by members of the professional and government classes:

> . . . it has been observed that a large number of people across various sectors of the society including particularly those parents who are highly placed government officials, teachers, students in the universities tend to express disgust at its use by youths at home and school premises. This is because they see Nigerian Pidgin English as an inferior language meant for the semi-illiterates and low status members of the society . . . In place of NPE, they have extolled the use of English and the three officially recognised indigenous languages (i.e. Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba) for communication. (Akande & Salami, 2010)

Following an examination of the situation in Nigeria, Olusola (2007) argued that indigenous languages were the most effective way of communicating environmental messages. It is noteworthy, however, that he does not recommend the use of NPE. He argues that coverage of environmental issues in indigenous language newspapers is quite low and appears to favour radio as the most effective form of communication.

> An examination of environmental messages shows an alienation of most of the people who the messages are meant for. The reason is that the messages are packaged in the language that most people do not understand—English. The newspaper contents, and most radio and television programmes are designed in English. Not only does the language of packaging make the messages foreign and elite-oriented, it results in the ex-communication of the people who the messages are meant for. Even the indigenous language newspapers give very low coverage to development issues. Salawu`s (2002) study on development content of Yoruba newspapers shows that all the development issues combined take 27.39 percent of editorial contents of issues of newspapers analysed. (Olusola, 2007)

Olusola, Oyesomi et al. (2018) argue that climate change information must be tailored to each community's economic, social and cultural situation: 'People's indigenous languages exert a lot of influence on the reception of development messages.' They advocate using indigenous languages to better communicate climate change information, but do not advocate—or even mention—NPE. It would appear that if the government, media or aid agencies were to communicate using indigenous languages then they would have to use hundreds of languages. Even using just the three main languages would either risk missing significant parts of the population or having to triplicate the work necessary. Using NPE would appear to be the most logical method of reaching everybody.

The question remains, however, why those proposing climate change education in Nigeria continue to ignore it as a medium for communication. On the evidence, the answer would appear to lie in a desire to concentrate on the three main language groups, possibly for political reasons, and accept the risk of missing the speakers of the 400 other languages. It also appears likely that NPE is ignored because of the dismissive attitude to the language by those most likely to be making decisions about climate change communication.

The BBC

In 2010, the BBC World Trust programme Africa Talks Climate: Nigeria, reported that

> . . . . in Africa, climate change is far from abstract—it is already determining the course of people's lives. Extreme weather events and greater unpredictability in weather patterns are having serious consequences for people who rely on land, lakes and seas to feed themselves and to earn a living. As a result, Africa's engagement with the issue is evolving rapidly, presenting an opportunity to leapfrog the slow evolution of Western public opinion and political action. (Cooke & Mohhamed, 2010)

The research focused on four key questions:

1. What changes have Nigerian citizens experienced in their climate and environment over time?
2. How do they explain and respond to these changes?
3. What do they know and understand about global climate change?
4. What do Nigerian opinion leaders know and understand about climate change and what are their views on Nigeria's response to climate change (Cooke & Mohhamed, 2010)

The report went on to say that it appeared that while most Nigerians had experienced the effects of climate change, they did not understand the causes. The report quoted one media worker as saying that 'Nigerians still look at it as one of those white scientific ideas that has nothing to do with us as a country' (Cooke & Mohhamed, 2010). The media worker went on to say climate change terminology could be better explained using Pidgin in TV drama and said it was like talking about HIV/AIDS.

Seven years after the report was written, the BBC World Service began providing an online Pidgin service to West Africa, just as Radio Australia broadcasts to PNG, Vanuatu and Solomon Islands in Tok Pisin. The BBC uses a mixture of the national variants in order to create a regional standard and the BBC's choices are creating a standardised language with rules governing usage, something that Tok Pisin has had since the 1960s (de Freytas-Tamura, 2017). Just as Radio Australia provides climate change news, so does the BBC's Pidgin service. The BBC appears to be creating rules for NPE usage. Examples of climate change stories include:

- Scientists for Cambridge dey plan to set up one research centre to develop new ways to repair di Earth climate.
- E go investigate radical method (approach) like refreezing di Earth poles and removing CO2 from di atmosphere. (BBC News Pidgin, 2019)
- Di temperature for Antarctica—di coldest place for world—don pass 20C for di first time, afta researchers record temperature of 20.7C for one island wey dey di coast of di continent.
- Brazilian scientist Carlos Schaefer tell AFP say ‘dem neva see dis kain high temperature for Antarctica’. (BBC News Pidgin, 2020)

However, the catch for reaching a wider audience is that it is an online service aimed at the younger audience, which means many rural dwellers, precisely the audience that could probably benefit most from having climate change news provided in NPE, may miss out.

Recommendations and conclusion

From the foregoing information, it appears that it would be appropriate to investigate a number of areas of climate change communication in PNG. Questions that immediately come to mind in PNG are how and where people are gaining their information, in what language, in what variety of Tok Pisin and how effective the information is. Because a range of methods have been proposed or implemented by different actors, from billboards to radio broadcast to school books and especially because of different experiences of climate change in different provinces, any research will have to be multi-faceted and draw on a range of expertise and speakers of several languages.

The BBC Trust report is an example of large scale investigation, involving interviews in several languages, including NPE, with audience members, media workers and government officials. The research consisted of 24 focus-group discussions with citizens and 31 indepth interviews with opinion leaders across four states in Nigeria. In each location, focus groups explored one key environmental issue which has been linked to climate change, or may be exacerbated by climate change in the future. Importantly, the report identified the media and schools are people’s main sources of information. (Cooke & Mohhamed, 2010)

At the other end of the scale, Di Gregorio et al’s (2014) analysis of REDD+ stories in the national media of Brazil, Peru, Cameroon, Indonesia, Vietnam, Nepal and Papua New Guinea provides a valuable example of a desktop-based analysis of discourse around climate change mitigation. Analysing the opinions of policy actors, it spanned the period from 2005-2010 and looked at stories from three newspapers in each country.

It could provide a useful template for an analysis of how audiences have reacted to or comprehended climate change information through letters to the editor at *Wantok* or in online fora around specific issues.

A more recent survey of communication effectiveness is the second Bougainville Audience Study (Thomas et al., 2019), which was designed to assess the response of 1000 Bougainvilleans to information on the Bougainville Peace Agreement, the Autonomous Bougainville Government and referendum preparations. It was intended to provide a guide for members of the government, the media and NGOs preparing public awareness campaigns for the Bougainville independence campaigns. (Thomas et al, 2019)

An earlier report demonstrated low levels of awareness due to poor access to media and government. More than 583 people took part in the research on Bougainville itself and about 250 semi-structured interviews were conducted to find out how people had received information and their opinion of it (Thomas et al., 2019).

In line with trends already noted (Nosk-Turner et al., 2014; Tacchi et al., 2013) mobile phones were the dominant communication medium. Two thirds of respondents said there was mobile coverage in their area. The main challenge with mobile phones was coverage and reception. Also in line with earlier parts of this article, the report noted a request that information be provided in Tok Pisin.

Of especial interest were the report's findings on audience perceptions of the trustworthiness of sources. These showed that clergy were the most trusted and that in general community leaders were considered the most reliable, with newspapers ranking in the middle and internet, Facebook and other social media coming last (Thomas et al., 2019).

The thoroughness and size of the survey were noteworthy, especially given that it was restricted to one province. Given that Bougainville is already suffering from the effects of climate change and has become a new home for people moving from the Carteret Islands, which have had to be abandoned, it would seem to be the ideal site for a survey of the effectiveness of climate change communication (de Jong, 2019; Rakova, 2014, Box, 2009).

Papua New Guinea faces huge problems with climate change. Educating the *grassruts*, finding ways for them to share information on best practice and engaging with communities across the country on this issue will remain an enormous challenge. A stocktaking of the communication processes used to share information about climate change can only help to prepare Papua New Guinea for the future.

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This article is based on a paper presented at the Melanesia Media Freedom Forum (MMFF) held at Griffith University in Brisbane, Queensland, 11-12 November 2019. One of the participants, the author represented Pacific Journalism Review as acting editor of the research journal. Dr Philip Cass is the associate editor and reviews editor of PJR. He was formerly graduate programme leader in the Department of Communication Studies at Unitec in Auckland. He has been a journalism and media educator in the Arabian Gulf, Australia, Britain, Fiji and Papua New Guinea. His doctoral thesis, People, Politics and Press in Papua New Guinea, 1950-1975, explored how the press in PNG reflected the rapid political and social changes from the end of the Second World War to the creation of an independent nation.
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13. Talking the talk

Navigating frameworks of development communication

Abstract: Journalism in Melanesia faces many challenges. Journalists strive for independence and objectivity while carefully navigating the needs and demands of communities, fragile states, and increasingly repressive governments. Personal safety is a concern in some places and there seems to be no abate to the growing encroachments on press freedom. There are also more insidious pressures. The influence of the global aid industry means that Melanesian journalists may find themselves under pressure to conform to dominant narratives of development in order to appease donors and training providers. This can result in journalism that paints a misleading picture of the way things are, instead showing donors and international interests what they want to see. This article offers a critical review of the approaches to development communication that may impact on the ways in which Melanesian journalists are able to work within this pervasive development discourse.

Keywords: communication for development, development, development communication, journalism, media for development, media development, Melanesia, Melanesia Media Freedom Forum

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Introduction

THE IMPORTANCE of a free and independent press cannot be overstated. There have recently been a number of direct challenges, even attacks, on press freedom in Melanesia levelled by governments and other powerful groups (Robie, 2018). The focus of this article though lies with a more insidious subversion of press freedom in the form of the development industry. The development industry has a significant impact upon the way journalists are able to do their jobs. While development journalism has significant potential to contribute to the media landscape in Melanesia (Robie, 2013), the influence of the development industry seems to overpower the benefits. Papoutsaki observed this directly in a 2008 review of development reporting in the South Pacific:

> In most cases, journalists based in capitals get their material from press conferences and duly report on how AusAID, NZAID, EU, JICA, UNESCO,

> UNDP and other aid and development agencies have spent or plan to spend their aid funds on development programmes. (Papoutsaki, 2008, p. 27)

This represents a key problem with some models of development journalism that is broadly symptomatic of the broader influence of the development industry. This article presents a critical exploration of the dominant models of communication for development and social change, and discusses the impacts they may have on reporting in Melanesia.

The development juggernaut

Development is big business. It is a multibillion-dollar industry, involving every country in the world either as a donor or a recipient or, increasingly, both (Ramalingam, 2013). Hobart reminds us that though 'the prevailing rhetoric is of altruistic concern for the less fortunate, it is wise to remember that development is big business' (2002, p. 2). Indeed, while development should lead to human progress, this is not necessarily always the case (Robie, 2008). Powell and Seddon go so far as to refer to the development industry as 'a monstrous multinational alliance of global corporations, a kind of juggernaut' (1997, p. 3). Much like other big businesses, not only does the development industry respond to global demand, but it finds ways of shaping demand to suit its own interests (Powell & Seddon, 1997). These interests are not explicit but are pervasively shaped by a framework of beliefs and assumptions about systems, problems, human agency, social structures, and the nature of change itself; beliefs that guide the way the development juggernaut learns, makes decisions, relates to external actors, and assesses itself (Ramalingam, 2013, p. 125). Manyozo refers to this phenomenon as an 'organised systemic discourse', that sees oppression operate through these 'structured, orderly and symbolic set of structures and processes and systems' (2017, p. 35). Both symptomatic and supportive of these structures are the institutions—local and international NGOs, donors, foreign governments, financial lenders—institutional oppression is essential to holding this 'regime of rules, regulations and arbitrary considerations' together (Manyozo, 2017, p. 23). These institutions, supported by a systemic discourse, serve to support the dominance of the development industry around the world. The robustness of the development industry has stood the test of time and seems impervious to critique. Despite the extensive and high-profile critiques levelled at the development and aid industries on the basis of inefficacy and economics (Easterly, 2006; Moyo, 2009; Ramalingam, 2013, among many others), the juggernaut rolls on. The reason for this could be attributed to the robust system of beliefs underpinning the sectors that serves as self-reinforcement and acts as somewhat of a shield against these incisive criticisms. Manyozo terms this phenomenon 'the spectacle of development' which involves the 'production, exchange and utilisation' of imaginaries that are based on stereotypes, fail to acknowledge difference, and silence the voices of marginalised groups (2017, p. 14). Considering development as a performative spectacle provides a useful frame for understanding the insidious ways in which development and, subsequently communication for development, shapes the lives of so-called 'beneficiaries'.

Media, communication and development

The use of communication within development agendas is a complex area of research; any research within this field must engage with literature in the fields of both development and communication, as well as countless intersecting fields such as media and audience research, behavioural studies, economics and political theory to name just a few. The terminology in itself also defies simple definition. Terms describing the phenomenon of using communication in development have undergone many re-inventions and paradigm shifts. A number of scholars and practitioners have extensively deconstructed the history and movement of paradigms and definitions around development and communication (Dagron & Tufte, 2006; McAnany, 2012; Servaes, 2008). Rather than engage in what Mansell (1982) calls 'superficial revisionism' by reiterating these arguments, this research opts to use Manyozo's (2012) suggested terminology of 'media, communication and development'. The use of this term clearly demarcates the distinctive but interrelated aspects of the field without assigning overt value or meaning to any one in particular. The emphasis here is on approaches rather than an overarching term, approaches that question the concepts of development communication, communication for development, and communication for development and social change as one homogenous field of study (ibid.). Grounding enquiry through these approaches or subdisciplines also contributes to mainstreaming the field and provides a solid foundation from which to operate (Lie & Servaes, 2015)

Media, communication and development (MCD), and the definition of development, as they have been employed in this article, are intentionally broad. Specific definitions can be limiting and can fail to take into account the diversity of development communication projects. Manyozo explains that 'the different approaches that characterise the study and practice of the field of MCD makes it very impractical to develop a single theory or model that may attempt to explain the heterogeneous field' (2012, p. 52). The success of these approaches is heavily dependent on context and which approach is more appropriate of the cultural, political and social environment in which it takes place (Servaes, 2008). Similarly, Lie and Servaes write of framing the field within a 'communication for development and social change', in terms of subdisciplines as a way of moving from 'an emphasis on homogeneity toward an emphasis on differences' (2015, p. 252). As such, rather than offering a single, prescriptive theory for development communication or definition of development, it is more useful to examine the predominant approach to media, communication and development. Scott (2014) identifies three intersections of development studies and media studies as C4D (communication for development), media development and media representations of development. The latter of which refers mostly to the work of advertising, marketing and public relations in shaping the perceptions of audiences in the global North around the global South and development activities. While Scott writes of the importance of these activities in a holistic approach to development, they fall outside the scope of this article.

Media for development

Media for development (M4D) is a form of C4D intervention and refers to the use of media as a tool to influence the knowledge, attitudes and behaviours of a public for development purposes. M4D may include diverse forms of media such as traditional advertising and marketing campaigns, development journalism, and education-entertainment in the form of soap operas. In this approach, the perceived development problem is a lack of information, therefore the solution to that problem is to simply provide that information (Scott, 2014). M4D draws its theoretical underpinnings from the modernisation paradigm of early C4D theory (Scott, 2014). Based on the work of several key scholars, namely Lerner, Rogers and Schramm, modernisation suggested that developmental problems were the result of traditional cultures and could be addressed simply by introducing modern values and technologies. This paradigm was characterised by top-down, centralised approaches towards development with Schramm (1964) going so far as to imply that development activities should be entirely government-run. The primary failing of this perspective was the assumption that a Western model for capitalistic, economic growth was applicable everywhere (Melkote & Steeves, 2001; Scott, 2014). Imperialist overtones aside, an additional criticism of the modernisation paradigm was its simplistic, prescriptive approach which can be summarised through one of the more prominent theories of the paradigm. Everett Rogers' (1995) diffusion of innovations theory detailed the stages that individuals work through in order to adopt innovations, which were assumed to facilitate development. As 'awareness' and 'knowledge' were the two initial stages, the diffusion theory made use of mass media to achieve these steps, engaging in a one-way transfer of information (McAnany, 2012; Scott, 2014). Both the diffusion theory and modernisation more broadly were reflective of communication theory at the time, which assumed the communication process was linear and predictable (Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009). An apt example of the modernisation paradigm, its problems and its historical connection with M4D was a failed programme in Samoa, in which lessons in schools were delivered via television programmes. It was posthumously summarised by the American project advisers who were asked 'primarily whether television was feasible, not whether it was best' (Schramm, Nelson, & Betham, 1981, p. 193). Despite these apparent failings, modernisation continues to influence development initiatives such as M4D. Waisbord (2005) observes that, while the diffusion/modernisation paradigm is widely regarded as outdated, no single paradigm has replaced it. In fact, these early C4D paradigms still seem to inform practice and policy (Tacchi, 2013). Though it is far from the preferred method of affecting development initiatives, there remains a place for top-down, modernisation-style approaches. Hence the prolific nature of the M4D approach. This research will build on the literature to date by exploring the listening practices of community radio stations. Understanding these practices has implications for future M4D interventions: a more thorough understanding of the ways in which stations and their audiences interact can assist in the development of more holistic M4D interventions that engage with audiences in a more relevant way.

The major critique associated with M4D is the assumption that the provision of information is enough to solve development problems. Thomas (2008, p. 35) conceptualises this phenomenon as 'poverty as a lack of access': theoretically, providing information should act as a catalyst for access to other services but in reality there is a disconnect. Simply disseminating information is not enough to effect long-term behavioural changes (Dagron & Bleck, 2001; Scott, 2014; Servaes, 2008). M4D approaches can fail to take into account complex social, cultural, economic and environmental constraints, and can be limited by a narrow definition of development. The Western-centric roots of M4D can sometimes lie close to the surface through assumptions that modern ideas are superior to cultural practices and traditions. In terms of community radio, Pavarala (2015) concedes that M4D is a 'legitimate idea' but that using media as simply a way of disseminating 'development' is a legacy of a postcolonial nation-building paradigm in which audiences are seen as merely passive recipients of information. Though in some circumstances, particularly in regards to health issues, there is unquestionable value in using the media to promote modern technologies, however there are many grey areas: discussions around family sizes, for example. As Waisbord (2005, p. 89) considers, 'Who had the right to determine which cultural practices are desirable and need to be preserved?'

In addition to cultural norms and values, M4D sometimes fails to consider the economic and environmental constraints facing audiences, and the fundamental sources of these issues. Manyozo (2012) goes so far as to argue that M4D projects are worthless if they do nothing to address the root causes of inequality. Scott (2014) elaborates:

> You may know that certain healthcare services have recently become free, and you may even have changed your attitude towards the efficacy of non-

> traditional healthcare, but if you live 50 kilometres from the nearest health centre, such knowledge and attitude cannot easily translate into changes in behaviour. (Scott, 2014, p. 28)

The issue lies not in awareness but in infrastructure and access to services, problems that cannot be solved through communication interventions alone. Assuming that information is the only barrier to solving development problems is simplistic at best. Within this criticism of M4D also lies the assumption that audiences are passive, predictable and will accept media messages without question. Disregarding audience agency reveals the problematic behaviour models used by many M4D interventions (ibid.). In this respect, M4D is reminiscent of the banking model of education, so strongly critiqued by Freire (2000), in which teachers simply make 'deposits' of information that students passively receive, file and store. This is deeply problematic as Appadurai (2004, p. 63) writes that a lack of agency or voice is one of the 'gravest lacks' of the poor.

Participatory communication

Participatory communication is a C4D-driven approach and focuses on a dialogical approach to communication rather than the more linear model seen in M4D. Local participation and collective decision-making are involved throughout the development process, from identifying the issues to taking action. Participatory communication also places emphasis on indigenous knowledge and experiences, which are understood to be essential to understanding and addressing local problems (Jacobson, 2003). This approach holds a lot of potential with Servaes and Malikhao (2005) suggesting that participatory communication could represent a new paradigm in development communication.

The participatory communication approach can trace its origins back to the work of Paulo Freire and the Latin American school of thought on development communication (Manyozo, 2012). Emerging independently from Western development thinking, early participatory communication projects yielded success stories like Radio Sutatenza in Colombia and the miners' radio stations in Bolivia (Gumucio-Dagron, 2005; Manyozo, 2009, 2012). Freire played an instrumental role in the evolution of participatory communication and its role in development. Though his work was developed for an education setting, it has been widely applied to development communication (Scott, 2014). Freire advocated for active participation through dialogue with a goal of empowerment or '*conscientizacão*'—action-oriented awareness (Freire, 2000; Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009). Freire also emphasises the importance of dialogue, a sentiment echoed by Servaes and Malikhao who refer to dialogue as 'inherent in participation' (2008, p. 170). Dialogue is a recurrent theme throughout the literature on participatory communication. Scott (2014, p. 49) defines dialogue as an 'ongoing, inclusive and multidirectional exchange between equals'. The importance of dialogue and participatory communication were formally recognised when, in the MacBride report, UNESCO advocated for employing participatory communication as a way of supporting development from below. The report placed particular emphasis on dialogical 'communication between men' (MacBride, 1980, p. 205). Waisbord (2014) suggests that, in a participatory model, communication is understood in terms of dialogue. Furthermore, Jacobson (2016) suggests that dialogue plays a key role in how participatory communication supports Amartya Sen's aforementioned argument for the use of a capabilities approach as a way of understanding development. He explains that participatory communication, through public dialogue, shares an emphasis on citizen agency with the capabilities approach. Dialogue and participatory communication allow for the comparison of different realities and perceptions while building trust among stakeholders, which plays a crucial role in identifying and solving collective problems (Mefalopulos, 2005). Participatory communication represents a way of approaching media, communication and development that highlights the importance of agency and dialogue in facilitating inclusive, grassroots development.

While widely accepted at the theoretical and policy level, as evidenced through the aforementioned literature, there remain questions about how participatory communication works in practice. Tacchi explains that although dialogue means 'valuing voice, recognition and respect, we are still fundamentally lacking an understanding of the information and communication needs and aspirations of people living in poverty' (2012, pp. 661–662). This encapsulates one of the aims of this research, which will focus on how media can explore these communication needs necessary for meaningful participatory communication.

Many of the critiques associated with participatory communication relate to balancing meaningful, participatory activities with the demands of funding bodies and reporting requirements. Slater captures the essence of the problem in his blunt assessment: 'You get repeat funding if you can demonstrate social outcomes and outputs directly or potentially attributable to your media intervention' (2013, p. 28). In reality, particularly in regards to participatory communication projects, drawing conclusions and distilling 'social outcomes and outputs' into something measurable and comparable is a complex, difficult task. This leads to some of the primary critiques of participatory communication. Thomas (2014, p. 10) provides a scathing assessment in this sense arguing that there has been an 'evisceration of meaning' and that participation is now more important for funding and report-writing than a tool to build the capacity of local communities. Participation could easily be accused of being just a buzzword, one that has been superficially co-opted to redeem or salvage the dominant (modernisation) paradigm (Huesca, 2008). There is, however, ambiguity in the term participation; it has been described as a continuum ranging from manipulation and passive participation to empowerment (Arnstein, 1969; Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009). The broadness of that definition is somewhat unsatisfying in terms of a concrete definition of participatory communication that could be used to preserve the essence of the approach from being co-opted. Scott (2014) recognises the elusive nature of a strict definition of participatory communication and suggests that participatory and diffusion models may be complementary rather than contradictory. An example of this could be public health crises or emergencies when fast, centralised decision-making is necessary in the first instance (Waisbord, 2001). Slower, participatory programmes could still be useful in this example but perhaps in reflective, preventative roles once the immediate crises are resolved. While aspects of participatory communication may have been co-opted, or incorporated, into programs that align with the dominant paradigm, there remains scope for the two approaches to complement one another and employ different levels of participation to achieve their goals.

While many of the critiques around participatory communication relate to reporting and the difficulties associated with quantifying the results of participatory projects for funding bodies, research itself also presents issues. Much of the research on participatory communication is not reflective of what is happening on the ground. As Slater (2013, p. 3) puts it: 'the North provides the theory; the South provides the data'. Aside from the cultural and linguistic barriers this presents, many participatory communication projects remain invisible to those outside the community as they are not promoted, funded or associated with major development bodies (Gumucio-Dagron, 2008). Thomas (2014) concurs, making the observation that, while large-scale, highly visible projects struggle with integrating true participation, small-scale projects are much more likely to embrace an all-encompassing approach to participation. Participation though is a term laden with different values, a further key critique of the participatory communication movement. Who is able to participate and how, represents a fundamental challenge of participatory communication (Backhaus, 2019).

Media development

The final approach within media, communication and development to be examined is media development. This refers to building the capacity of the media in order to achieve and support a free, plural, professional and sustainable press (Deane, 2014). Building media capacity may refer to physical infrastructure and advocacy work to improve government policies, media ownership and training opportunities (Manyozo, 2012). As opposed to the C4D approaches that will be discussed in upcoming sections, media development in its purest form is focussed on the support of journalism and democracy rather than achieving specific development goals or agendas (Deane, 2014). Despite what traditional media development dictates, UNESCO has unequivocally linked media development with human development in an International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC) report (Peña-López, 2008). Behind this link is the understanding that a free and open media is a necessary condition for human development. This is in accordance with Sen's (1999) aforementioned assertion of development as freedom in that the expansion of freedom of expression can be seen as a means of development itself. By building the infrastructure necessary for a free and independent press, media development as an approach also aligns with Sen's capabilities approach. Both media development and participatory communication 'can be directly equated with capabilities that communities may choose to prefer in greater or lesser amounts' (Jacobson, 2016, p. 16). How exactly this occurs and the relationship between media and development is also extensively discussed by Scott. He cites a number of empirical studies that illustrate a link between media and development (see Armah & Amoah, 2010; Norris & Zinnbauer, 2002, in Scott 2014). Assuming that this is indeed the case, there are a number of different forms of media development activities. Manyozo (2012) classifies these activities into two strands: good governance and community development.

The good governance, or dominant, stream of media development focuses more on facilitating broader systemic changes to support media environments. Key aspects of this stream include supporting plurality and diversity of media, professional capacity-building, creating and maintaining an enabling environment, developing infrastructure, and building media literacy in audiences (Manyozo, 2012; Peña-López, 2008; Scott, 2014). The good governance stream of media development derives from political theory and the assumption that because a pluralistic and independent press has contributed to democracy in the West, it will do the same in the global South (Manyozo, 2012). This assumption is supported broadly: Pavarala and Malik make specific reference to the importance of plurality of the media in the current global media environment. Rather than the misuse of state power, they believe that the biggest threat to media freedom is the unchecked evolution of media organisations into multinational conglomerates controlled by a handful of wealthy, powerful owners (Pavarala & Malik, 2007). A large part of this stream, what Scott cites as 'the most common and indeed the most well-funded of media development overall', is journalism training (2014, p. 80). While generally considered important, questions have been raised over the widespread emphasis on this aspect of media development. Javuru (2012) observes that all journalists, well-trained or not, work within the constraints of the system. Even a generous training budget does little to counteract a stifling regulatory environment and limited freedom of the press. Rather than broad, sweeping priorities, decisions about which aspects of media development to focus on should be based on the prevailing local circumstances (Scott, 2014). While work in the good governance stream is vital for media development, a balance needs to be struck between broad regulatory change and specialised, local interventions.

The second stream, the 'community development' stream, focusses more on small-scale, local interventions with an emphasis on participation and indigenous knowledge communication systems (IKCS). The primary work of this stream involves increasing citizen access and participation in local media by working within, rather than in opposition to, traditional governance systems (Manyozo, 2012). Participation and equal access forms a major part of this stream of media development. A major influence is Habermas' classic theory of the media as a public sphere, a space where public opinion can be formed through open access to information and respectful, deliberative debate (1991). At a local level, IKCS are essential to creating and maintaining the local public sphere and therefore facilitating gossip, discussion and dialogue on relevant issues. The work of media development activities in this space focus more on developing communication processes within the community (Manyozo, 2012). This stream of media development illustrates the broadness of the field: from small-scale community media interventions to high-level regulatory negotiations, media development encompasses a vast range of activities.

The primary critique of media development activities is that they represent a Western-centric, modernisation approach to development that focuses on external interventions rather than local knowledge. Like many aspects of modern development communication, media development has roots in the modernisation work of Lerner and Schramm, and later UNESCO (Manyozo, 2012). These roots can still be seen through the many interventionist-based media development activities. Indeed, Berger notes that media development discourse generally is narrow in its definitions: media development is considered as 'externally originating proactive steps to "develop" the media … between North–South developers and "developees"' while more organic, local growth is not perceived as a form of media development (2010, 550). The formation of news network Al Jazeera is a high-profile example of this double standard: significant for the perceived 'development' of Qatar's media landscape, yet rarely considered an example of media development (ibid.). Scott (2014, 96) provides a succinct summary of this critique:

> Focusing on media development as an external intervention is problematic because it obscures the central role of internal or indigenous developments within the media. This is important because the most successful examples of media development are widely agreed to be those driven by local governments and people, rather than donors.

Media development programmes focus on establishing and supporting a pluralistic media environment. Though there is undeniable value in projects of this nature, locally-driven media development projects have enjoyed more success than interventionist approaches.

Conclusion

It is clear that the field of media, communication and development is complex and that the dominant approaches within this field come with a range of critiques. Engaging with these critiques and understanding the dominant approaches is essential to finding ways that journalists can exploit this industry rather than be exploited. There is a complex and powerful system at play that aims to influence the ways in which journalism is conducted in the Global South. These dominant approaches to communication for development also fail to capture discussions around the role of development journalism in fragile and fledgling nations. Indeed, Berger argues for 'unbundling' media development and looking at sub-categories such as 'journalism development' to allow for the integration of new media and the practices that come with it (Berger, 2010).

Further, what was central to the critiques of these dominant approaches is the danger of top-down media, communication and development projects managed by external interests. Clumsy, external interventions, as well-intentioned as they may be, can do more harm than good. As Bohane (2006, p. 4) observes, much political and journalistic discourse fails to recognise the catalysing role of '*kastom* and so-called "cult" movements'. Interventionist approaches are ineffective, true change and support for media and journalists must be driven by the grassroots. As Robie (2013, p. 105; 2014) argues, it is not just development but 'deliberative and critical development journalism' that have an essential role to play in the future of Melanesia. The unique blend of Western, democratic standards of journalism and Pacific development media must be defended (Cass, 2004). Gatherings like the Melanesia Media Freedom Forum (MMFF) offer essential opportunities to create communities of practice among Melanesian journalists and media workers. Knowledge sharing among those directly impacted by external communication for development interventions is essential if journalists are to able to do their jobs.

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14. Forgetting PNG?
Australian media coverage of Papua New Guinea

Abstract: Coverage of Papua New Guinea (PNG) in Australian media has been a source of resentment and dissatisfaction among academic writers and journalists within PNG and in Australia, and PNG activists and political leaders since the former Territory's independence in 1975. A survey of Australian media coverage during 2007-11 found there was a low volume of coverage and much of the content was negative. The Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) provided an exception by maintaining a Port Moresby correspondent. The present study finds the volume of coverage has increased slightly with indications of more positive approaches in reporting on the country. It contrasts disinterest in PNG among established Australian press and commercial television, with the ongoing contribution of ABC, and the 'new media' *Guardian Australia* making a targeted and well-serviced entry into the field.

Keywords: Australian Broadcasting Corporation, coverage, foreign correspondence, Papua New Guinea, political journalism, Radio Australia, *The Guardian*, *The Sydney Morning Herald*

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Introduction

WAS Papua New Guinea (PNG) forgotten by Australia after independence in 1975? That is a conclusion which could be drawn from the very limited coverage of the former Territory which occurred in Australian mass media. It was an omission marked by some exasperation, resentment and dissatisfaction among academics, journalists and political leaders within PNG, noted by non-PNG observers such as those cited here. Thirty years post-independence, the question was addressed in a research collaboration based on monitoring and assessment of actual levels of coverage. Ginau and Papoutsaki (2007) found 40 articles about PNG subjects in six Australian newspapers chosen for analysis; Duffield et al (2008) analysed broadcast media content; and the studies were brought together by Ginau et al., in Papoutsaki et al. (2011), to settle on conclusions that media treatment of PNG in Australia was not only sparse in volume, but where it occurred, it tended to be 'negative'.

It was found that coverage by the ABC and its international service, Radio Australia, provided some relief from this, with a consistent flow of reportage containing usually more ‘positive’ treatments.

The debate over what was taking place embraced a range of arguments that became prevalent from the early 1970s, for example taking up Galtung’s (1965) formulation of the ‘centres’ and ‘peripheries’ in the media world: That the commercial imperatives of Western news media permitted near-exclusively the extraction of ‘bad news’ stories which could arrest the attention of home audiences, usually on violent conflict and disasters; like street crime in Port Moresby, expulsion of the ‘Sandline’ mercenaries, or the Aitape tsunami. Overseas journalists deploying liberal, or commercial ‘news values’, such as the privileging of conflict in the news, were seen as uninformed and culturally insensitive, distorting the reality of life in post-colonial settings (Ginau & Papoutsaki, 2007:127-28).

A plea would be made for more exposure of local people, and not just elite figures, as sources for the news; more news about their needs and way of life, and ‘development news’ about achievement. In response, as local editors and journalists would affirm, news operations were seen as restricted by difficulties with high costs and poor infrastructure (Duffield, 2004), and at times officialdom withholding information or visas (Dorney, 1998). These interactions and discussions reflected widespread concern that PNG society was not being faithfully or adequately reported to itself or the world at large. News media to a significant extent were supporting the characterisation of PNG as principally a site for the limited or ‘negative’ agenda: tribal war and urban violence, Australians suffering injury and misadventure, commemorative visits to the Kokoda Trail battlefields, relief work during natural disasters, some sports especially popularity in PNG of Australia’s State of Origin football, and sometimes a *sing-sing*, ‘cultural’ performance for documentary-style treatment. Several other matters would come up occasionally and in isolation—cases of official corruption, logging and the environment, business and finance reports about the resources industry, or news from parliament—without achieving routinised treatment for updates, connectivity or continuity.

The present study, after a further 10 years, was carried out to ascertain whether at all the unsatisfactory situation had improved, specifically with a possible increase in volume of coverage. It might obtain information on whether events in the news, and developments in media had made PNG a less marginal, and in cases a better understood field for media interest.

It was concluded that coverage of PNG has an acknowledged, if limited, place in Australia’s general news agendas, where for example it might be expected that a major political story will be aired, but with overall a modest tally of individual PNG items in the count-up of reports published in Australia. The reviewing exercise has shown more clearly the divergence among Australian media, with the

News Corp press and commercial television showing little interest while 'quality' orientated media, such as the ABC and *Sydney Morning Herald*, if not providing heavy coverage, at least showed consistent attention.

The review did not find a pronounced weighting overall towards 'negative' treatment of news, that would be pejorative, or confined to a 'mantra' of violence and disaster. Certainly large problem issues for the country existed and demanded coverage, such as corruption charges against the recently-removed Prime Minister, but the tendency was towards more detached reporting on a problem solving process, not exploitative treatment with potential to in some way aggravate the situation. Similarly, while the sourcing of reports continued to include mostly 'outside' voices or elite figures in PNG society, social responsibility would be observed on the part of the news media, where the civil society, *viz* sports officials, health workers or the views of private citizens also would be represented. One major change was the advent of *The Guardian*, Australian edition, as a new participant, with a well-serviced plan for expanding and changing the character of reporting from PNG.

Method and approach

The task was to obtain a record of reporting on PNG from a survey of content of Australian mass media. The research problem was to assess the extent and quality of Australian media coverage of PNG, in the light of critical findings obtained previously. The questions included: What volume of coverage is provided by a selection of main media outlets? What will be the content of this coverage, as a set of news topics, and its characteristics in terms of a faithful reflection of events? What inferences might be drawn on the authenticity of the coverage and its value to users in understanding the 'life' of PNG?

The undertaking dealt predominantly with news pages and news bulletins, but included information on other relevant content. Only events with a reference to PNG were considered except that some issues to do with the close neighbour Papua, in Indonesia, were accepted. Given the scope of this project, with one researcher, the approach taken was to define a period which was extended enough, that it might be seen to contain the news cycle on some main issues; and then to work through a wide enough selection of exemplars to be able to identify agendas, trends, similarities and differences in the coverage. It provided a sampling of the offerings of a representative set of media outlets, for limited periods within the prescribed time frame. Planning was informed by the volume of material encountered in the research done during 2007-11. The content monitoring was carried out from 1 October 2019 through to 14 January 2020.

The exercise reviewed essentially the same media outlets as in the earlier research: three newspapers, two commercial free-to-air television stations and the Special Broadcasting Service (SBS), the ABC and Radio Australia, and the addition of *The Guardian* (listed under News Media). As all of these outlets have their content posted directly online or in versions formatted for online and mobile users, there was far greater accessibility than nine years earlier. The exercise could not replicate the research conducted in 2007-11, as a group project carried out over a longer period, which happened prior to certain key changes, especially the founding of *The Guardian* in Australia, and technological changes giving good access to content, but not through the same process of checking—for example much quicker access to archived 'stories' and 'clips' as well as episode run-downs displayed by the commercial television networks. Only three print newspapers were reviewed against six previously, while *The Guardian* was added. In 2019-20, opening pages and noting, then compiling the topics for the reports as they were found, was a sequential effort over the prescribed interval of time. The news outlets studied had much the same, historical events and processes to work with as each other, during this restricted, six-weeks period.

Within its limits, the rationale was that answers to the researcher's questions would emerge as the data was obtained and organised in a sequence. The experience of reading this, as the proceedings and results were documented for the respective media outlets, one-by-one, might be seen as an unfolding of the history and substance of all of their coverage being brought together.

Monitoring of media content

Commercial free to air television and SBS

Commercial free to air television remains heavily watched with content firmly fixed on immediate and close-to-home interests of the maximum available reach and number of Australian viewers. These are scarcely in the 'market' for material that might be available from relatively 'remote' PNG, whatever possibilities can be imagined, for example: cultural material, travel, wildlife, investment, or political developments like the fall of a government, independence for Bougainville or penetration of Chinese interests. International content generally in commercial news and current affairs is mostly limited to main headline events especially where those involve highly recognisable figures, *vis* Donald Trump or Meghan Markle. Otherwise, from overseas, there is competition from amusing or dramatic back-of-the-bulletin colour stories. In the scan of content made for this study one report related to PNG was found on each of the two networks.

Channel Seven News has a selection of main stories on its Home page in a dedicated 'Asia Pacific' category, with 46 displayed during the calendar months of October and November 2019—one relating to PNG. They included main headline reports, for example six on the Hong Kong rioting. Others were, the arrests in Vietnam over the asylum seekers truck deaths in the United Kingdom, and winding-up of an Australia-China agreement on human rights. Stories about Australians abroad included the 'Sydney grandmother' drug mule cleared in Malaysia, and a Youfoodz founder apologising for allegedly anti-Asian remarks made in Singapore. There were several in the 'human interest', oddity or 'click-bait' category, all with images or video, taking in a baby born with two heads in India and a woman in Thailand murdered by her son—body parts kept in the freezer. Not in PNG, but neighbouring Papua, the network had funded a trip accompanying a young man back to his 'cannibal village'. This followed up a venture 14 years previously when a crew had gone there to help the boy as an infant accused of witchcraft 'escape' to foster care in Sumatra (Seven News, 2020). The incident is a reminder of the capacity of major media organisations to put resources into coverage in difficult areas if moved to do it.

Channel Nine on the Home page posts a large selection of free views including news bulletins from the preceding week and clips, mostly 4-5 minutes, from the current affairs shows *Sixty Minutes* (190 items scanned from 2019) and *A Current Affair* (580 items). A replay of the six available news bulletins, from Brisbane, at the start of January (6 to 12 January 2020) demonstrated a standard line-up for the commercial sector, of heavy concentration on a major story from anywhere (the bushfires, the flare-up over Iran including destruction of the airliner, 'defection' of the Sussex Royal couple); celebrity stories, health reports, finance and family budgets; then local accidents and crime, and community events, as Elvis impersonators, or opening of a new park. Finally there is comprehensive treatment of elite sport being played in Australia. One story related to PNG was found, a *Sixty Minutes* interview with a Bougainville politician on Chinese influence after prospective independence (9NOW, 2019).

The Special Broadcasting Service (SBS) produces a nightly one-hour news bulletin with emphasis on international coverage, in line with its mission, 'to provide multilingual and multicultural radio, television and digital media services that inform, educate and entertain all Australians, and, in doing so, reflect Australia's multicultural society' (SBS Act) . It runs advertisements but functions as an independent, government-sponsored entity. The bulletin like those on commercial television is structured around extended coverage of a few main stories, though the one-hour duration permits more stories to be included within that format. The SBS World News will at times cover Pacific events, as in the 2008 study (Duffield et al, 2008, pp. 11-12). However, the service's interests are global and geo-political, ranging beyond Australia and the Pacific. Playing through one week of bulletins this time (9-14 January 2020) provided analytical features on the situation in Libya, Northern Ireland or Poland—but nothing on Pacific affairs. The current affairs programme *Dateline* had 28 editions archived from 2019, showing the same pattern, conversation-making topics from many countries, not the Pacific, except for the Christchurch Mosque massacre.

Newspapers—The Courier Mail and The Australian

A detailed reading was made of print copies of two News Corp newspapers, *The Australian* and the Brisbane *Courier Mail* over one week, 4-10 November 2019, noting any mentions of PNG, with very sparse results. It included the *Weekend Australian* on 9-10 November 2019 and the Brisbane *Sunday Mail* on 10 November 2019. Hard copies were used as the online records are less accessible behind paywalls. Three mentions of PNG were found: A forthcoming game between the national Rugby League side and Fiji was noted in a table of weekend sports events (*Weekend Australian*, 9-10/11/19). In a feature about Australian coast watchers during World War II, PNG was included as one country where they operated (*SM,* 10/11/19). An article in the *Sunday Mail* travel section called 'How can I see the true PNG' promoted cruise ship holidays, quoting a travel agent: 'The cruise lines have secured safe locations for their guests to experience and are trustworthy.' It said the 'locals put on displays and festivals to meet the ships' (*SM*, 10/11/19: Escape 52).

Two stories might be classed as indirect mentions, with the name of the country not included. The Pacific Islands Forum, of which PNG is a member, criticised America's withdrawal from the Paris climate agreement (*CM*, 7/11/19). The PNG Rugby League player James Segeyaro contested charges he had deliberately ingested Ligandrol. This was run by both dailies, with a front-page picture in the *Courier Mail* (*Australian,* 8/11/19; *CM,* 8/11/19). He was criticised the next day by a sports columnist for requesting a court timeline (*Weekend Australian,* 9-10/11/19). Segeyaro was identified as a member of the Brisbane Broncos team ('fallen Bronco') without reference to his PNG origins.

Newspapers—The Sydney Morning Herald

The Sydney Morning Herald has a public archive of stories in segments which include an 'Oceania' page, extending back two months. For the present study it was searched for the three-weeks period (18 November 2019 to 12 January 2020). The articles tend to be in clusters forming coverage of a breaking story, and in the period under review this was heavily skewed by concentration on the White Island eruption in New Zealand—61 of the 99 items found. PNG was mentioned in nine articles, of which seven were about the independence referendum on Bougainville; the others were reports on gun running in the PNG Highlands, and on Behrouz Boochani, the Manus detainee visiting New Zealand for a literary festival. The veteran Pacific Region journalist and photographer, Ben Bohane, contributed five of the Bougainville articles, forming part of a portfolio of his reportage and analysis of the event published by the Lowy Institute and other outlets. Bohane was awarded the inaugural Sean Dorney Grant for Pacific Journalism, made by the Walkley Foundation, and used the prize to fund his reporting trip. This is noted as it represents one means by which coverage of events in the Pacific region can be supported and injected into many outlets including ‘mainstream’ publications like the *SMH* (Bohane, 2019).

Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC)

The ABC has for some decades provided an oasis in what might otherwise have been a media desert in terms of coverage of PNG in Australia. The research preceding this study determined that a report would be published by the ABC on PNG, in one format or another, each two days (Ginau et al, 2011, p. 70). This was the largest media contribution towards awareness of the former Australian Territory and new information about it. A key factor has been maintaining a resident overseas correspondent in Port Moresby, with some local support staff—for several years now the only full-time representative from an Australian media organisation. The present incumbent, Natalie Whiting (Natalie Whiting, 2020), posts online recent reports across a broad range, from political controversies, to news stories with an Australian link, to more general interest pieces. Five items listed there in October 2019 were: ‘Suspicion of birth control drives men to cut implants out of their wives’ arms’; the former PM’s interim court order to prevent arrest (two reports); over $1million missing after purchase of 40 Maseratis for the 2018 APEC conference; concerns being expressed about Bougainville independence and a possible ‘crisis’ in the Pacific. The reports appear in diverse programs on television, online, in radio news and current affairs, and on Radio Australia. This process represents ‘value for money’ without overuse, providing a ‘backbone’ of PNG reportage together with material from several other sources also.

ABC news stories compiled and posted online, in an ‘Asia Pacific’ category, where some 150 reports will be posted in a month, were checked for the calendar month of October 2019. Eight PNG reports were recorded on several topics: Bougainville referendum; Australia easing kava import rules; former PM Peter O’Neill on corruption charges (two reports); money missing from sale of VIP Maseratis; RAAF fetching performers for the Military Tattoo in Melbourne; Chinese-owned Ramu nickel plant shut down over toxic spill; men opposing birth control for women. Separately, the running list of candidate stories for publication presented online as ‘Just In’ was monitored again, as it had been used in the previous research (finding 15 ‘PNG’ stories out of 2597) (Ginau et al., in Papoutsaki et al., 2011, p. 66). For one week commencing 21 November 2019, 700 reports were noted, of which four referred to PNG: Australian financial aid sought by PNG; a loan of A$400-million to PNG, expected to replace an anticipated loan from China; Bougainville referendum (two reports).

The three radio current affairs programs, *AM, The World Today* (*TWT*) and *PM* use limited PNG material, most from the resident ABC Correspondent. The programs were monitored for the month of October 2019. *AM* broadcast 237 reports of which five were on PNG issues, such as Australian economic aid boosted, corruption charges against O'Neill, toxic spill from the Madang province nickel mine. *TWT* which does not broadcast on weekends had 141 reports, none noted on PNG. The published archive had 23 days available for *PM* which broadcast 148 reports in that period, three relevant for PNG, including the O'Neill arrest warrants and trouble along the border with Papua.

A few offerings were found during October 2019 in lists published for specialist ABC programmes. In television, none of 83 reports on *7:30* were about PNG matters, nor any of 24 *Foreign Correspondent* episodes publicly archived, and the religion and ethics program *Compass* had none that month, though the record included a feature in July on a group of Polish missionaries. In radio, *Correspondents' Report* listed two dispatches, one on Papua, one on street art in Port Moresby. Radio National Breakfast had a report on the O'Neill arrest and a lawyer speaking on human rights in Papua. ABC Sport posts news highlights online, with sections for individual sports. Review of the Rugby League category (28 postings) and Cricket (34) produced two PNG mentions: the suspension of the Broncos player and PNG national James Segeyaro; and a visit by the Australian Prime Minister to a training camp in Fiji, to be used by police and military teams from across the Pacific.

ABC Radio Australia

The ABC's international service, Radio Australia, provides extensive coverage of Pacific affairs via 13 local FM radio stations (five in PNG) and relay stations, Internet streaming, on-demand audio, podcast downloads or live satellite (ABC RA frequencies). It controversially dropped its traditional shortwave services in 2017 in recognition of new alternatives and as a cost-saving measure. News and current affairs in English are carried in the two flagship programmes, *Pacific Beat* and *Pacific Review*. As programmes for overseas listening they have no broadcast outlet within Australia. The diversity and high volume of material is an indicator of the potential of PNG as a field of interest for Australian media.

The daily *Pacific Beat* necessarily provides an Australian perspective, though eclectic in its sourcing, describing itself as delivering 'interviews with leaders, newsmakers, and people who make the Pacific beat … to keep (listeners) up-to-date on the happenings in the Pacific' (ABC RA *Pacific Beat*, 2020). It provides reports of about four minutes, in 25-minute segments twice in the morning then in the late afternoon. *Pacific Beat* remains easily available online as a strong resource for the representation and understanding of regional affairs, though its absence from domestic radio is a 'missed chance' for the Pacific Region to be stronger in national agendas. That might also match the declared aspiration of the Australian government to cultivate Pacific linkages (DFAT, 2020).

The present review charts *Pacific Beat* content for calendar October 2019, with 85 items broadcast, 23 related to PNG. Seven of the 23 items are indirectly linked to PNG being on relevant Pacific-wide themes. These included initiatives by non-government organisations (NGOs) towards increasing female representation in the region's parliaments, or to clean up plastic waste in the ocean; the United States 'Pacific Pledge' raising the possibility of increased investment spending; moves by an industry body in Australia to promote the fashion trade in the region; Australia's relaxation of import restrictions on kava, and a Lowy Institute report discounting charges against China of conducting 'debt trap diplomacy'.

In news instigated 'from outside' directly related to PNG, there are reports on a project of American universities to preserve early recordings by anthropologists, and the contentious deportation of a part-Aboriginal man, of PNG background, from jail in Australia. The 'strictly PNG' material, originating there, included: the cricket team, the Barramundis, entering the T-20 World Cup; proposed legal action against Ramu Nickel over pollution near Madang; the former Prime Minister, Peter O'Neill, evading arrest on corruption charges; the Treasurer anxious about a 'very deep hole' in the national budget; claims of law and order problems being linked to squatters' 'settlements'; complaints by people along the Indonesian border about shooting incidents and the presence of Papuan separatists. A check on sourcing showed that 11 of these 23 reports were initiated by PNG citizens, five were from Australia, two from the United States, another five from other 'outside' sources. PNG citizens would be involved in follow-ups on the latter reports.

The second current affairs offering on Radio Australia, the weekly *Pacific Review* also follows a practical and open brief, as 'a roundup of major stories from across the region and the people involved and affected by them' (ABC RA *Pacific Review*, 2020). The programme is slower paced permitting some analysis, produced each Saturday, running 30-minutes, with three stories in each edition. Three of the 12 'major stories' posted for October 2019 directly concerned PNG: preparing for the aftermath of the Bougainville referendum; former Prime Minister O'Neill facing arrest, and Australia's new import rules on kava. *Pacific Review* had also recently reported on increased American and Indian interest in the Pacific Region, and the US 'Pacific Pledge'.

The Guardian Australia

An initiative by *The Guardian*, the Australian online edition, offers to materially change the overall story of PNG coverage. The earlier research referred to (Ginau et al, in Papoutsaki et al, 2011) took place three years before *Guardian Australia* was founded. In 2019, it obtained a major grant from the Judith Neilson Institute for Journalism and Ideas (JNI, 2019) to support a 'Pacific Project' whereby it will expand the volume, range and quality of coverage available in

Australia. PNG has a separate page (*The Guardian*, 2020), and coverage there during the calendar month November 2019 demonstrates the editors' intentions.

As well as dedicated 'Project' items, the publication continued also with 'regular' coverage, where during November it had four articles about Behrouz Boochani, the Kurdish detainee and writer travelling from PNG to New Zealand. Under the 'Pacific Project', there are six postings from Bougainville, badged with the sponsor organisation's logo: three feature-length reports by PNG journalist Leanne Jorari, a guest article by Bertie Ahern, Chairman of the Referendum Commission, an historical gallery of pictures, and a substantial article, 1700 words, 'Bougainville's independence referendum explained' by Kate Lyons, the Pacific editor appointed in October to lead the project (*Guardian Australia* press office, 2019a). Also in the Pacific Project coverage of the month, journalist Jo Chandler filed from Port Moresby, a report on the 'Maserati scandal' over the government's luxury cars, and an extended interview with the beleaguered former Prime Minister, Peter O'Neill.

In October 2019, 'pre-Project', *The Guardian* had featured a 22-minute documentary on contraband firearms in tribal fighting in Enga Province, jointly made with Screen Australia. The film records the efforts of a local 'peace-maker' to dissuade two belligerent groups from mutual killings and major destruction of property.

Commentary on *The Guardian* case

The Guardian Australia initiative raises issues about the kind of coverage likely to occur, and more generally the rationale for reporting the news. The first of the issues concerns motivation of the sponsor organisation, which, as with most coverage monitored for this study, is pragmatic and focused on demonstrable social, cultural, environmental and also economic bases for news coverage. Mark Ryan, director of the Judith Neilson Institute, said at the Pacific Project launch in July: 'The Pacific is increasingly a focus of global attention as larger geopolitical forces play out and it's on the frontline of climate change and other major environmental impacts. It's an obvious area of need and JNI is keen to support efforts to boost reporting of these issues and bring them to the attention of Australian readers and policymakers.' Lenore Taylor, the *Guardian Australia* editor, said: 'The region receives relatively little sustained reporting even though there are globally significant security, environmental and social stories to be told. We know these topics are of strong interest to our readers in Australia and around the world' (*Guardian Australia* press office, 2020b).

Going further, Ryan stressed JNI's championing of 'quality journalism and storytelling', stating that with 'news media everywhere facing unprecedented challenges …', 'the need for accurate, evidence-based journalism is stronger than ever.' Taylor added: 'We're excited to work with local journalists and we have plans to collaborate with SBS on some bigger investigations.' The points made contain an appeal to traditional liberal journalistic values, as to 'evidence-based', establishing facts, while the reference to 'quality journalism and storytelling' may take in the ambition to deploy advanced production values and a variety of forms, especially with options created by advanced ICT—hence *The Guardian's* juxtaposition of galleys of text, video, picture galleries. Taylor's contribution signalled a pre-emptive response to past criticisms of media coverage, that it excluded local voices, and with the reference to SBS, pointed up the growing phenomenon of cooperative ventures in news reporting—a break with commercial models focused on building audiences for advertisers in a competitive scramble.

Where the motivations and goals addressed in this case put social and cultural objectives first, commerce second, they are concerned with ideology, being an ideology about mass media and its uses in society. It would plainly assume that humans value having validated information and knowledge for its own sake, and that facilitating this is a social good: news as bonding material of the culture not as a commodity. It is not so much a generalised, political ideology, of left versus right, 'haves' versus 'have-nots' and the like. That is, except for a forceful protectiveness towards human rights, widely shared across the media community worldwide, and following the signature liberal stance of *The Guardian's* parent newspaper in England. Indicative of that concern, *The Guardian* gives a significant proportion of coverage to the condition of 'Australian' asylum seekers held in PNG.

Discussion of media work in PNG has always had to take account of the high cost of operations and low returns, in terms of the weak local consumer economy and sluggish interest levels in Australia. *The Guardian* model in this instance accepts the cost challenge through use of foundation support, at base the Scott Trust's funding of its parent organisation (Scott Trust, 2020), other grants, advertising, collaborations (as with JNI, SBS and Screen Australia), and such other means as crowd-funding and subscriptions—evading the tight squeeze imposed by finding profit for shareholders.

As a 'mainstream' player it has been developing audiences, bringing in substantial numbers with a measurable interest in variety and facts; without pressure of servicing a 'lowest common denominator' to maximise the numbers. The Australian site has turned a small profit since 2018, when audience growth reached 2.8-million unique visits per month (*Guardian Australia*, 2018), (Samios, 2018). Current company postings give larger user numbers and some pertinent audience profiles (*The Guardian* Advertising).

Discussion and conclusions

Altogether 86 items were assessed here of which 26 from ABC, 23 from Radio Australia and 17 in *The Guardian and* the *SMH* almost attaining double-figure with nine. There was some doubling-up of stories in different outlets. These were mostly reports on ABC from the full-time correspondent—similar to the situation in 2011 (Ginaud et al, in Papoutsaki et al, 2011:66). This repetition is estimated at less than 20 percent of the total for all outlets, and 'repeat' versions are included here due to stories being repackaged and repurposed, for different audiences in diverse programs. The ABC output again led. Whereas in 2011 it was estimated one ABC report appeared each two days, in 2019 it was *pro rata* 1.3 reports each two days, excluding the large input from Radio Australia. Otherwise the volume of coverage was not demonstrably greater than 10 years ago, except for the reinforcing factor of *The Guardian* coming in—a substantial change.

To address the issue raised in the Introduction of representation of Papua New Guineans in media reports, and 'negativity' in reporting about PNG: A standard was applied as to whether the principal voice or presence in a report was a PNG national. In the case of an Australian interviewing a PNG politician, the latter was the main actor. Where Australian journalists wrote about the PNG NRL player James Segeyaro, in balance the PNG participant should still lead. Mostly the choice is more obvious. One standard applied is, who has provided the main information? For example, where the Australian government provides information about its air force flying PNG dancers to Melbourne, and the dancers are pictured in the story, on this criterion the lead presence would still be Australian. An aspect of the long-held concerns about representation of PNG people in news, is the use of 'elite' speakers as against others. Within the bounds of this study, it is observed that in 2020 more people speak, for example the 'peace-maker' in *The Guardian* documentary, or in situations like the heavy coverage of the Bougainville referendum, where there is strong community engagement and so more voices, especially educated young people talking as private citizens. Certainly, the spread of mobile telephones (Watson, 2011) has made a breakthrough in communication and access for more people, with expected increases in 'media competencies'. In this qualified assessment Papua New Guineans were the principal voices in 50 of the 86 items.

Determining a 'positive' or 'negative' cast in media reports is far less reliable and useful because of the complexity of values involved. Reports about tribal warfare or street violence are doubly negative, as they involve harm to persons, and put the country in a bad light, for example discouraging tourists. The consensus, colour and festivity surrounding the Bougainville decision, despite the uncertainty about what will follow, was doubly positive: a decision made firmly and peacefully, enabling dignified representation of it in the coverage. Reporting of corruption charges against the former Prime Minister, Peter O'Neill, was negative as a reminder of widespread corruption in PNG, again affecting the country's reputation, but could be considered positive reportage in showing that, however difficult, much was being done about it under the legal system—a good reflection on the country. The O'Neill stories were classed as 'neutral' in their moral impact. Signalling the ambiguity in such choices is the *SMH* headline, denoting a grim situation and positive response to it: 'Papua New Guinea is one of the most dangerous countries in the world to be a woman. But enlisting men and businesses to fight family violence has raised hopes of progress' (Topsfield, 2019). The monitoring exercise has noted evidence of in places, expanding coverage with more involvement of Papua New Guineans and more 'positive' treatment of subjects.

This survey shows once again there are many difficult issues for the country to deal with, though in the media reporting crime and calamity appear descendent not the mainstay of coverage. Most of the coverage is describable as reasoned with no preponderance of obstructive or gratuitously critical treatments. The monitor of stories separates the News Corp publications and commercial television from the rest. The former are the more commercially orientated outlets focused on maximising Australian audiences, the least committed to providing news from PNG, and if they do, the most likely to highlight irruptions of violence. To be disingenuous, such events may have lost some of their novelty and 'shock' value over the years, hence interest value as news for those outlets. Coverage of bad events does continue to be done as a professional duty by the more sympathetic media, including an interest in reporting campaigns to try and resolve social problems. In the analysis of 86 articles, 42 were classed positive, 28 negative, 16 neutral.

The review of media output showed a familiar pattern in the making of news agendas, where one or a few strong running stories obtain most of the attention, over a period of weeks. From October 2019 into early January 2020, the Australian agenda was dominated by the bushfires, with the supplementary issue of the Prime Minister's holiday in Hawaii; tragedy of the White Island volcano; the tension between America and Iran, and destruction of the Ukrainian airliner; President Donald Trump's impeachment process, and later the Duke and Duchess of Sussex stepping down from the Royal 'life'. Where certain news takes precedence through sheer volume of attention over an extended time, PNG, at home, also has such an agenda; for the period under review led by the O'Neill case and the Bougainville referendum. These stories did have significant play also in Australian news media, if not in the zone of the first-line, high-volume topics. If the news is considered a process where stories qualify for status through being of universal strong interest and in some ways considered important, PNG is not closed out or peripheral.

This review shows how there is interest in developing media coverage of PNG towards more extensive and resourceful treatments, away from superficial and exploitative models that have attracted criticism in the past. The publicly-funded ABC has carried a large burden in PNG but with its many tasks and tightened budgets has not radically extended that contribution. Suggestions were made in 2011, to provide Radio Australia current affairs on domestic radio in Australia, or to create a national news service, to make PNG news more easily accessible (Ginau et al, in Papoutsaki et al, 2011, p. 71). With the hindsight of a decade those seem unlikely. In 2020 however strong possibilities exist for growth of the coverage and expansion of its horizons, through opportunities being created in the field of digitised 'new media'. These begin with an aspiration for change, as articulated by the JNI foundation backing *The Guardian,* above, and are carried out by enterprising media outlets, such as *The Guardian* with its diversified funding, or the freelance grant recipient Ben Bohane publishing through major outlets like the *SMH*. Possibilities are in play which can enable deep change.

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The Melanesian Media Declaration

We, the participants at the Melanesian Media Freedom representing media from Fiji, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea and West Papua, wish to express concern about growing threats to media freedom in our region and call on members of our industry and other organisations and individuals to take action to help secure the future of the Fourth Estate as a vital pillar of democracy.

Professional media, through accurate and impartial reporting has a crucial role to play. As António Guterres, United Nations Secretary-General, said on World Press Freedom Day 2019:

> No democracy is complete without access to transparent and reliable information. It is the cornerstone for building fair and impartial institutions, holding leaders accountable and speaking truth to power.

We note that Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states: ‘Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.’

In this context we observe that

- A better understanding is needed of the role of journalism in Melanesian democracies. Awareness of the accountability role played by journalists and the need for them to be able to exercise their professional skills without fear is critical to the functioning of our democracies.

- The media is ready to work with all parties that want to improve the social media landscape: There is an urgent need for the media to assert its role as a source of accurate and impartial information and to play a role in building social media literacy and public understanding of how to identify credible sources of information.

We express concern that

- The range of threats to media freedom is increasing. These include restrictive legislation, intimidation, political threats, legal threats and prosecutions, assaults and police and military brutality, illegal detention, online abuse, racism between ethnic groups and the ever-present threats facing particularly younger and female reporters who may face violence both on the job and within their own homes.

- Threats to media freedom are having professional, personal and health impacts on journalists across Melanesia. The situation in West Papua is of particular concern with attacks on journalists resulting in deaths and injuries.

- The unwillingness of politicians and officials to engage in dialogue is undermining the media’s accountability role: public figures are becoming more resistant to responding to direct questions from media, choosing instead to issue media releases, or statements on social media or to preferred media outlets. In addition to undermining the crucial accountability role of the media, this places broadcast media (which requires actuality) at a disadvantage.

- Obstruction from development partners and communications consultants, including from Australia, are in some instances contributing to problems of lack of access to decision-makers.

- The global decline of democracy is making it easier for our governments to silence the media. It is expected this will become a bigger challenge in the future if it is not addressed, as national leaders, media organisations and journalists come under pressure and misinformation campaigns continue.

- Misinformation, propaganda and fake news are a growing problem: there is widespread concern around misinformation and offensive material being posted on social media platforms, sometimes by anonymous sources, some of them state and politically-partisan actors. The media's role as an antidote, and as a balancing source of verified information is under-recognised and under-supported.

- Social media is an existential threat undermining Melanesian media companies: the erosion of editorial budgets and vulnerability of the mainstream media's business model to the flight of advertising revenue and audiences to social media is an urgent threat to media throughout Melanesia and therefore to media freedom.

- Significant sections of the population in some Melanesian countries do not have access to information services. This undermines the media's role in providing access to information and debate. Some media organisations, including public broadcasters, lack the basic equipment needed to do their job properly.

- Women in the media face additional challenges. Women are underrepresented in many newsrooms and in media management. They can face additional challenges in being recognised and responded to by people in authority and they face threats to their safety including sexual harassment, gender-based violence and expectations from partners and family.

We applaud

- The invaluable work of National Media Organisations, the Pacific Islands News Association (PINA), the Pacific Freedom Forum (PFF), and the Pacific Media Watch Freedom Project (based at AUT's Pacific Media Centre) in defending media freedom (including at IFEX).

Recommendations:

We call on Melanesian governments to

- Respect the media and its necessary place in national conversations.

- Require political leaders and senior public servants make themselves available for interviews with their local media.
- Recognise, respect and support National Media Associations as the voice of the media industry.
- Fund public broadcasters properly to ensure they have sufficient equipment and staff to enable their services to reach all citizens in their country and to adequately play their watch-dog role.
- Assure the safety of journalists as they pursue their professional activities.

We call on the Papua New Guinea government to

- Respect the independence of media institutions and journalists.
- Strengthen anti-corruption and whistle-blower protection legislation to include journalists and media practitioners.

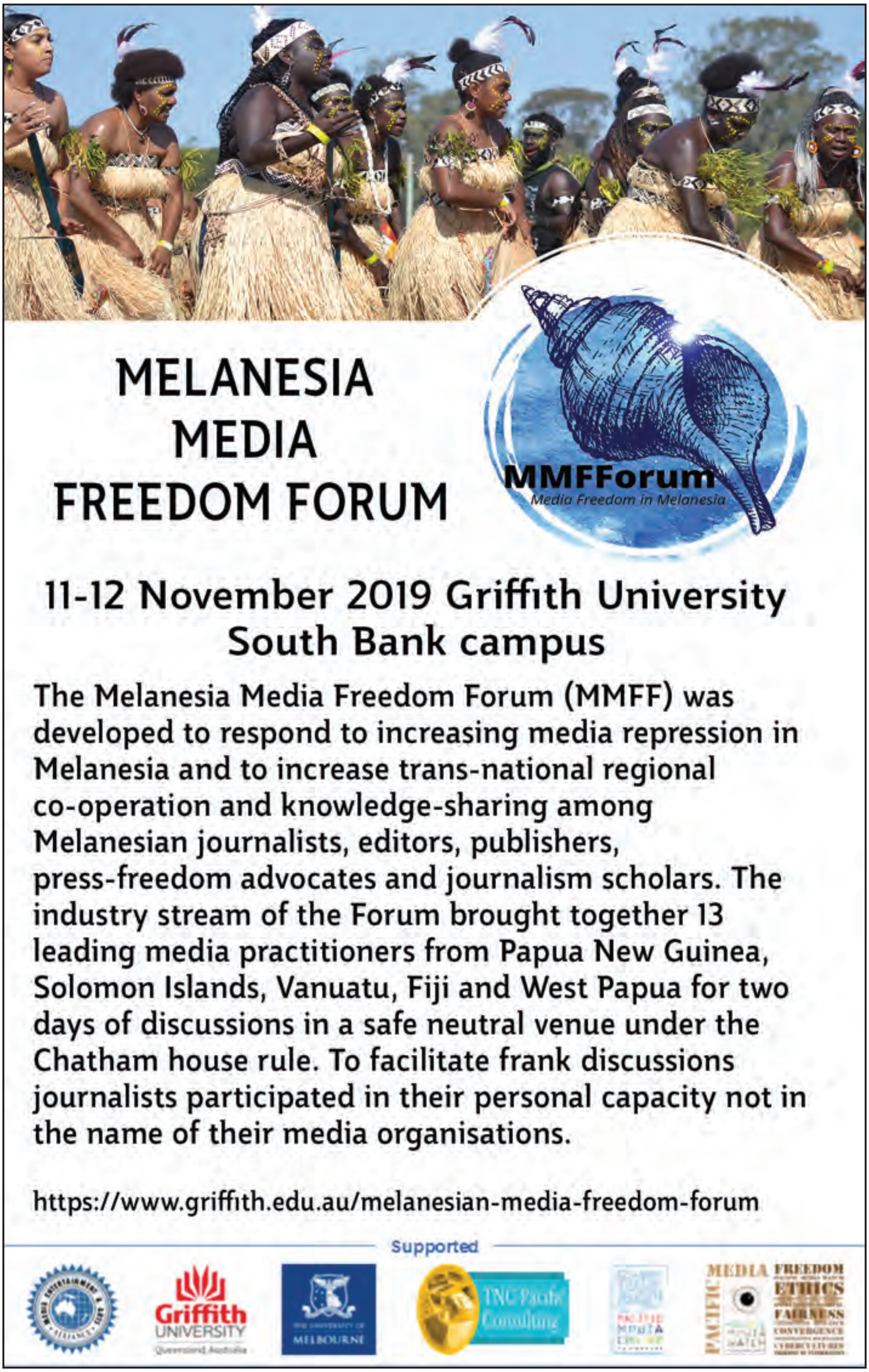
We call on civic institutions in Bougainville to

- Respect and respond promptly to requests for information at this crucial time.

Melanesia Media Freedom Forum

11-12 November 2019
Griffith University, Southbank, Brisbane

Figure 1: Participants at the Melanesia Media Freedom Forum (MMFF) symposium in Brisbane, Queensland, on 11-12 November 2020.


MMFForum
Media Freedom in Melanesia

MELANESIA MEDIA FREEDOM FORUM

11-12 November 2019 Griffith University South Bank campus

The Melanesia Media Freedom Forum (MMFF) was developed to respond to increasing media repression in Melanesia and to increase trans-national regional co-operation and knowledge-sharing among Melanesian journalists, editors, publishers, press-freedom advocates and journalism scholars. The industry stream of the Forum brought together 13 leading media practitioners from Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Fiji and West Papua for two days of discussions in a safe neutral venue under the Chatham house rule. To facilitate frank discussions journalists participated in their personal capacity not in the name of their media organisations.

https://www.griffith.edu.au/melanesian-media-freedom-forum

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Solidarity statement by academics attending MMFF

Delegates to the Melanesia Media Freedom Forum express their solidarity with media workers in Melanesia in their struggle for freedom of expression, security, and professional recognition.

Delegates note the words of Secretary-General of the Pacific Islands Forum Dame Meg Taylor who told the Asia Lecture at Griffith University, Brisbane, on 11 November 2019: 'We live in unprecedented times of change which will test our abilities to respond.'

Dame Meg outlined a range of threats facing the Pacific, including growing militarism and the fragility of national boundaries and natural resources. However, she said climate change was the greatest threat facing the *wansolwara*.

It is against this background that the Melanesian journalists attending the conference outlined their experiences and concerns.

Melanesian delegates spoke of a litany of difficult circumstances they faced. These included beatings, torture and murder and torture by Indonesian security officials in West Papua and the threats made to media workers in other countries.

The internet was threatening media consumers because it was often used to spread distorted versions of events and outright lies.

Several delegates said they were facing the challenge of multiple news platforms by improving their own performance and engaging with online audiences. However, they faced problems with online content produced by people who claimed they were journalists, but who had no standing in the profession.

There were strong concerns about the need to distinguish professional journalists from other content producers.

Delegates expressed strong concerns about issues of human rights, violence, and freedom of expression.

They also expressed concerns about the effect of stifling legislation that had the power to impose heavy fines and prison sentences on journalists.

We also note the comments of Fred Wesley, editor-in-chief of *The Fiji Times* who said, after relating his long—and successful—legal battle with the Fiji government: 'The truth needs to be told every day.'

We also note the words of encouragement given to Melanesian journalists by the man regarded by many as the journalist emeritus of Pacific reporting, Sean Dorney. Dorney said that in the current difficult circumstances, members of the media needed to support each other.

‘We have to keep up the good fight and keep in touch with each other,’ Dorney said.

He told delegates the work of the media was essential in keeping ‘the fire burning’.

‘I have nothing but admiration for anybody working in the media in the region.’

Therefore, consistent with the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, particularly Article 19 which protects the right to express opinions and communicate information and ideas in different ways; and in line with the United Nations 2030 development goals, particularly those designed to strengthen peace, justice and strong institutions; climate action; reduce inequalities; and gender equality; delegates to the forum call for journalists working in Melanesia and across the Pacific, to be guaranteed the following basic rights as professional communicators:

- Freedom of expression
- Freedom from physical abuse, threats, or intimidation in pursuit of their work
- Recognition of their status as professional communicators
- Security of digital communication
- Equality for all media workers in terms of their professional standing, regardless of gender
- Recognition and protection under law of these rights

Dr Philip Cass
Acting Editor of Pacific Journalism Review
Brisbane
12 November 2019

FRONTLINE *Edited by Wendy Bacon*

Reversing silences in West Papua

Interdisciplinary research and (audio) documentary

Abstract: Journalism about West Papua is in many ways an act of translation. It involves not only translating between languages, but also disciplines, audiences and knowledges. This article examines how interdisciplinary research—such as anthropology and history— might intersect with journalism as a means to understand and challenge existing gaps in translation, or 'silences' about West Papua in the past and present. It also reflects on how audio documentaries carry out such translation work on misunderstood and underreported issues. To illustrate this, the author reflects on the process of making the audio documentary #Illridewithyou, West Papua for ABC Radio National's Earshot documentary programme as well as a companion long-form article for the ABC's website.

Keywords: anthropology, audio, documentary, Frontline, history, human rights, Indonesia, interdisciplinary research, investigative journalism, journalism as research, West Papua

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Silences in West Papuan history and journalism

MY anecdotal evidence for how poorly West Papua[1] is understood by my fellow Australians is this: whenever I mention I have an interest in the region, at least half the time, in response, someone will mention Papua New Guinea instead. Which is often why the infrequent reporting on the topic in the international media usually comes with a mandatory one or two paragraph attempt to bring the audience up to speed with West Papuan modern history and politics, to understand why the current news matters.

In August 2019, the largest protests about West Papua seen in decades started in Java and spilled out throughout Indonesia. I realised that I might be able to create a long-form journalism project that could explore the roots of this discontent, not in a paragraph aside but as a framing question about the recent and not-so-recent past. I felt an urgency in doing so, given the media portrayals and censorship of Papuans, community violence and heavy state response to the uprisings (Human Rights Watch, 2020).

When it comes to West Papua, I am also interested in what Haitian anthropologist Michel-Rolph Trouillot (1995) describes as the production of silences in the historical narrative. He argues that such silences are about power—they do ‘not require a conspiracy, not even a political consensus. Its roots are structural’ (p. 105). These ideas have emerged in parallel in West Papua. Theologian, writer and anthropologist Benny Giay (2006) describes the social fabric of such structural productions of silences as budaya bisu (a mute or silent culture), which ensures these absences endure because of trauma and oppression.

I approach Trouillot’s work primarily via Chris Nash (2016), who expands this concern to silences and absences in the media, ‘the norm for those not in a position to exercise power in the world of journalism’ (p. 147). It is a situation that again materialises in Indonesia and beyond about West Papua, as this article will reflect on further.

Nash’s book What is Journalism? devotes itself to two interdisciplinary practitioners, Hans Haacke and I.F. Stone, whose work challenged structural power. They were ‘in Trouillot’s terms… taking a position to reverse an existing silence by producing objects able to be perceived by audiences’ (Nash, 2016, p. 150).

West Papuans have long sought to reverse such silences in their colonial past and present. They have done so through both a longstanding culture of oral storytelling, and a new generation of journalists and thinkers grappling with these ideas through writing and discussion (Lopez, 2019).

Giay is the leading example of many Papuan interdisciplinary writer-scholars guided by the work of theologian Johann Baptist Metz, whose memoria passionis aims to contend with ‘the “silent history” of the colonised and enslaved’ (my translation) (Giay, 2006, p. 24). His work of longform journalism, Pembunuhan Theys (The Murder of Theys) (2006), documents the life and death of Theys Eluay, a Papuan man who served as a parliamentarian for the ruling party during the Suharto era. While initially helping the Indonesian state track down West Papuan independence activists, he later emerged as a leading figure for independence himself, before being killed by Indonesian security forces (Kirksey, 2012).

In West Papua, daring to work to reverse such silences can carry great consequences, including threats to lives and livelihoods (Lopez, 2019). Giay’s experience is no different. Among other threats, the first edition of Pembunuhan Theys was removed from circulation and banned a month after its release by local authorities, who described the book as ‘disturbing to the public’ (Giay, 2006, p. 9).

Reportage outside of West Papua may also reverse such silences, through journalistic translation. I do not only mean translation between languages, although this is often needed. In reportage about West Papua, it is not enough simply to reverse the silence — the silence itself must be explained. The media, political and historical blackout of West Papua has been so successful, many international audiences may not even be aware of the existing narrative where the absence exists. Language, identity, and—most importantly—the past must be contextualised, which is why that seemingly mandatory two-paragraph backgrounder on history is found in nearly every international current affairs article on West Papua.

We might consider this translation work in terms of the 'maps of meaning' articulated by Stuart Hall et al. in Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State, and Law and Order (1982; see also Nash, 2016, p. 142). They argue that newsworthy events are 'brought into the horizon of the "meaningful"'—in that these events are added to "maps of meaning" which already form the basis of our cultural knowledge' (p. 54). Making an event 'intelligible' is a social process made possible through journalistic practices 'which embody (often only implicitly) crucial assumptions about what society is and how it works' (p. 55). This journalistic 'mapping' process I argue is one of translation, particularly when an audience has to learn both about silences and the stories that should fill them, as well as the patchwork of historical and political narratives previously used to cover them up.

Yet just as a journalist makes West Papua 'meaningful' for an audience, she too must preserve and respect original meanings and knowledges. This too requires careful translation work. Anthropologist Eben Kirksey (2012) invokes feminist theorist Donna Haraway to describe how West Papuan 'situated knowledges' are translated into 'the view from nowhere'—'a disembodied form of vision that claims to see everything from nowhere'—found in both NGO reports and some forms of journalism, including the investigative journalism articles he wrote based on his fieldwork and interviews about West Papua (p. 134). He also describes this as a translation project, in line with Haraway's call to 'translate knowledges among very different—and power-differentiated—communities' (Kirksey, 2012, p. 134; Haraway, 1988, p. 588). This is also about mapping: Haraway (1988) argues that 'a map of tensions and reasonances between the fixed ends of a charged dichotomy better represents the potent politics and epistemologies of embodied, therefore accountable, objectivity' (p. 588). In journalistic terms, this means a reflective kind of reportage that explores and documents complexity, contradictions and power relations in all its forms, an aim that does not have to be incongruous with mapping meaning for an audience.

Part 1: The exegesis

Translating West Papua's past and present

I first pitched the idea of a documentary to the ABC in 2019, not long after the West Papua protests that year appeared in international headlines. During the previous four years, I had conducted doctoral research exploring how West Papuans encounter stories from the past and present in Java, Indonesia. My research analysed the purpose and impact of Papuan stories and storytelling, particularly about history, by fusing several narrative methodologies defined by non-Indigenous and First Nations' scholars (Lopez, 2019).

Yet Chris Nash (2016) argues, the 'sine qua non of successful journalism is to have the most up-to-date information to report and analyse… to be operating at the cutting edge of the present as distinct from the past or future" (p. 137). My doctoral research was not 'up to date' in a current affairs sense, and it had employed ethnographic or anthropological methodologies as opposed to traditional journalistic ones—and I will endeavour to dig into these distinctions further. Before and after my doctoral studies I worked as an audio documentary maker, for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation and other local and international outlets. Much of my previous work has comprised narrative-led audio documentaries on human rights and social justice issues. In that sense my ethical code was also one of a journalist's—in as much as journalism's public morality involves getting an important story out, and doing so by addressing a public and using a 'public voice' (Nash, 2016, p. 227).

Of the many people I spoke to during that time, I thought almost instantly about a specific incident, and a few participants that might translate into a story and characters in an audio documentary on the subject. I realised that my original longterm anthropological/ethnographic research could became another source I could employ in the pursuit of my journalistic aims. It was a source that needed to be supplemented with further research, in order for it to be considered journalism. Part of the measure of the success of my audio documentary would be how I translated or 'interpreted the materials [I had] brought to light' (Meadows in Bacon, 2012, p. 156)—including my own research data. First, I needed to formulate a question, 'the answer to which is the answer to "What's the story?"' (Nash, 2013, pp. 127–129).

I question myself whether I could ever really switch off my journalistic radar for my anthropological research, and of course the two fields employ participant observation, interviews and fieldwork as part of their methodological tool kits (Nash, 2013, p. 129). Anna Tsing writes that fieldwork represents the rhythms, or 'exceptional outpouring of the everyday. The story presents us with repetition, and then surprise' (Tsing & Ebron, 2015, p. 685). This 'seeps and bubbles into partially formed consciousness—and analysis and theory are informed' (p. 683)—and I would argue, allows the researcher to be better placed to find stories and form questions for further (journalistic) research. Another way of describing this is habitus, and Chris Nash (2016) suggests that Pierre Bourdieu's concept might be useful to explain 'real time intuition' in journalism, or 'news sense' (p. 171)—in other words, my journalistic radar. He also concludes that journalism research can be thought of in relation to other disciplines, 'and therefore disciplinarily should be understood not as a series of barriers but as a basis for mutual exchange and collaboration' (Nash, 2016, p. 234). Thinking of the inherent interdisciplinarity of habitus presents opportunities for translation across methodologies, outputs and audiences.

The techniques I employed in my original ethnographic research, including indepth interviewing, observation and sound recording, also happen to be key elements in audio documentary, the genre or style of journalism in which I have most professional experience. I also gained approval from participants for their interviews to appear in various formats beyond scholarly articles, including audio documentaries, feature articles and books, long before I had conceived how these outputs might take shape. Similarly, after conducting ethnographic research into how remorse is judged in the NSW criminal justice system, writer-ethnographer Kate Rossmanith (2013) found herself considering her options while looking at her field notes: 'My mind immediately turned to genres: I can write academic articles, I thought to myself, and I can also write literary nonfiction' (p. 7)—of course, a form of journalism in its own right. However, my anthropological ethnographic research data was a knowledge base or source/s upon which I had to formulate further journalistic questions.

The audio documentary is its own distinct form of journalism that unlike other genres is less focused on breaking news, and in that way I would argue better suited to adapt the data produced from ethnographic fieldwork and interviewing. Journalist-academics Mia Lindgren and Gail Phillips (2015) write that 'while deploying skills familiar in oral history and sociology methodologies, the power of the story and specifically its crafting to maximise its appeal to a future audience is what distinguishes journalism as a discipline' (p. 169). I would argue the practitioners of documentary, investigative and research journalism are more likely to have the capacity to apply indepth methodologies, compared to the vast majority of journalism, increasingly deprived of resources and often pegged to a 24-hour news cycle (Bacon, 2011; Lynch, 2013).

Answering 'What's the story?' occurred in reverse throughout my ethnographic research—'Aha, here's a story!'—when I often heard an angle, experience or information I felt could be the opening lines of a pitch, or develop into a distinct or expanded journalism research question. The title of the audio documentary featured in this article is a case in point. During my research in 2015, I was interviewing Indonesian activist Zely Ariane, who, while describing her experiences of working with West Papuans on human rights issues in Jakarta, told me a story that caught the attention of my journalistic radar (clearly, it does not have an off switch).

A year earlier, Ariane had tried to raise awareness about the killing of teenagers by Indonesian security forces in Paniai, West Papua, by tying it to a phenomenon that had originated almost at the same time in Sydney and had made international news. Her plan was to use the hashtag #illridewithyou, which went viral worldwide on social media in response to the Lindt cafe terrorist attack. The hashtag aimed to show solidarity with Australian Muslims, who feared a backlash after the gunman Man Monis had depicted the *Shahada*, the Muslim declaration of faith, and claimed it was an attack on Australia by the terrorist organisation Islamic State (State Coroner of NSW, 2017). Ariane came up with the idea of a poster that read #illridewithyou #Paniai #West Papua, as a means of making the killings in Paniai 'translatable' into solidarity for Papuan grievances, since her fellow Indonesians appeared to be showing far more interest in #illridewithyou than the deaths of teenagers in their own country. Activists in Jakarta responded to the Paniai incident by forming a movement called Papua Itu Kita (Papua is Us), that when I first spoke to Ariane in 2015, was only just gaining ground. That #illridewithyou poster was their first logo on social media.

Aha! I remember thinking during that interview that #illridewithyou was an angle that was translatable to an Australian audience—it was a definable point on an existing 'map of meaning'. In real time during the interview (which took place about a year after the Paniai incident) I was also formulating questions about what this story was: Why had nobody been made accountable for the teenagers' deaths? Why was there so little interest in what had happened? As a researcher and professional working in and occasionally studying the media, I was also interested in what the story illustrated about why and how some events are elevated above others in the news, and the power dynamics that come into play to facilitate that. Within that same ethnographic interview, I then pursued a line of detailed questioning with Ariane that I subconsciously knew would allow me to use this interview in both a scholarly output, as well as a narrative that could be experienced by an audience, even as I had no plans to create a documentary at that moment. As an audio documentary maker with an anthropologist's hat on (and at times, vice versa), I had somewhat subconsciously adopted dual modes of listening, as Rob Anderson and George Killenberg (1992) describe: 'Listening to a person and listening for a story that the public needs to know about may be somewhat separate, perhaps contradictory, and often ambiguous tasks for an interviewer' (p. 73)—perhaps a kind of 'habitus of listening'. Becker (2004, p. 71) uses the term adopted from Bourdieu to reflect on how musical emotion is perceived, but we can also use it to think about how interdisciplinary researchers and storytellers listen in particular and tacit ways, and to reflect on the conscious translation work that is needed to share this knowledge with different audiences.

ABC NATIONAL *EARSHOT*

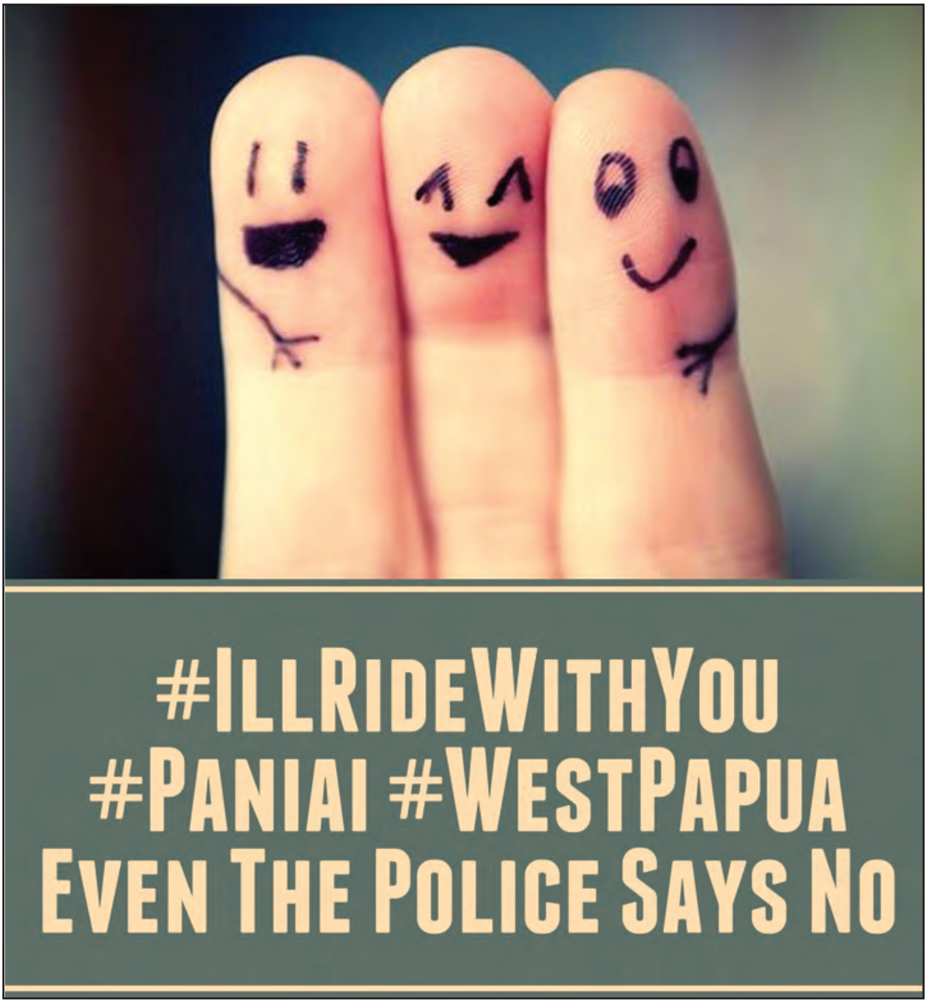


Figure 1: The #illridewithyou poster was the Papua Itu Kita group's first logo on social media.

If journalism is described as the first draft of history, then it can also be thought of as 'the first draft of memory, a statement about what should be considered, in the future, as having mattered today' (Kitch in Lindgren & Philips, 2015, p. 161) or of having helped decide what is 'of contemporary significance' (Nash, 2016, p. 148). I was interested in Ariane's inspiration to act on the deaths of teenagers using the #illridewithyou hashtag from Sydney—in that way, the story became its own meta-narrative about what had been considered important in the space of one week in December 2014. Ariane herself had identified silences in the present and recent past, and the power dynamics behind it, when she noted how media coverage and Indonesian audience attention of the Lindt cafe hostage siege in Sydney, and the resulting #illridewithyou hashtag, trumped reportage of the killings of teenagers in her own country.

By the time I had pitched the documentary to the ABC in 2019, it became clearer what the story might be. Some of those I had interviewed in 2015, including human rights lawyer Veronica Koman, had become key players in the largest protests on West Papua in decades, which began in August 2019. I realised I could seek to translate how Indonesia's response to West Papuan grievances had tracked in the past, but particularly during the last momentous five years, what the roots of these grievances were, and why they had become so visible. I sought to examine this through the personal experiences of three women: Indonesians Zely Ariane and Veronica Koman, as well as West Papuan activist and student Dorkas Kossay, who I had followed and interviewed at different stages between 2015 and 2019. For my reportage, I focused on new critical findings about the Paniai incident released by Indonesia's human rights commission in February 2020, as well as the West Papua protests that swept Indonesia in 2019. I also re-interviewed Koman, who had become a target by the Indonesian Police and was featured in international news headlines because of her tweets documenting the demonstrations. That first Aha! moment that occurred during my interview with Ariane also made it in: #Illridewithyou became the framing device to add context for an Australian audience, as well as the fact that Koman was now living in Australia, describing herself as being 'in exile'.

#Illridewithyou, West Papua was an attempt to use this story, not only to appeal to an Australian audience, but to critique this first draft of memory in narrative form. Lindgren and Philips (2016) use Keren Tenenboim-Weinblatt's concept of 'mediated prospective memory' to explain the journalistic process of creating materials than inevitably become collective memories inserted into the public domain (p. 159), as well as 'the process whereby past memories are harnessed in order to raise awareness and encourage future remedial action' (Lindgren & Philips 2016, p. 160). My reportage for the ABC inevitably engaged in its own mediated prospective memorising by offering a focus on Paniai—in other words, aiming to 'reverse an existing silence' (Nash, 2016, p. 150) and challenge budaya bisu (a mute or silent culture) (Giay, 2006). Another benefit of long-term research and/or reportage was that I was able to witness this silence-making and reversing in real time, and over time.

An example might be found in the finishing lines of the online article I wrote for the ABC (Lopez, 2020). It used the news peg—that in early 2020 Indonesia's human rights commission had found the military had committed gross human rights violations in Paniai—to illustrate possible (albeit thus far squandered) avenues for justice (Amnesty International, 2020). It also drew on the experience of activist Zely Ariane, whose own life has since become inextricably interwoven with this story and community—she married a man from Paniai, had two children and now works as a journalist in the same region. Ariane could recall the recent past, point out which remedial actions had been promised but not yet carried out by the Indonesian government, and the impact that had had on West Papuans themselves. As the article reads:

> The Indonesian government has sent mixed signals about last month's finding by the National Commission on Human Rights (Komnas HAM) after its five-year investigation into the Paniai incident.
>
> While the government initially committed to following up on the report, the Attorney-General's Office, which is responsible for instigating prosecution, recently said the commission's findings were incomplete, and that it would return the dossier…
>
> [Ariane] still recalls the speech that President Joko Widodo gave to Indigenous Papuans a few weeks after the Paniai killings.
>
> He told them he wanted the case to be 'resolved as quickly as possible, so that it does not reoccur in future'.
>
> Zely says people have grown weary of seeking justice for what happened.
>
> 'They just focus on their wounds. They know that the legal process won't deliver a win,' she said.
>
> 'They feel numb. And the situation [in Papua] since Paniai has only become worse.
>
> 'There have been too many new tragedies, new arrests, and far more deaths than the four people who died in Paniai.' (Lopez, 2020)

Reversing silences through audio documentary

I want to reflect a little more about the power of journalism to reverse silences through translation—particularly through a style of audio documentary that is narrative-led and often considers the past and memory in telling a current-day story.[2] I argue that speaking and listening specifically work to challenge such silences, and also have roots in West Papuan memoria passionis. Giay (2006, p. 31) suggests a number of ways West Papuans counter the silence of budaya bisu: including through the performance of songs and oration; seminars, book reviewing and discussions; worship and drama.

#Illridewithyou, West Papua is available in transcript form below, but I will focus on a scene in the documentary that can only be completely appreciated by listening to it.

LISTEN TO SCENE: belindalopez.net/dorkas/

In the scene, Papuan activist Dorkas Kossay addresses an Indonesian audience in Jakarta during a feminist event, to speak about the experiences of West Papuan women.

From the moment I first heard Kossay's speech, while I recorded it live in

Jakarta, it stayed with me as a powerful act of oration, infused with the repetition and lilt of poetry delivered in stanzas. Veronica Koman, who was also in the audience, described those listening as being 'mesmerised' by what she was saying:

> *I am one of the many women in Papua*
> *who every day shed tears,*
> *Because every day,*
> *we see that our children are killed*
> *Our husbands are killed*
> *Our relatives are killed.*
> *It is not only lives that are lost.*
> *Our fields of food are seized*
> *We're evicted from our lands*
> *For palm oil plantations*
> *Our farms are taken*
> *For the paramilitary police.*

As radio producer and journalist academic Siobhán McHugh (2012a) notes, audio documentary itself is an aesthetic blend of 'art and journalism', and its focus on narrative, or storytelling, includes the search for such features in an interviewee's speech (p. 198). She turns to affect theory, which has its roots in psychology, to explain how 'an affecting testimony will also arouse strong feelings in the listener, which will, in turn, influence how the listener processes the story and evaluates its meaning (cognition)' (p. 195).

What struck me about Kossay's oration was the affect it produced, in myself and other listeners, although the bare facts in the speech's content are available in human rights reports about West Papua. These are often written in the empirical, straight-laced style of the genre, rarely accessed by a mainstream public and once again employing a kind of 'god trick of seeing everything from nowhere' (Haraway, 1988, p. 581; Kirksey, 2012).

In #Illridewithyou, West Papua, rather than invoke 'the view from nowhere' and replace each line in Kossay's speech with a reference to the corresponding human rights reports that quantify and classify the Papuan deaths and land evictions that she evokes, her oration stands up on its own. It offers what journalist and writer Rebecca Solnit describes as 'one of the arts of perspective': 'to see yourself small on the stage of another's story, to see the vast expanse of the world that is not about you' (2014, p. 29). Or rather, to hear the vast expanse of the world that is not about you. Perhaps it is no coincidence that the audio documentary offers insight through affective listening, since, as Haraway (1988) reminds us, the sensory system of vision has been most used to signify 'a conquering gaze from nowhere' (p. 581).

Remarkably, given the poetic, flowing nature of her speech, Kossay later told me she hadn't prepared what to say for the audience: 'I just said what was in my head', she told me. 'And this situation is something we always experience—it's an everyday situation, so [the speech] just came out'. In other words, Kossay needed no preparation because she drew on her expertise, her situated knowledges, as Haraway (1998) would describe them, to communicate with audiences—the Indonesian one, first off, and then an Australian one, indirectly through #Illridewithyou, West Papua.

I took care to include as much of Kosssay's speech as possible in the documentary. My intention was to have the audience experience her original oration, if not directly through its Indonesian language content, but then through its affect. I had initially hoped to have a West Papuan English-language speaker perform the voiceover, but for logistical reasons instead commissioned performance poet Melanie Senter, based in Sydney where the documentary was produced. During the recording we aimed to translate not only the meaning of the words but its expression and inflections at every moment of Kossay's delivery, which manages to be softly spoken, while smouldering in its intensity. I took considerable time to edit the English voiceover in an 'echo' form sitting not on top of Kossay's oration, but among it, so that the listener might be made to feel they could understand her original words, spoken in Indonesian. The time given to this endeavour, both in recording and editing (and in research time in terms of long-term ethnographic fieldwork supported by the academy), is not common in most forms of journalism (Bacon, 2011). It is one example of how I believe the affective power of audio documentary can strive to make sure that situated knowledges are not lost in the translation work required in journalism.

Of course, the act of translating between languages, of my having translated Kossay's speech from Indonesian to English, is perilous in itself, as Tejaswini Niranjana (1992) and many others have pointed out. Translation, particularly ethnographic translation, risks the same kind of unequal power relations that Trouillot, Giay, Nash and others have identified in history and journalism. Haraway (1988) has the last word, warning that science (substitute with journalism) 'has been a search for translation, convertibility, mobility of meanings, and universality—which I call reductionism only when one language (guess whose?) must be enforced as the standard for all the translations and conversions' (p. 580). I argue that journalism translation must serve to do the opposite—to avoid reductionism and ensure that these 'maps of meanings' mark out multidimensional tensions and reasonances, à la Haraway (1988), as opposed creating a new rendition of the 'totalising classification' of the colonial maps of old (Anderson, 2006). Despite the perils of translation, the audio documentary offers an opportunity to expand our 'habitus of listening' with new dimensions and reasonances.

Kossay reflected on effect in a later interview with me, when I asked if she felt the Indonesian audience had really understood what she was saying during her speech. While Kossay was speaking in Indonesian to an Indonesian audience, she too was performing translation or code-switching work, including language translation between the style of Indonesian spoken in the capital, *logat Papua* (Papuan dialect) and *bahasa daerah* ('local language'—in Kossay's case, from Wamena in the central highlands of Papua). As #illridewithyou, West Papua aims to demonstrate, the knowledge translation work on West Papua is also necessary for Indonesian audiences receiving limited perspectives from national media and education systems. Kossay was unsure about whether her audience was capable of understanding: 'How can they understand what life is like for us there? And even if they can feel it, after they hear it, what will they do about it?" she asked. She might also have asked the same of an Australian audience.

However, Sue Tait (2011) critiques the attempt to elicit affect in 'bearing witness' accounts in journalism that 'moralises the audiences' future action' (p. 1227). (In Kossay's words: 'Even if they feel it, what will they do about it?'). Tait argues the danger is that the empathy elicited for the victim creates a straw man Evil Other that misrepresents complexity, and is responsible for 'reproducing the mechanisms of violence rather than facilitating processes of reconciliation' (p. 1233). (My hope was to avoid this by conveying the multiplicity and complexity of Indonesian views and responses to West Papua, as well as useful Indonesian and Papuan exchanges and identifying proposed legal avenues for justice). Despite Tait (2011) arguing that it is 'difficult to conceive of a journalism that is at once objective, and able to "nourish moral response"' (p. 1232), other journalist-researchers have articulated the consistency of these two positions. Jake Lynch (2015) posits that (peace) journalism's task is to create opportunities for readers and audiences to 'consider the value of non-violent responses', but—'if such responses—once considered—are rejected, "there is nothing else journalism can do about it, while remaining journalism"' (pp. 193-194).

I argue that affect is important in reversing silences on underreported issues, such as those that take place in West Papua. Nash (2013) writes that the answer to 'what's the story'—the research question in journalism—can adopt a number of modes (p. 129). The audio documentary allows for an affective mode, as opposed a statistical representation of deaths and crimes often found in reporting about West Papua. McHugh (2012a) argues that an experience narrated in an "affecting way" allows listeners to "translate" the emotion through the prism of their own lived experiences; we can infer that this personalisation will confer added impact' (p. 195) (text changes mine)—we might also call this an expansion of our 'habitus of listening'. In that way, the audio documentary can evoke an empathy 'map of meaning', to refer to Stuart Hall et al. again, as a translation tool for the audience to drill down into the root of Papuan grievances. Such affective translation work is the great humanising force of journalism. Trouillot (2015) reminds us that the production of silences during colonialism and slavery required feigning that ‘resistance and defiance did not exist, since to acknowledge them was to acknowledge the humanity of the enslaved’ (pp. 82–83) —a critique reflected by Kossay and her friends in #Illridewithyou, West Papua: ‘These people, they don’t see us as humans, do they?’

‘Good journalism’ instead ‘enables power to be inspected and interrogated’ and ‘challenges accepted notions of “us” and “them”’ (Lynch, 2013, pp. 6, 19). Human rights lawyer Veronica Koman told me that Indonesians witnessing accounts of Papuans expressing their grievances amongst a heavy response by security forces during the 2019 uprisings, through mainstream and social media, led some to better understand and acknowledge Papuan perspectives: ‘This is enough,’ she said of their reaction. ‘They are not being treated as humans.’ (Figure 2)

ALICE MOLDOVAN

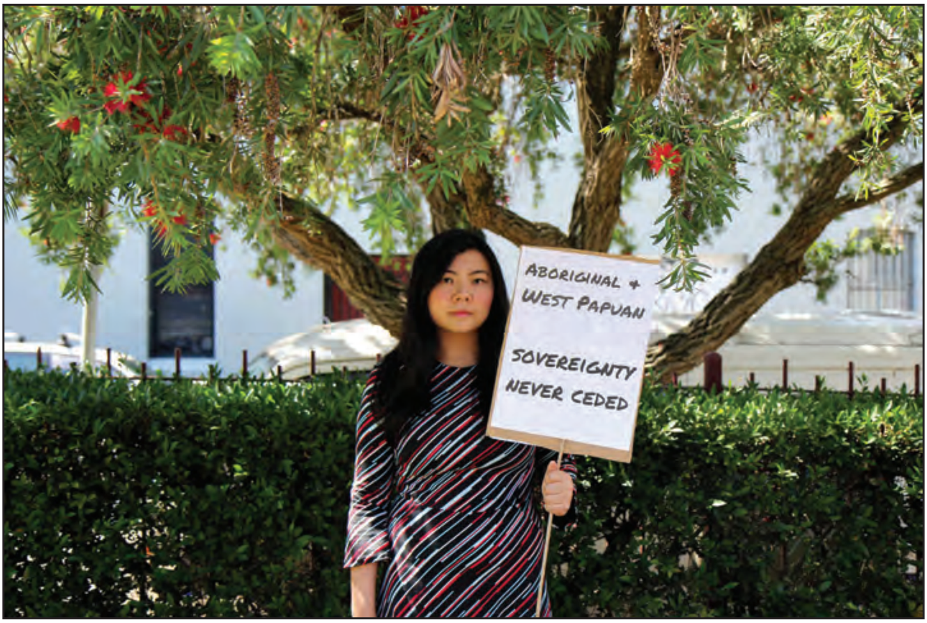


Figure 2: Human rights lawyer Veronica Koman believes that Indonesians witnessing accounts of Papuans expressing their grievances [during the 2019 Uprising] … led some to better understand and acknowledge Papuan perspectives.

Part 2: The podcast
First broadcast by ABC Radio National's Earshot documentary programme: https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/earshot/iillridewithyou-west-papua/12005696

#Illridewithyou, West Papua

By Belinda Lopez

EARSHOT HOST: It feels like centuries ago in internet years, but do you remember the hashtag #I'llridewithyou?

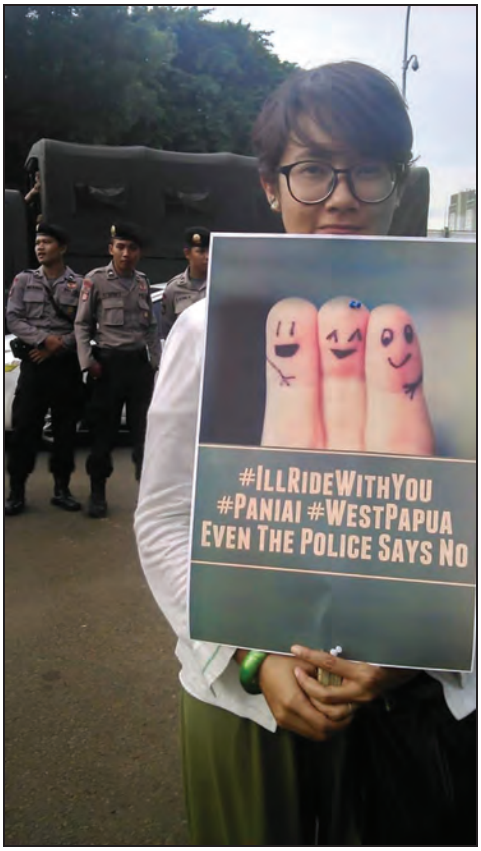
When Man Monis took hostages in the Lindt cafe in Sydney, in the name of Islamic State, Australian Muslims were scared of a backlash. Some were worried about taking public transport.

Hashtag 'I'll ride with you' was a way of saying 'we're with you'. A week before the Lindt cafe attack, something else terrible happened, that attracted far less media attention. It was in the most remote part of Indonesia, West Papua. But there is a link between these two events.

…On today's *Earshot*, we're asking, how do you make people care about issues that are usually ignored, or even censored?

Over the past few years, researcher Belinda Lopez has been following three women in Indonesia, who've decided they had to speak out about West Papua. But the topic is so sensitive that just protesting means you can be arrested. In the demonstrations that swept through Indonesia last year, hundreds were.

But this story begins in December 2014, just as I'll Ride with You started going viral.



ZELY ARIANE

Figure 3: Activist Zely Ariane helped organise a tiny demonstration in the middle of Jakarta. She stood there with other activists, holding up that poster.

BELINDA: Something about 'I'll ride with you' spoke to people—maybe it's the idea that you can support someone different to you. And—it's pretty easy to share a hashtag.

[AUDIO NEWS CLIP: 'Tell us the story of I'll Ride With You…']

BELINDA: It was trending worldwide. Including in Indonesia's capital, Jakarta.

ZELY ARIANE: [Indonesian] Pas di Australia, itu ada yang I'll Ride with You, gitu (In Australia, there was I'll Ride with You).

BELINDA: This is activist Zely Ariane (Figure 3).

ZELY: Hashtag 'I'll ride with you' was all over social media. That was in December, soon after Paniai happened.

BELINDA: In Paniai, West Papua, four teenagers were killed by Indonesian security forces, who opened fire into a crowd, according to human rights groups. Police said they were just defending themselves from violence. The crowd had gathered to protest what had happened the day before. Members of the military allegedly tortured a 14-year-old.
But Zely could see online that people in Jakarta were paying more attention to I'll Ride with you- in Sydney.

ZELY: So we made a poster of it— *I'll ride with you, Paniai*, West Papua.

BELINDA: She helped organise a tiny demonstration in the middle of Jakarta. She stood there with other activists, holding up that poster. Indonesian lawyer Veronica Koman also helped out.

VERONICA KOMAN: I was already disturbed by West Papua issues anyway, and then because the victims were children really outraged me. From that time, we agreed that we need solidarity in Jakarta, based in Jakarta. Like I tried to find West Papuan activists in Jakarta and then we gathered, and then: Let's make a movement, which is called Papua Itu Kita.

BELINDA: Papua Itu Kita. It means Papua is Us. And that poster *I'll Ride with You, West Papua*—was their first logo on social media. Zely, Veronica and a group of Papuans and Indonesians had a clear aim—this is Zely speaking to me back in 2015.

ZELY: We want to build a bridge for people in Jakarta, and for people all over Indonesia, who don't know about Papua. There's a lot of stigma and prejudice. And sometimes it's not because Indonesians are racist, it's because they just don't understand.

BELINDA: I was there, at the first event Papua Itu Kita put on in Jakarta in 2015. Zely was the MC.

ZELY: [at event]: I'm Zely Ariane. The phone number on the poster, that's my number. Now, from around seven, the music is going to be really good if you're on a date, ok? So invite your lover to come along…

BELINDA: You can hear it in Zely's tone: She was open and enthusiastic-and non confrontational. Papua Itu Kita shared Papuan art, and culture and politics—carefully.

ZELY [at event]: So friends, it's like this: We at Papua Itu Kita haven't worked together for very long. This is our first event—and we want it to be something that makes all of us in Jakarta feel close to Papua.

BELINDA: The thing is, in Indonesia, recognising Papua is seen as political. This is about history. After Indonesia gained its independence from the Dutch in 1945, it fought for Papua be included in its territory. And so Papua somehow completes Indonesia's idea of itself as a nation.

The government says it's done a lot to develop Papua.

But that's not how a lot of Papuans see it. Papua was also a Dutch colony, and many say it only became a part of Indonesia because of a UN-backed election in 1969, which has since been called corrupt.

And they say Indonesian security forces have rarely been made accountable for human rights abuses against them—for decades.

And the most outspoken Papuans say publicly what even more say privately: that the solution is for West Papua to become its own nation.

But that can see you charged with treason.

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BELINDA: Soon after Papua Itu Kita got started, the team began meeting at the Jakarta Legal Aid Institute, LBH. It's an unassuming building in the middle of the city. I spoke to Veronica there in 2016, when she was working as a legal aid lawyer.

VERONICA [chatting in background]: …pro-bono stuff…

BELINDA: LBH has always supported freedom of expression, so Papua Itu Kita figured it would be good place to hold an event—where Indonesians could hear what Papuans actually wanted. Then one of the MCs started to get the crowd involved.

VERONICA: …And he said: Ok when I say Papua, you say 'Itu Kita'. Or for those who want to say merdeka. you can say it.

BELINDA: Merdeka is the Indonesian word for freedom.

VERONICA: So Papua Merdeka already said, like really enthusiastically 'Papua merdeka, Papua merdeka' three times in this office. And on that event there's so many intels (laughs).

BELINDA: 'Intel' is short for Intelligence officers. Veronica said they all seem to kind of dress the same.

VERONICA: And they're wearing their distinctive polo shirt. They're not in their, uh, official uniform but even in front of LBH Jakarta right now, I can say, that half of them are intels.

BELINDA: Every time I went into the legal aid building, I'd see men, sitting outside, watching.

VERONICA: And they're getting more intels since LBH Jakarta takes West Papuan issues. And because West Papuans are hanging out in our office and West Papua issues just like intel magnet.

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BELINDA: In Jakarta, young Papuans would often tell me they felt extremely visible. There was the political surveillance, sure, but it was more than that.

They escaped to their student boarding houses, to hang out. Some prayed together, others talked politics.

[AUDIO: Papuan students singing in a shared rented house in Jakarta].

BELINDA: At school back home in West Papua, they were constantly told they were Indonesian. But when they arrived in the capital, they weren't always made to feel that way.

DORKAS KOSSAY: Maybe they felt I was different, or that I was somehow… I don't know. They would always ask, 'Hey Dorkas, can we touch your hair?' 'Yeah sure,' I'd say. 'Just touch it.'

BELINDA: When I first met Dorkas Kossay in Jakarta, in 2016, she told me she was the only Papuan in class at university, and the other students would stare at her black skin and curly hair.

And when I asked her what it had been like living in Jakarta, she started telling me this story, about when her friends from Papua had come to visit for a student conference.

DORKAS: These were friends who hadn't been to Jakarta before. So I said, 'let's go check out Jakarta'. My friends wanted to rent a car to be more comfortable but I said 'No. You've got to understand how the people here treat us'.

I wanted to see what happened when these Papuan friends of mine got on the train, with these massive dreadlocks in their hair.

When they got on, straight away the women who were sitting nearby who were all wearing headscarves, they held their headscarves like this, against their nose, and I thought, 'Wow, didn't my friends take a shower?"

Oh God, straight away I felt emotional. I said to the women: 'Ah, excuse me mam, sorry, actually I've got a face mask in my bag, do you want to use it? Instead of making your headscarf dirty, you can just use this mask.'

And the woman said, ‘Oh, no, no miss, no. No don’t worry about it, don’t worry.’ And the way they were acting, just made us feel so unwelcome.

Papuans like me who have been here a long time are used to this, but these guys who had just arrived, they were really angry. They said: ‘These people they don’t see us as humans, do they?’

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ZELY: I’ve got a public mobile number and I’m always getting calls in the middle of the night. There’s just silence on the other end. I say, ‘Hello, hello, hello’ three times, and then if I don’t hear anything, I just hang up. Do I feel scared? No, I mean, maybe because I haven’t received any serious threats yet. But all my activities are out in the open. It’s not like I’m sharing hardcore posts about Papuan independence on Facebook.

BELINDA: I’d met up with Zely for a drink after she’d just come back from a remote part of Papua. She was leaning out of the window, looking out at the Jakarta traffic.

ZELY: I want to go back to Papua. Look, basically: The more that is known about Papua. The subtle details we know about Papua and its problems, and the more that’s spoken about in Jakarta, the more things will improve. It’s not like, ‘Oh, I want to move to Papua because it’s so pretty’—no, it’s not like that. I need to stay there longer to understand.

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BELINDA: When Veronica Koman was 19, she did what a lot of us have done: she got a tattoo, that she later sort of regretted. We were at her office, LBH, when she showed me her forearm, inked with the word ‘Indonesia’

VERONICA: It’s the philosophy that Indonesia is running through my veins. I was a crazy nationalist.

BELINDA: After years studying in the national education system, Veronica was a passionate defender of Indonesia and its red and white flag, the Merah Putih.

VERONICA: Like even when I was in the car and I saw a Merah Putih flag, I could just raise my hand like this. On the 17th of August, the independence day of Indonesia, I could just listening to this nationalistic music—it’s like crazy, it’s fascist or something. And (laughs) I was actually embarrassed telling this story.

BELINDA: Every country has its national stories. One of Indonesia’s stories is that it liberated Papua from Western colonialism. So when Indonesia was criticised internationally about West Papua, Veronica used to think that it was just more Western colonialism—against Indonesia.

VERONICA: Like now, this West Papua issue—separatism— it's just a US conspiracy. And now I tell my colleagues now too, if you look for anything in Bahasa Indonesia you will not find anything about the human rights abuses in West Papua. But if you google in English, then you can find the truth.

BELINDA: The Indonesian government heavily restricts foreign journalists and NGOs from going to Papua, but that hasn't stopped decades of reports of human rights abuses from coming out. Instead of searching for 'Papua' in Indonesian, Veronica typed 'West Papua' in English, and what she read was totally different to what she'd learned at school, and in the media.

VERONICA: I remember reading all this, like 'what, what is this really true?' But oh, this is from the reliable sources'. I was being brainwashed, Indonesians are being brainwashed and [subject to] systematic censorship.

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BELINDA: A couple of weeks after I spoke to Veronica, I went to a history conference at LBH. There were a lot of political discussions planned- including about longstanding problems in Papua.
Zely was there presenting. When I left LBH I must have forgotten to switch off my recorder.
[Rustling zipper]
Just as I walked outside, I ran into another Papuan activist I had met earlier. And almost immediately, an Indonesian man, dressed in a polo shirt, interrupted our conversation. You can just make out him asking me where we're both from.

[**BELINDA** (faintly on tape): Australia]
Then [the] poloshirt guy asked me if I was a journalist. And if I'd been to Papua? No, I said. I was actually doing my PhD, and I had been to Papua years before—but I didn't trust this guy. He was dressed exactly how Veronica described the intelligence officers. She said they claimed to be journalists (Figure 4). He told me he was part of the press. So what do you report on? I asked him.

[**BELINDA** (faintly on tape): So what do you report on?]
Everything, he said.

[BELINDA (faintly on tape): OK. Nice to meet you. Bye bye.]

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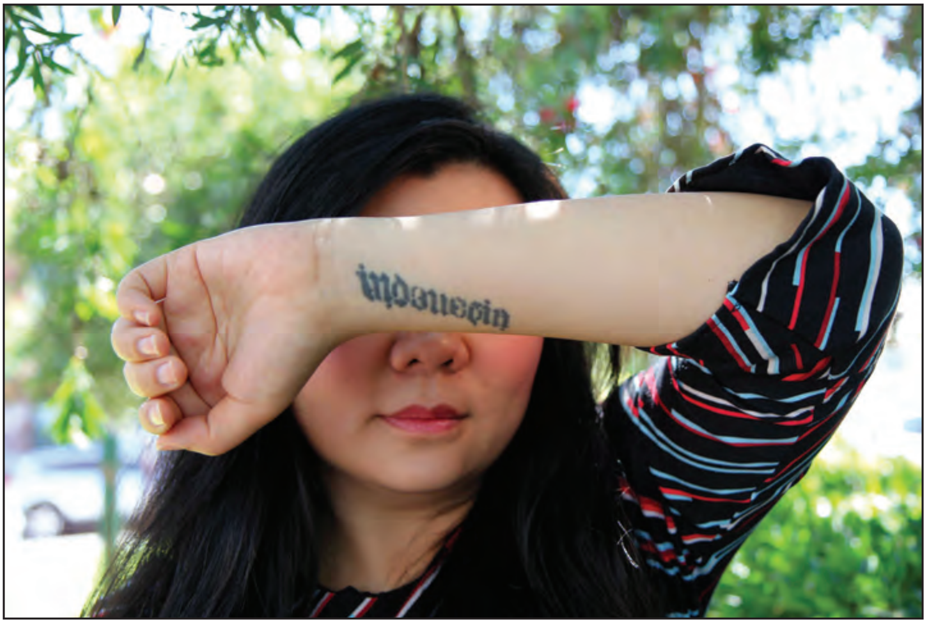
BELINDA: One of the times I felt the huge abyss between West Papua and Jakarta was when I saw Dorkas speak in front of an audience. It was for a feminist event, in Jakarta. Veronica was there as well. She asked the organisers to let Dorkas speak.



ALICE MOLDOVAN

Figure 4: Human rights lawyer Veronica Koman with her distinctive Indonesia tatoo on the left arm: Intel – intelligence officers - all seem to kind of dress the same'.

VERONICA: Among West Papuan students, Dorkas was the most articulate and powerful one.

BELINDA: The MCs were really high energy.
[MC, screaming: … Kakak (Sister) Dorkas!]

BELINDA: Dorkas got up on the stage wearing a high tall headdress made from cassowary feathers, a native bird of Papua.

VERONICA: Before she started to speak she told me she was nervous. But then the audience was mesmerised to what Dorkas was saying.

DORKAS: Good evening everyone [softly]
Good evening everyone [louder]
[Crowd: Malam! (Good evening!)]
Thank you.

> *I am one of the many women in Papua who every day shed tears,*
> *Because every day, we see that our children are killed*
> *Our husbands are killed*
> *Our relatives are killed.*
> *It is not only lives that are lost.*
> *Our fields of food are seized*

We're evicted from our lands
For palm oil plantations
Our farms are taken
For the paramilitary police.
Thank you friends, that’s all from me.

BELINDA: Later, I asked Dorkas if she felt the audience had understood what she was describing.

DORKAS: I have my doubts. Could they really, really feel what I was saying? Or not? How can they understand what life is like for us there? And even if they can feel it, after they hear it, what will they do it?

When I went back home and saw Papua the way it is, and then Java the way it is, it made me think differently. I felt that, yeah… Papuans must be free.

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BELINDA: It’s been five years since the Paniai incident, where teenagers were allegedly killed by Indonesian security forces. No one’s been prosecuted since their deaths.

It's also five years since the I’ll ride with you hashtag, and the Lindt Cafe terrorist attack in Sydney. And I'm actually standing just 200 metres from the Lindt café and Veronica Koman is here, protesting in front of the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

She says it’s not safe for her to go back home to Jakarta.

[Veronica on megaphone: ‘We really need your solidarity. It's very heartening. This is my first protest on West Papua issues together with Australian comrades’]

BELINDA: Recently, other Indonesians have held counter-protests against what they say is an attempt to break up Indonesia.
[Protesters: ‘Free the Jakarta Six, end the repression now, Free the Jakarta Six, end the repression now…’]

BELINDA: ‘The Jakarta Six' are five Papuans, and the first Indonesian currently on trial for treason for declaring their support for an independent West Papua [CKD].
[Veronica on megaphone: …’and they're facing 20 years imprisonment for that. And what do we hear from Australia?’
Crowd: ‘Nothing!’]

BELINDA: Another 50 ethnic Papuans will also be tried for treason. It started last year in August, in the week of Indonesia’s independence day. Veronica used to play nationalistic songs, but last year, she was the lawyer for Papuan students threatened by nationalist groups at their student dorm.

The Papuans were accused of damaging an Indonesian flagpole. Veronica was on the phone to them when police stormed their boarding house.

She tweeted about it. Videos of what happened went viral on social media.

What came next were the largest protests about Papua that had been seen around Indonesia, in decades.

It just felt like the heat had been turned up on something that was simmering for years.

By then Veronica had moved to Australia to do her masters. She spent her days online, documenting the demonstrations on Twitter. And then, in West Papua…

VERONICA: The Indonesian government shut down the internet. I think it was to prevent the footage and information of thousands of West Papuans took to the streets demanding independence referendum from coming out to the world. So they shut the internet down. But I managed to keep getting the footage and then I kept posting it… Jakarta already said that the situation in West Papua has gone back to normal but I kept posting these videos, which makes their claim not true.

Not long after that they named me as a suspect based on four different laws, from spreading hoaxes and then incitement to riot because of my posting. [Police reading Veronica's tweets]

BELINDA: This is the head of the East Java police reading out Veronica's tweets at a press conference. He calls her a provocateur.

The police have threatened to cancel her passport and put out an Interpol red notice, to have her brought back to Indonesia, from Australia.

VERONICA: But I think, I think these fabricated charges against me is just a way to shut me up in general about this whole uprising thing.

BELINDA: Veronica's Twitter profile now reads: Human Rights Lawyer, in Exile.

VERONICA: Like I sort of knew I would be arrested sooner or later, or in exile. Ah, actually I didn't expect that I would be in exile. Yeah. (laughs).

BELINDA: I mean, you laugh about it, because it's kind of one of those 'if you don't laugh you'll cry' sort of things.

VERONICA: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. A friend pointed that out to me. He said that 'there's always new bad things happen to you. But you always tell me the story while laughing it off hahahaha'. Yeah, I think it's some sort of reaction, I don't know (laughs).

BELINDA: Do you allow yourself to think about that, in terms of the very real possibility that you might not be able to return to Indonesia, ever again?

VERONICA: Ah, I think even if they drop the charges, but still, thanks to the drama of the Indonesian police making me everyday headline news everywhere on national media, it could be dangerous for me, especially from the ultra nationalist groups, which are many in Jakarta (laughs). Yeah.

BELINDA: I'm speaking to Veronica in Sydney. A lot has happened since I met her in Jakarta. I found out I'm on an Indonesian government blacklist. It's a really long story that I'm still trying to work out—but I do know that while I'm on the blacklist, I can't go back to Indonesia either.

And a year after Veronica moved to Australia, Dorkas Kossay died.

BELINDA: I want to talk a little bit about Dorkas, if that's ok. I did a search this morning of Dorkas just to see what people said, when she died. And it came up actually with your message that you wrote on Facebook.

VERONICA: Ah, yeah suddenly feel things again. Yep. Yeah. (Whispers) Now I want to cry.

BELINDA: Yeah sorry, she was so brilliant.

VERONICA: Yeah so, I posted 'Kerja terlalu lambat, kolonialisme memberangkat banyak kawan dengan lebih cepat. RIP Dorkas Kossay sayang. ('Working too slow, colonialism has taken away many lives of Papuans friends. Rest in peace, the beloved Dorkas Kossay'.)

Still until now, many West Papuan friends passed away very very young. Including Dorkas. So at that time I felt desperation. I felt guilt that this person that I admire, they passed away before they saw independence.

BELINDA: That's something that's been really shocking to me as well, since I went to Jakarta, and met a lot of different Papuans there. Is just how many of these young, bright intelligent people, the people that would have been the new leaders of a generation of thinkers and artists, from West Papua, and political leaders, just gone. Just, sickness, things that were curable.

VERONICA: Yeah I agree I remember the first few deaths I was so shocked, but now I'm used to it. Sadness of course I still cried every time I heard the news. But it didn't shock me too much anymore. It's partly because West Papuans do not trust Indonesian healthcare system. Err, hospitals. So they prefer to not go to the hospital, that's why they died.

And then, West Papuans who are sick, they tend to not tell anyone about it. Because their life has been so hard, they feel embarrassed, as if they're complaining. So they keep it to themselves. So we don't know we are sick.

BELINDA: In Dorkas' case, did she keep quiet?

VERONICA: Yeah, Dorkas kept quiet and every time a friend dies I always feel like we need to work faster, people are literally dying.

BELINDA: I remember when we spoke three years ago you said Indonesians weren't aware. Do you think more Indonesians now know what's happening in Papua?

VERONICA: Yeah. Because ignorant Indonesians like to say, 'ah it's only a handful of Indonesians who want independence from Indonesia, surely'. But now, because of the footage of thousands of Papuans demanding independence referendum, I haven't heard such ignorant comments since being said again.

Before the uprising began, I felt something different because it was not just coming out from the Papuans, but many Indonesians on social media publicly support: 'They're not being treated as humans, so we support their independence from Indonesia'. Many Indonesians did that on Twitter, and Facebook as well.

BELINDA: On the other hand, social media can be an echo chamber. I mean how reflective do you actually think it is of the wider Indonesian society?

VERONICA: It's still a small group of people but there were Indonesians leading the marches in Java. In Jayapura, Sorong, and Wamena, Indonesians were amongst the arrested ones. So on the ground it's real. Like Indonesians are willing to take the same risks.

BELINDA: Could you have imagined the support that you've seen amongst Indonesians when we spoke three and a half years ago?

VERONICA: No, that's a very good question. No, no, I didn't imagine it. No. Oh my God, I now feel a little bit teary. That's right, I didn't imagine that at all. We've come so far.

Notes

1. West Papua refers to two administrative provinces in Indonesia, Papua and West Papua. West Papua is also the name by which the two provinces are collectively known internationally in English, often alluding to its self-determination aspirations.
2 McHugh (2012b) describes a similar form as the 'crafted oral history radio documentary'.

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The emergence of creative practice as research

Abstract: The term 'Creative Practice as Research' is now in common usage in the tertiary sector, although it is relatively new in its inception. This article traces the rise of the term (and its variations), which emerged about the same time as the tertiary auditing processes, such as Aotearoa New Zealand's Performance-Based Research Fund (PBRF). But creative practitioners had already been sneaking production into the traditional university, at times facing resistance and even derision from scholars undertaking more conventional research within the arts, humanities and social science departments. The author argues that the term Creative Practice as Research, and the many practices under its umbrella such as journalism, is now widely accepted, in part because it has been convenient, fulfilling particular needs within a changing tertiary landscape. Its greater acceptance allows traditional universities to respond to student demand for skills-based learning without losing their reputation for research excellence. But the term also suits the former polytechnics, or 'new universities', that are eager to imbue their craft and technical teaching history and practice with richer research content. Drawing on a new wave of 'production studies', the article also explores how a specific instance of Creative Practice, the documentary, does indeed fulfil the requirement of research as articulated through other academic disciplines such as the social sciences. Furthermore, documentary and other creative practices can contribute to 'impact', an increasingly important metric deployed in the assessment of research within the tertiary sector.

Keywords: academic disciplines, creative practice, creative practice as research, documentary, journalism, New Zealand, PBRF, Performance-Based Research Fund, polytechnics, skills-based learning, tertiary sector

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THE phrase Creative Practice as Research (CPR) is heard frequently these days within universities, so much so it appears to be part of the natural lingo, even though it is an expression that is relatively new.[1] CPR argues that creative processes, rather than being a supplement or 'nice to have', contribute just as much 'new knowledge' as the more traditional approaches to research, at least in arts and social sciences, which involves publishing in monographs, journal articles and edited collections. Although now CPR is accepted within the academy, complex tensions can still arise in its implementation. Arguments arise about what practices qualify, and which do not. Frictions also arise between Creative Practice produced within universities and their respective 'cultural industries' in the broader cultural community.

I draw on documentary production as an example of CPR as it is my own speciality. A growing number of PhD students also include documentary in the new wave doctorates that have a practice component. The genre has always fitted in relatively easily to academia as, in the words of Bill Nichols, documentary is one of the 'discourses of sobriety' that claim to describe the 'real', to tell the truth, along with science, economics, politics, and history (2001, p. 39). That he sidelines documentaries affective, metaphorical or expressive tendencies is a debate for another day. But as well as finding a place, or not, within academia, all Creative Practice has an industry counterpart. Documentary's counterpart, in my experience, has been the screen industries—that is, film, television, the art world and digital industries. But this can vary. Documentary can also be positioned as a branch of journalism, the focus of this journal, which looks more towards news, current affairs, and again digital industries as its home profession. That I include digital industries in both lists points to an overlap between documentary and journalism, even their merging, something I have addressed in an earlier article in this publication (Goldson, 2015) but given my experience, I place it here within the screen industries

The documentary relationship with the academe and screen industries

Documentary produced with a university setting, as with all Creative Practice, can have a patchy relationship with the screen industries 'out there'. Is university-based Creative Practice intended to challenge or 'make a difference' to mainstream industries, engendering a kind of critical thinking associated with the social sciences and humanities? Or do practitioners exist in the academy to offer mere training to the new generation of industry workers? These positions may not be poles apart as many in the creative industries acknowledge they require reinvigoration, but very often the mainstream remains focused on producing the 'hit'. Generally, the screen industry has tended to have little interest in what is occurring in production among university practitioners. This could be in part because Aotearoa New Zealand has relatively few university staff nation-wide are involved in producing and teaching screen production, so they and their work are not particularly visible. But as Jon Dovey states, 'By and large, the screen industries have tended to see higher education as just a site for training future personnel rather than undertaking creative research' and that they focused almost entirely on filling gaps in their workforce (2009, p. 53).

Not all disciplines face this complex dichotomy. Some have always had practice components, for example, the sciences, engineering, medicine or architecture. But these tend to follow, as Dovey (2009, p. 51) suggests, a kind of triangulation—idea-development-'product to market'—pursuing a streamlined track in tandem with the professional sectors in their respective fields. Fine arts, performance, and music have also fared better than the media arts, given the more secure material relations they have with their constitutive areas, where there are more established traditions to draw upon and indeed, fall back on. As argued above, Creative Practice as Research, produced variably in the arts, humanities and social sciences disciplines—the pools within which many of us swim—can have an altogether stickier relationship with their industry counterparts. But they also have had a complicated relationship with the academy, which I will now explore.

Pinpointing when the terminology Creative Practice (and its variants) first arrived is hard. Still, its emergence appears aligned with the introduction of university research assessment processes that shifted the economic basis of universities away from depending mainly on a student numbers model (EFTS, or bums-on-seats) to one that also rewarded the collective research output of the staff. In Aotearoa New Zealand, the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) instituted the Performance-Based Research Fund (PBRF) in 2003, following the formation of Britain's United Kingdom's Research Excellence Framework (REF) and Australia's Excellence for Research in Australia (ERA). Differing from its precursors, PBRF focused on the outputs of individual researchers which are then aggregated into an overall score. Each researcher produces an Evidence Portfolio that cites published Research Outputs (NROs) and collates instances of Peer Esteem. The Tertiary Educational Commission offers up a concise description of the reason for PBRF:

> The purpose of the Performance-Based Research Fund (PBRF) is to ensure that excellent research in the tertiary education sector is encouraged and rewarded. This means assessing the research performance of tertiary education organisations (TEOs) and then funding them on the basis of their performance.[2]

It is safe to say PBRF has had a transformative effect on institutional life, providing a chunk of university and tertiary provider budgets. The auditing process has altered the shape and frequency of research outputs so that they are timed to suit its six-year cycle. Some academic staff are less willing to take on duties, either teaching or administration, recognising that their standing and promotion prospects are likely to be tied to their PBRF score. The auditing process has also injected more competition into an already competitive sector, becoming not just about the allocation of resources but also a de facto struggle for the crown. As a consequence, the resources spent in the run-up to PBRF are mighty, given the person-hours, the rehearsals and the intensity of the practice runs.

But the PBRF has generated positive outcomes too, increasing the focus on the importance of research generally and accelerating the acceptance of Creative Practice within the academy. Practitioners demanded that our work be recognised as research once we realised the auditing processes were underway. Some creative and practice disciplines have fared better than others, however. Documentary production slipped into the Creative Arts sector relatively unquestioned, seen as part of Screen production. Journalism practice-as-research has struggled for visibility, either included as part of journalism studies, which belongs to the Communication/Media Studies discipline or as 'creative non-fiction', an add-on to creative writing. Given its affiliation with documentary, the fate of journalism practice-as-research is worth considering in more depth here. In an article written before the 2018 PBRF round, David Robie pointed out that the audit process 'makes no explicit provision for journalism practice-as-research, although it does not exclude it either' (2015). But as the author points out, journalism educators at various universities are now focusing less exclusively on practitioner-based instruction and undertaking quality academic research. Thus, Robie, who was a member of the Social Sciences panel for PBRF in 2016-7, argues that the TEC should open up the door to investigative journalism and other long-form modes. But he also puts the onus on journalism educators who need 'to push the boundaries for greater acceptance of journalism research methodologies and to claim an enhanced academic space as a "critic and conscience of society"' (2015). In Australia, the battle for journalism practice-as-research to be accepted in the ERA process has been fiercer, led by scholars such as Chris Nash who argues, like Robie, that there is a pressing need for journalism research methodologies to be recognised (2017). Nash sheets blame home not just to the auditing processes but also to the 'academy, including its journalist members, and not of its leading practitioner members' (2017, p. 26). In his book on the subject of journalism, Nash focusses on I.F.Stone and Hans Haacke's respective practices as exemplars of journalistic excellence, exhibiting methodological rigour and conceptual reflexivity (2016). Wendy Bacon, an investigative journalist, former professor at UTS (Sydney) and currently editor of the *Frontline* section of this journal, has for some time advocated for more interface between professional journalism and scholarly journalism research practices (2012, p.153). In a submission to Australian and NZ standard research classification review where journalism's fate hung in the balance, Bacon argued that 'in-depth, rigorous journalism practice can produce fresh insights and knowledge and has methodologies that can and should be recognised' (2020, p. 3). As I suggest later in this article concerning documentary, Bacon points out that journalism can similarly share methodologies with sociology and history—hence is distinct from the priorities of media studies or journalism studies. While she recognises research about journalism is valuable, she suggests it does not encompass what journalism research can or should be (2019, p. 2).

I have been a member of the Creative and Performing Arts panel for PBRF three times since 2003, most recently in 2018. The CPA panel assesses portfolios representing a diverse range of practices, including fine arts photography, curatorial practices, film-making (narrative, documentary, animation and experimental), creative writing, music, design and computer graphics, theatre, but also their theoretical counterparts, art history, theatre studies, musicology, and production studies of various stripes. Some individual researchers offer up Evidence Portfolios that contain creative outputs exclusively, while others are a blend of practice and theory. Luckily for those of us in the field, the CPA has had exemplary leadership, headed by scholars and creatives committed to their practice and to the institutions they work within. The two Chairs I have had the pleasure of working with, who come from music and fine arts respectively (thus have the more 'secure tradition' connections I refer to above), have taken as given that creative practice is a legitimate form of research within the University system. They have used the PBRF process to emphasise this firmly-held position and consistently argued that creative practice deploys critical thinking and 'new knowledge' just as well as more traditional methods of research. One can read, in their insistence, some frustration that this recognition by academic institutions has been a long time coming.

This positive attitude towards Creative Practice has given a fillip and more certitude to those producing a range of non-traditional outputs within the academy. There are always arguments during evaluative processes, and our PBRF panel grappled with a series of questions about practice within the academy. Where does 'acceptable' creative practice begin and end? Where does the 'research' bit come in, and when is creative practice work-a-day? How does one ascertain the relative weight of a contribution, especially when roles within collaborative projects are so often intertwined? How does the wealth and investment of an institution, or lack thereof, impact on an evidence portfolio? What personal circumstances may affect the frequency or quality of an individual's research outputs? Long-term panel members have also witnessed the shifts in the assessment process. PBRF has had to respond to changes within disciplines and curricula, as well as to the profound impact technological change has had on research outputs, not only in a formal sense but critically how research is now 'published' and circulated.

The impact of PBRF has led to a greater acknowledgement of the many ways that cultural production engages with and indeed extends, audiences, readers and spectators. The term 'creative practice' is now routinely listed in university paperwork, for example, in grant applications or PBRF preparation documents. However, the acceptance of creative works within the arts and humanities has been a relatively long time coming—and has involved some fractious debate.

Some thorny issues remain. The Ethics process is one—its requirements, for example, to be very open with one's participants precludes any form of investigative documentary or journalism (How, for instance, can you investigate corruption in the City Council if you are open to all councillors?). What about the acknowledgement of the effort required to raise significant external funding to cover the costs of production of 'high impact' documentary or drama which can take years? And should funding be awarded, there is consistent pressure to cycle income through the university—which then clips the ticket. Dispersing external funding is fair enough in principle, given the support universities provide their staff, but spawns some further complexities. Academic business units cannot fulfil the specialist tasks filmmakers require, and budgets anyway are already lean. Besides, funnelling funding from one state agency (a film funder) to another (the university), let alone dealing with international co-production funding, would cause impossible headaches.

Exploring the history of Creative Practice as Research

To explore the history of Creative Practice as Research, I turn here to my career, which has been more shaped by luck and happenstance than planning. We will all have our tales to tell and of course, what follows is a partial, personal take rather than a comprehensive look at the gradual institutional acceptance that has taken place. I had gone to New York City in the early 1980s having worked as a journalist at Radio New Zealand but wanting to move into film-making— which I did.

At the time I was producing 'video art', labelled as such first because of exciting developments in video technology which made cameras sufficiently affordable and portable (just) to be lugged around, by artists and political activists alike. Second, my artistic and political circles, mobilised by the Reagan administration's policies, saw documentary as a conventional genre associated with mainstream television. The commercial underpinnings of television made it, we argued, incapable of nurturing aesthetic experimentation or accommodating the alternative political viewpoints we tended to share. The televisual exceptions were little pockets within the public broadcasting system (PBS) and also within cable TV, then the newcomer challenging the hegemony of broadcast television. As part of the deal allowing cable TV to roll out, a small number of public access cable channels had been established. They aired more local, non-commercial, uncensored programming and series such as Paper Tiger TV and Deep Dish TV, produced by volunteer collectives of media producers, educators and activists flourished.[3] I joined these collectives, but I also attended various workshops that were abundant in the city during those times. At the same time, I completed an MA in Film Studies (then relatively new as a discipline) at New York University. I began teaching myself at Global Village, a kind of video branch of the New School for Social Research, famously founded by members of the Frankfurt School as a centre for teaching philosophy and social sciences. Teaching, to me, appeared a more stable and ethical way of making a living than working in commercials, or the newly-minted music video business, both of which seemed rife with sexism among other unpleasant-nesses. I had made some short pieces of video art, gained a minor reputation in the local art work/film circuit in NYC, had my MA and done my teaching. These qualifications managed to get me hired as a junior lecturer at Brown University, part of the prestigious Ivy League chain of institutions and based a few hours north of NYC in Providence, Rhode Island. Brown was small and sufficiently elite to be able to be experimental and progressive when it chose and offered film and video production within the then Semiotics Department—which was to become the Department for Modern Culture and Media. I taught video production, a mix of documentary and experimental work, but also pushed myself into the field of theory—feminist theory, semiotics, cultural studies and related disciplines—which was the primary focus of the curriculum.

On the practical front, my efforts to master 'theory' (to use a blanket term) was in part because I found it engaging and challenging. But academia was shaping up as a possible career move for me, not just a lucky break. If academia was to see me as more than 'just a filmmaker', I felt I needed to diversify my teaching. Universities provided some shelter for less commercial filmmakers, buffering us from the prerogatives of the mainstream industry, providing an income and permitting, even encouraging, an intellectual engagement that could be difficult to achieve 'out there'.

I continued teaching across the academic/creative divide when I returned to Aotearoa New Zealand in the mid-1990s, taking up a post in the English Department at the University of Auckland, teaching in a film studies strand of the broader discipline. It was then that I first taught video production in Aotearoa New Zealand, to a third-year documentary class which has seen many graduates produce extraordinary projects and advance into careers in the industry and at universities. But I also continued my academic teaching and decided to undertake a PhD which I completed in 2006, while simultaneously keeping up my various documentary film-making projects. In pursuing a conventional doctorate, which was all then that was on offer, I was, in part, seeking validation from the academy. At this point, documentary production was still not accepted as research. Some that considered themselves 'true scholars' expressed some indifference or scepticism, challenging production's right to exist within such an institution. Was filmmaking too commercial, not really academic enough, too populist? Not really research? There was at very least a hierarchy. There was pressure of filmmakers to engage with complex theory, while more traditional scholars knew very little about the technologies of production. As Dovey states, screen practitioners felt some resentment as it was assumed that 'everyone should know how to speak abstract critical analytic discourse whilst knowing how to frame a shot or make a cut is relegated to a subaltern specialist discourse' (2009, p. 59).

In time, film studies expanded to media studies and cultural studies, and shortly thereafter, we departed from the English Department to become a department ourselves. Tempers flared at times. At the University of Auckland, I recall a member of a research committee accusing Roger Horrocks, who had introduced the popular strand of film studies, of wanting funding to 'watch television' or 'go to film festivals'. But production offerings in the curriculum grew and screen-writing and then drama directing were added to documentary production, forming a Screen pathway, but one that always occupied a 'boutique' status within the academic programme.

In many ways, Creative Practice as Research then described by the humbler umbrella term 'production', snuck into the traditional universities, often introduced by one or two people, practitioners themselves. This move faced resistance from some quarters, but support from others. Production often remained an awkward fit as institutional life was still structured to accommodate more conventional disciplines.

As well as settling in at the traditional universities, CPR has also found a home at the 'new universities', the former polytechnics. In the UK, and many of the Commonwealth countries, including in Aotearoa New Zealand and Australia, polytechnics were 'upgraded' into universities in the 1980s and 1990s, often doing the heavy-lifting in terms of overall student expansion, absorbing and encouraging students from less affluent communities to enter the tertiary sector. Auckland University of Technology, over the road from the University of Auckland, offers a good example. Formerly Auckland Technical Institute, then said to offer 'advanced vocational training', including a popular practical journalism course, it became Auckland Institute of Technology when it earned the right to confer degrees. Finally, in 2000, it became the first polytechnic to become a university and was rebranded Auckland University of Technology. AUT's background as a technical college meant its focus would have been on craft and vocational skills. Its transformation into a university suggests that theory and critical theory/analysis would have been introduced into this core curriculum over time, supplementing its more practical base and increasing its research focus. I imagine this shift and change was disruptive, just as the introduction of production had been into the University of Auckland. My understanding is that RMIT University in Melbourne and the University of Technology Sydney (UTS) have followed similar trajectories and like AUT, are successful examples of the shift from polytechnics to universities.

Although now mostly welcomed as a legitimate form of research, Creative Practice emerged in part because of economic factors. As university education has become more expensive, parents and students raise valid questions about its worth. Who can afford a university education without falling into economic doldrums? Will there be job opportunities for the media studies graduates, the sociologists and the art historians? These anxieties and perceptions made the idea of learning practical or creative skills appealing to students, as they may be perceived, rightly or wrongly, as offering up more job possibilities on graduation. Furthermore, students live in a much more mediatised world and creativity and production is woven into their everyday life. Thus Creative Practice as Research became a convenient moniker within a traditional university setting, one way of addressing the developing student interest in technical and skills-based learning but without relinquishing the underpinning notion of research quality aligned with the history of the academy. Creative practice as research, as a concept, did offer a way out of a dilemma—how to provide an education that is popular with the students, but that still fits relatively comfortably within a university agenda.

For the newer university model, such as AUT's, the university emerging out of a technical college or polytechnic, the term CPR also proved useful. Its deployment allowed the redubbing and rebuilding of the technical and craft skills that were part of its history, taking them out of the regular work, craft or skills framework into something more academic. The institution could then earn its badge as a university. The new universities have been disadvantaged by the PBRF process, given the traditional institutions were more able to draw on their histories as research institutions. But there is something of a meet-in-the-middle process going on here. The conventional university embraces Creative Practice as Research to satisfy student demands for concrete skills while retaining its academic reputation for research. But the former polytechnics can own the phrase too, as a way of repositioning and elevating its solid skills-based history into more of a research culture that enhances its standing.

It may be cynical to suggest that the greater acceptance of Creative Practice within the academy was motivated by pragmatic reasons alone, a response to either student demand or the need to attract funding. There is, of course, more recognition and appreciation of the contribution that Creative Research makes to culture, that of the university and at large. Many staff have 're-tooled' and descriptions of research areas included in job applications have expanded to include creative research. These shifts suggest there is undoubtedly a greater understanding of the skills required to deliver a 'research rich' creative culture and a recognition of how mediatised the world is, and perhaps always has been.

Producing creative work within the academy

Producing creative work within the academy has many advantages. A stable income is a luxury many working in creative fields are unable to achieve, and research funding can assist in seeding projects, or sometimes cover their costs completely. Teaching is a rewarding career for most. We learn from our students as they learn from us, forging productive collaborations.

A vibrant research environment enhances a creative work, providing access to smart and specialised colleagues, let alone libraries, databases and specialist archives, and an association with a university can open many doors. But there can also be complications, around workloads, ethics clearances and funding conundrums as I mentioned above. There are possible intellectual and creative fishhooks too, one such being the pressure to align their outputs with current academic analyses, or critiques of culture, resulting in work that can feel derivative. When I was first working as a filmmaker within the academy, anxieties about practice often loomed large. Rather like the term 'politically correct' then used as a self-deprecating term by activists—so 'theoretically correct' was a term used to judge a work in terms of the dictates of academia of the time. The divisions within the feminist film movement, sometimes coded the 'feminist realist debates' offer a good example. Critiques of the representation of women within Hollywood films, articulated by Laura Mulvey in her seminal article, (1975) led to demands that the codes of realism must be smashed if women were to be liberated from libidinal inequalities that held their power in check. 'Realism', it was said, reinforced the dodgy concept of the 'unified subject', so must be smashed if a feminist cinema were to be born anew (Johnston, 1973). These were exciting and challenging theories, yet as Alex Juhasz recalls (1999) out the window too went much feminist activist documentary which had the nerve to be 'realist'. Many feminist filmmakers shifted to more reflexive practices, obeying the strictures of the feminist orthodoxy of the time. Some notable films, documenting second-wave feminism and its many gains, simply disappeared, forcing new generations of feminist filmmakers to reinvent the wheel. Counter-cinema prevailed within university curricula, one of the only ways that more marginal film practices could survive. Juhasz encapsulates the contradictions:

> When I view 1970s (and 1980s and 1990s) realist talking heads documentaries by feminists and other disenfranchised producers, and, perhaps more significantly, as I make a video with groups of political women, I am struck by two things: how often political producers are drawn to realist strategies and then, in contradiction, how often such work is evaluated by academics in an overly critical and sometimes simplified manner. (1999, p. 193)

The strictures imposed, or self-imposed, on producers by theory and theorists now appears more relaxed, although a resurgence of identity politics is leading to kind of cultural policing, that reminds me of the 1980s. But there have been positive intellectual developments too recently seen in the rise of what is called generically 'production studies', academic investigations that explore processes of production and creative practice. This literature departs from the plethora of 'how-to' books that circulate in the marketplace. Production studies, an exploration of producing as a broad field, use 'ethnographic, sociological, critical, and political-economic methods' to explore media production, from major producers to lowly production assistants, connecting 'cultural activities to an understanding of media and texts' (Mayer, Banks, & Caldwell, 2009).[4] There has been a parallel rise in screen writing studies, with publications such as the *Journal of Screenwriting* established to 'encourage the investigation of a broad range of possible methodologies and approaches to studying the scriptwriting form' including looking at histories, providing contextual analyses, exploring the processes of writing and so forth.[5]

Michael Wayne (2008) in a similar fashion has extended the study of documentary out from the more historical, ontological and textual analyses pioneered by Bill Nichols (1983, 2001), Michael Renov (1993) and Jane Gaines (1999) among others. Wayne explores documentaries as 'critical and creative research', exploring 'a trinity of terms as they pertain to the documentary: critical, creative, research' (2008, p. 82). His article asks what it means to discuss documentary as a mode of research, that is, to what extent its critical methodologies overlap with issues around knowledge production associated with the social sciences. As he argues, documentary often deploys quantitative methods of statistical analysis and graphics familiar to sociologists. A documentary on climate change might chart how fast the ice-caps have been melting, whereas a feminist film might list how few women occupy boardrooms or political office. But documentary, as Wayne argues, is even more closely aligned with the use of qualitative methodologies given films are often based on the 'case study, inductive analysis, the inferred typicality from the particular'(2008, p. 94). Qualitative methods include the interview, a staple of the documentary, but also very much part of social science research; the use of narration, which is equivalent to a researcher's analysis of their findings; or the inclusion of archive, a research strategy shared by historians and sociologists alike. As well as exploring documentary as a critical practice aligned with sociology and like disciplines, Wayne also asks what it means to discuss documentary as a creative practice, one in which aesthetics plays a crucial role in its production and consumption. All of the more 'academic' methods cited above can be mobilised in very different ways, using, for example, a reflexive, surrealist, poetic, humorous or expository approach. Creativity and imagination are essential elements of any kind of cultural production. Wayne quotes Marcuse as stating that these qualities provide an ability to create something new out of given materials of cognition (Wayne, 2008, p. 92). Creativity, in other words, can fuse thinking and feeling.

In this 'audit era', Creative Practice as Research may have an advantage over more traditional modes of publication. Practitioners in the media arts, certainly those reliant on external funding, are already attuned to audience outreach not only because we want our work to be heard and seen, but that funding agencies require us to develop distribution plans. Thus, we are acutely aware of our work's 'impact', a measure that is becoming central to the auditing processes, such as RAI and PBRF. 'Impact' can be difficult to ascertain and how it might affect research of all stripes is unknown. Creative practitioners already walk a tightrope. To fulfil academic requirements, we need to demonstrate our films contribute 'new knowledge' to a field. Yet at the same time, they need to be sufficiently 'commercial' to attract the kinds of external funding that we so often need in the production process.

A new awareness of the importance of 'impact' however, may be providing new resources for Creative Practice. Documentaries, podcasts, even animation films are being built into application bids as part of larger research projects, for example, Health Research Council of New Zealand (HRC) or the Australian Research Council (ARC). Their inclusion suggests a recognition that creative projects, as well as being research outputs in their own right, can enhance more scholarly research as they have the potential to be distributed through mainstream media channels as well as through academic networks. Thus, they are able, potentially at least, to reach much bigger audiences than traditional research outputs, attracting more to the project as a whole.

Such is the case with *The Conquistador, the Warlpiri and the Dog Whisperer*, a podcast or 'crafted audio storytelling documentary' as its producer Siobhán McHugh, from the University of Wollongong, describes it (2019, p. 1). Funded as part of an ARC grant on art history, the podcast explores 'significant but little-known cross-cultural relationships', that influence the production of Aboriginal art today, an important economic and cultural activity (McHugh, 2019, p. 1). As McHugh describes

> sound, as well as speech, expresses aspects of the community … (t)he holistic audio artefact allows us to appreciate at many levels, including the sensory, the cross-cultural dimensions of Indigenous art production—and in choreographing these sound recordings into a layered, affective, creative work, I am creating not just an engaging and accessible documentary, but a scholarly 'non-traditional research output (NTRO). (McHugh, 2019, p.1).

I realise that I, like McHugh, have long made a similar argument about my films being NTROs, or as we call them in our PBRF system, NROs—but not so overtly as she has. I have published multiple academic articles about the documentary, exploring it either as a genre (Goldson, 2015) or more commonly, analysing my specific films. At the time of writing, almost without knowing it, perhaps I was in part making a case for my films as Creative Practice as Research. I always felt self-conscious about writing about my films as if I was engaged in self-promotion or exercising a justification, rather than applying analytical and theoretical tools I have developed in my years at universities.

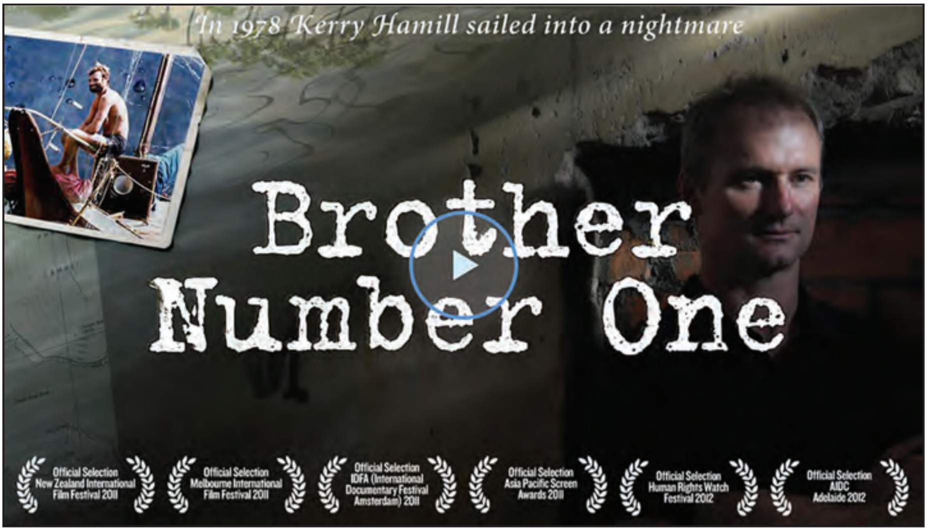
In 1978 Kerry Hamill sailed into a nightmare
Brother Number One
Official Selection New Zealand International Film Festival 2011
Official Selection Melbourne International Film Festival 2011
Official Selection IDFA (International Documentary Festival Amsterdam) 2011
Official Selection Asia Pacific Screen Awards 2011
Official Selection Human Rights Watch Festival 2012
Official Selection AIDC Adelaide 2012

Figure 1: *Brother Number One:* An empathic connection or a bridge between Cambodian people and Western audiences. http://op.co.nz/

One such instance is an article I wrote after completing *Brother Number One* (2011), the feature documentary I directed and produced (along with Rob Hamill and James Bellamy). The film follows Rob Hamill's journey to Cambodia as he sought justice for his brother who had been tortured and murdered by the Khmer Rouge in 1978 (Figure 1). The article argues that as a character, Rob was able to provide an empathic connection or a bridge between Cambodian people and Western audiences, as the latter can feel distanced from the suffering of others (Goldson, 2014). Thus *Brother Number One* engages with critical issues about ethnography, 'othering' and dominant representation, a fraught topic within academic studies of documentary and anthropology as a discipline. Furthermore, the film's use of archive tells a brief history that explains, in part, the rise of the Khmer Rouge. It points to the involvement of the US, China and the Soviet Union, thus implicating the world's most powerful nations that used Cambodia as a pawn in a greater game, that permitted the rise of a brutal leadership. France, too, after its colonial rule ended, used its influence to keep the people undereducated, reliant on the whims of its 'Sun-King' Prince Sihanouk. *Brother Number One* then, as well as engaging with issues of representation, explores the history behind the rise of the regime, while allies it with disciplines such as anthropology, documentary studies and history.

My second example of an article (Goldson, 2015) explored two of my more recent films. *He Toki Huna: NZ in Afghanistan* (2013) looks at our most prolonged military engagement ever, asking three simple questions that have complicated answers: Why did we go into Afghanistan? What did we do there? Why did we

HE TOKI HUNA
NEW ZEALAND IN AFGHANISTAN

Figure 2: ***He Toki Huna: New Zealand in Afghanistan:*** **Questions about media representation and political power. http://op.co.nz/**

hear so little about it? The first two questions are aligned with those asked by disciplines such as politics and international relations, while the third engages with questions about media representation and political power (Figure 2). *He Toki Huna* then essentially mirrors Mike Wayne's point that a sizable sub-genre of documentary is involved in critiquing the mainstream media. Such films parallel 'academic criticism of … television news and brings it into the mainstream' and 'exhibits the broader self-reflexive knowledge about media culture that is now in play' (2008, p. 90).

This second article also looks at my last completed film *Kim Dotcom: Caught in the Web* (Monsoon Pictures, 2017) which was accompanied by an ambitious online project kimdotcom.film. *Caught in the Web* followed the story of the notorious German hacker-turned-entrepreneur, who founded MegaUpload, a file-sharing platform which became massively popular. The New Zealand police arrested Kim Dotcom and three of his colleagues in a high-profile raid on the Dotcom mansion in 2012, accusing the team of pirating Hollywood films on a massive scale. Since that time, the online mogul has been facing, but has successfully fought, extradition to the US where he could face up to 80 years in prison. The film was challenging as the rollicking tale of Dotcom took quite some telling, requiring an extended editing period to craft a coherent story. Wayne (2008, p. 84) suggests above that 'narration' in a documentary is equivalent to a scholar's assessment of his or her research, a commentary if you like (Figure 3). Yet as with most of my documentaries, I did not use voiceover to tell the story, rather interwove elements of interview, archive, visual sequences and some graphic

KIMDOTCOM
CAUGHT IN THE WEB

Figure 3: ***Kim Dotcom: Caught in the Web:*** **'Narration' in a documentary is equivalent to a scholar's assessment of his or her research, or a commentary. http://kimdotcom.film/**

elements, along with an evocative music track. Such an approach is more allied with Nichols' (1983) idea of the 'voice of documentary':

> By 'voice' I mean something narrower than style: that which conveys to us a sense of a text's social point of view, of how it is speaking to us and how it is organising the materials it is presenting to us. In this sense 'voice' is not restricted to any one code or feature such as dialogue or spoken commentary. Voice is perhaps akin to that intangible, moiré-like pattern formed by the unique interaction of all a film's codes, and it applies to all modes of documentary. (Nichols, 1983, p. 18)

Extending out from the narrative were commentaries on the recent history of, and themes critical to, the digital age. As I state in the article, the film also explores three key issues, relevant to us all, that underpin the Kim Dotcom case:

> The first is how we consume and share media and information in a digital environment … The second equally divisive issue that Dotcom case raises is that of surveillance .. Finally, in *Caught in the Web,* we will explore what the stakes are for New Zealand sovereignty as the Dotcom case plays out, given it sheds light on our relationship to the international community, and in particular, to the United States (Goldson, 2015).

Conclusion

I have attempted above to trace the history of Creative Practice as Research, drawing on my own experience and observations. The term, and its variants, arose about the same time as university auditing processes—the late 1990s, early 2000s. Practice has been part of some disciplines, but within the media arts, it has taken time for creative outputs to be recognised. Creative practitioners within academia face certain complications still, as they do outside the universities as they engage with their counterpart industries. The now-common usage of the term I argue is in part a greater recognition within the academy that cultural production can be research-rich providing 'new knowledge' to its respective fields. But its recognition has also been useful to the institutions themselves. Traditional universities can provide skills-based learning without losing a commitment to research, while the former polytechnics have extended their skills-training into more research-based pedagogies. My focus has been on documentary as that is where my experience lies—further reflections of how other cultural practices, such as fine arts, journalism or screenwriting, would be a welcome addition to the study of Creative Practice within the academy.

Notes

1. Creative Practice as Research is also known as Practice-Based Research, Practice as Research, Creative Practice Research or Non-traditional Research.
2. Performance-Based Research Fund https://www.tec.govt.nz/funding/funding-and-performance/funding/fund-finder/performance-based-research-fund/
3. http://papertiger.org/; https://archive.org/details/deepdishtv
4. In descriptive paragraph on the book's website: http://bitly.ws/7Y4W
5. In descriptive paragraph on the *Intellect journal*'s website: https://bit.ly/3cCZiCw

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Dr Goldson is also an academic, who publishes widely in books and journals and through her teaching, has mentored many younger filmmakers. She holds the New Zealand Order of Merit (ONZM) for services to film and was recently nominated for membership of the Royal Society of New Zealand.
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SPECIAL REPORT

Tropical Cyclone Harold meets the Novel Coronavirus

Dispatch from the Pacific

Abstract: COVID-19 began to manifest in the Pacific Islands by early March, 2020 starting in the US and French territories spreading slowly to the independent countries of Fiji, PNG and Timor-Leste. The independent Pacific countries responded with aggressive measures, closing borders and establishing curfews. Against this background, Tropical Cyclone Harold, formed on April Fool's Day, began its devastating path through four Pacific countries: Solomon Islands with 27 dead in a ferry accident, ni-Vanuatu whose northern islands, including Santo and Malekula were devastated by Tropical Cyclone Harold with wind speeds greater than 200 km/h. The devastation continued in Fiji, with two tornadoes and devastation, particularly in Kadavu and the southern Lau group. Tropical cyclone Harold struck Tonga at the height of the king tide with resulting storm surge destruction. COVID-19 continues to complicate relief efforts, particularly in Vanuatu. Pacific resilience continues to shine. As of May 3, 2020, sixteen Pacific countries and territories have yet to report their first confirmed case of COVID-19: American Samoa, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Pitcairn, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, and Wallis and Futuna. The Pacific continues to lead by example motivated by collective stewardship with actions and policies based on science. Pacific leaders continue to work with WHO to implement COVID-19 management recommendations.

Keywords: COVID-19, cyclones, disasters, environment, Fiji, pandemic, risk communication, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Vanuatu

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The University of the South Pacific, Suva, Fiji

ON Easter Sunday, 12 April 2020, Fiji had 16 cases of COVID-19 (Fiji Health, 2020). Prime Minister Voreqe Bainimarama announced Fiji's first confirmed case of COVID-19—a flight attendant on a Fiji Airways flight from San Francisco to Nadi who roamed around Lautoka and attended zumba class before feeling ill (Fiji Government, 2020a). The announcement was made within a week of the arrival of the WHO test kits. An isolation unit, just outside of the capital city Suva had been staffed since January, along with a test facility set up in February.

Coincident with the announcement of the first COVID-19 case, Prime Minister Bainimarama announced the suspension of all Fiji Airways flights through May 29 (now extended until the end of June), a 14-day lockdown of the port city of Lautoka, isolation of the ill patient, his family and close contacts with thorough contact tracing, a 10pm to 5am curfew, a ban on gatherings of more than 20 people, and a call for social distancing. With case number 9, inter-island transport of people was suspended to prevent the spread of COVID-19 among the islands.

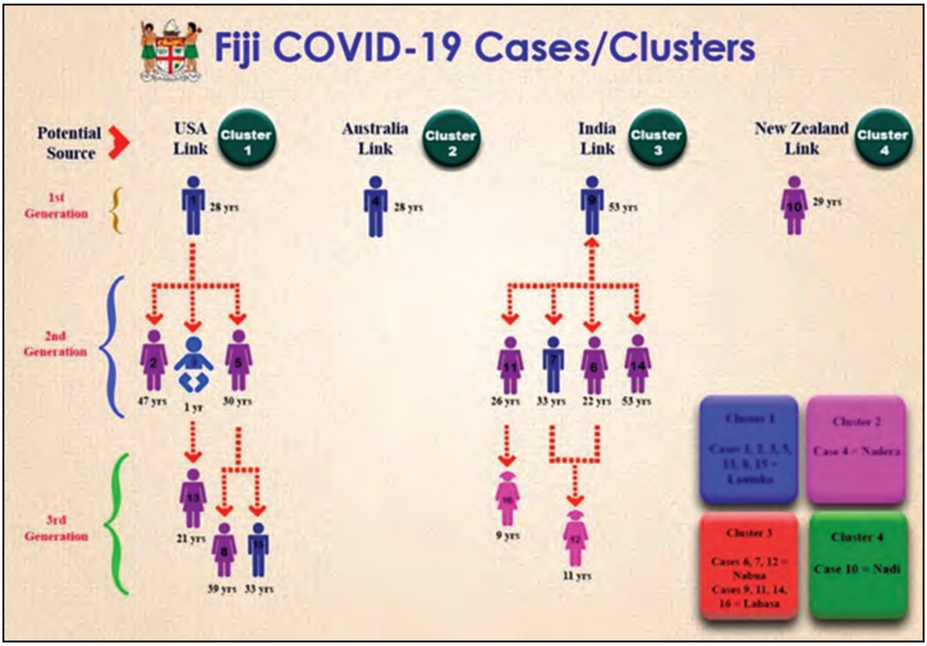
On Thursday, April 2, with the announcement of cases #6 and #7—haircutters in two separate popular local hair salons—Suva was locked down, and contact sports, including touch rugby, a national pastime, and social gatherings, including customary kava gatherings, were forbidden.

The curfew was extended from 8pm to 5am. The contact tracing for case #9, father of case #7 identified 830 contacts (Kumar, 2020)

A woman and her son, with a history of possible COVID-19 exposure, arrived on our remote island at 10 pm on April 2, potentially compromising the health of 139 people on the island who had just completed a 14-day island quarantine (Nand, 2020a). The violation of the ban on interisland transport plus subsequent quarantine violations made the national news. Hundreds of people have been charged for quarantine and curfew violations. Two rugby players were arrested and placed in isolation after violating quarantine restrictions. On April 16, Fiji extended the quarantine period (Nand, 2020b) from 14 to 28 days for returning citizens with 28 days of isolation for positive COVID-19 cases. On May 16, it had been four weeks since Fiji's last confirmation of a new case, and Fiji had only three people completing the required isolation (Figure 1).

According to the WHO situation report #117 released on 16 May 2020, more than 4.4 million COVID-19 cases had been confirmed worldwide. Sixteen Pacific countries and territories remained free of confirmed COVID-19 cases—American Samoa, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Pitcairn, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, and Wallis and Futuna.

The independent Pacific island countries of Papua New Guinea and Timor-Leste had 8 and 57 confirmed cases respectively (WHO, 2020). The French associated territories of French Polynesia had 58 cases, and New Caledonia had


Fiji COVID-19 Cases/Clusters
Potential Source
USA Link
Cluster 1
Australia Link
Cluster 2
India Link
Cluster 3
New Zealand Link
Cluster 4
1st Generation
2nd Generation
3rd Generation
1
28 yrs
4
28 yrs
9
53 yrs
10
29 yrs
2
3
5
47 yrs
1 yr
30 yrs
11
7
6
14
26 yrs
33 yrs
22 yrs
53 yrs
13
21 yrs
8
15
39 yrs
33 yrs
16
9 yrs
12
11 yrs
Cluster 1
Cases 1, 2, 3, 5, 13, 8, 15 = Lautoka
Cluster 2
Case 4 = Nadera
Cluster 3
Cases 6, 7, 12 = Nabua
Cases 9, 11, 14, 16 = Labasa
Cluster 4
Case 10 = Nadi

FIJI MINISTRY OF HEALTH

Figure 1: Case isolation and tracing done by Fiji's Ministry of Health for the first 16 confirmed COVID-19 cases.

18 cases. Fiji and New Caledonia are among the very few countries in the world with no new COVID-19 cases for more than 28 days.

The US territories of the Northern Mariana Islands had 19 COVID-19 cases (2 deaths), and Guam, home to a US military base, reported 149 COVID-19 cases (5 deaths) (WHO 2020). More than 20 percent (> 1,000) of the 4,800-person crew of the *USS Theodore Roosevelt*, tested positive for COVID-19 while docked in Guam, including the now famous Captain Crozier, fired for speaking up on behalf of his men. As of 16 May 2020, the ship continues to struggle with managing COVID-19. Thirteen sailors, who contracted COVID, and recovered with two successive negative tests, have now tested positive for the second time (Sandler, 2020).

COVID-19 and Tropical Cyclone Harold

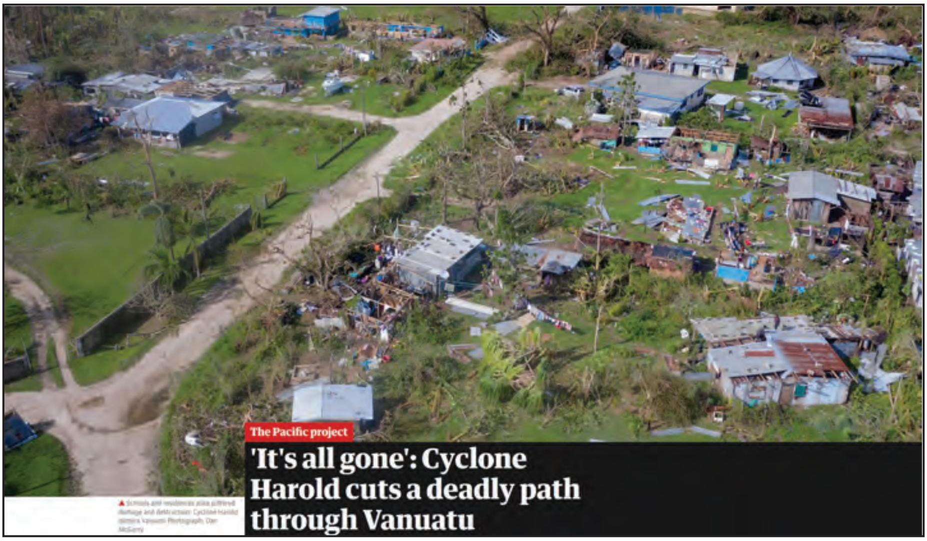
With Fiji, the Pacific and the world anxious about COVID-19, Tropical Cyclone Harold spun into existence on April Fool's Day, and began its devastating Easter path across the Pacific. Imagine trying to practise shelter at home and social distancing while simultaneously preparing for a tropical cyclone that was gaining ferocity. Windows were boarded, evacuation centers were prepared. Adequate food and clean water were secured where possible. Generators were serviced and tested.

In early April, with no confirmed COVID-19 cases, the Solomon Islands government ordered city dwellers to return to their home villages to reduce the density of people in the capital of Honiara in Guadalcanal and to provide security of place (Aqorau, 2020). On April 4, some 600 Are Are residents of Honiara and Malaita boarded the *MV Taemarehu* ferry to make their way home. *MV Taemarehu* ran into the rough seas generated by Tropical Cyclone Harold, then rated as category one. Twenty-seven people were washed overboard and reported missing. Solomon Islands had difficulty transporting additional COVID-19 tests to Australia because Solomon Islands borders were closed. China has since donated the equipment needed to set a COVID-19 test facility in Honiara. The situation was beautifully described in an article by the ever insightful Transform Aqorau (2020), the Solomon Islands permanent representative to the UN, now stranded enroute to take up his new post in New York City.

By Monday, April 6, Tropical Cyclone Harold had intensified to category 5 (Australian scale) with wind speeds in excess of 198 km/h. Four northern islands of the independent nation of Vanuatu: Santo, Pentecost, Ambrym, Malekula and Malo were directly hit by the TC Harold.

Luckily, TC Harold arrived on Santo with the low tide. Luganville, on the island of Santo, the second most populous city of Vanuatu, suffered tremendous damage and struggled to provide food, power and water (Figure 2). In the days immediately after Tropical Cyclone Harold, *Vanuatu Daily Post* reported the following from Luganville:

> For Lord Mayor Patty Peter, the experience was overwhelming. In an emotional phone call to media in Port Vila Tuesday. He said, 'We urgently



The Pacific project

'It's all gone': Cyclone Harold cuts a deadly path through Vanuatu

DAN McGARRY/*THE GUARDIAN* SCREENSHOT

Figure 2. TC Harold battered schools and residences alike in Vanuatu.

> need water, food and shelter at the moment. Many have lost their homes. Schools are destroyed. Electricity is down. I'm urgently calling for help. This is one of the worst experiences of my life.'
>
> Lord Mayor Peter later confirmed that food and water were being distributed, but 'just for today and tomorrow. That's all that we can do'. (Roberts & Selman, 2020)

The town has shrugged off smaller cyclones countless times in the past. 'But this one, like, it's a nightmare. It's a nightmare for all the people in the northern islands,' said Peter.

One of my PhD students launched a social media campaign to rebuild his family home, and his neighbor's homes in Luganville after receiving the news that more than 50 percent of the buildings were destroyed by TC Harold.

Montin Romone, a ni-Vanuatu master's student in climate change at the University of the South Pacific in Fiji, said in an email:

> My family on North Malekula are safe despite all the root crops have been totally destroyed. Yesterday, I also was informed by my family on Malakula that my dad's smaller brother died at Santo hospital when TC Harold blew off the roof of the emergency room he was sleeping in. He was so panic as there were no doctors around as well. No electricity due to power cut by the hurricane. Only my smaller brother was there but could not do anything to protect him so he finally died at 1:00 am on that night. As doctors did not allow him to be put into the cold room, so my brother with the help of four other boys had to dig a hole in the municipal cemetery and bury him that evening.
>
> Otherwise, family on Malekula are safe. Unfortunately, I lost two of my cattle but it's better than losing another family member. (Romone, M., email to the author.

With no confirmed cases of COVID-19, Vanuatu has forbidden any relief workers from entering the country. Vanuatu will manage the TC Harold relief themselves, and permit delivery of specifically requested supplies. All incoming supplies are subject to a three day quarantine in the capital of Port Vila before being shipped to the Northern Islands.

Since Vanuatu was hit by record-setting TC Pam in March 2015, the government has committed to building internal capacity for disaster relief. During TC Pam, managing the relief workers and their individual agendas proved to be more difficult than the relief work itself. Recognising the challenge of managing COVID-19 in a small country with limited resources, and only two ventilators, Vanuatu declared a state of emergency and closed its borders in February.

With COVID-19 efforts to repatriate non-citizens, Fiji Airways airlifted at least two flights of expatriates out of the Pacific Islands just hours before Tropical

HIMAWARI/CIRA 2020

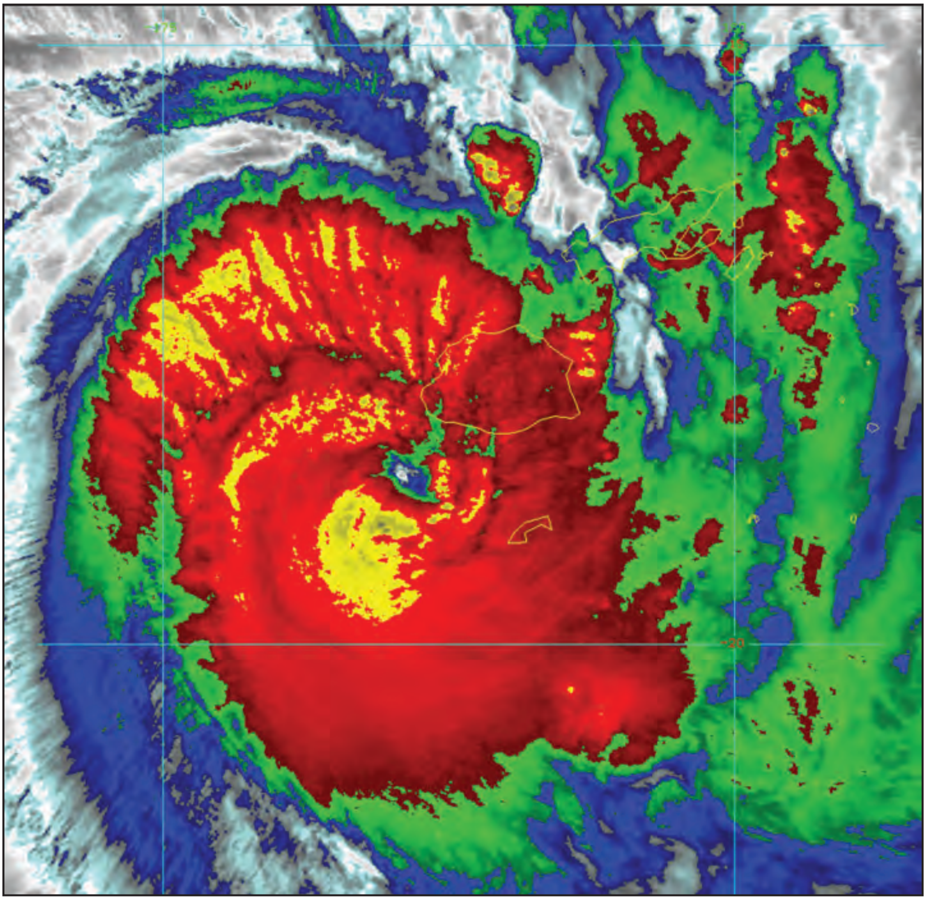


Figure 3: Himawari-8 visualisation of Tropical Cyclone Harold crossing just south of Fiji's main island of Viti Levu on April 8, Fiji time.

Cyclone Harold arrived. By 2am on Thursday, April 8, TC Harold's winds arrived on the main island of Fiji's Viti Levu on a more northerly, and more populated, track than originally forecast. The incoherent eyewall spun off two tornadoes one in Nausori and another in Tailevu. TC Harold generated substantial damage, through many of Fiji's more than 300 islands. TC Harold arrived in Kadavu at midday with the king tide and impacted the small island communities of Buliya, Dravuni, and Narikoso in Astrolabe Reef in the Ono district. A 30 day state of natural disaster was declared for the Viti Levu's Central and Western divisions including Tailevu North, Korovou, Nausori, Nakasi, Beqa and Yanuca and in the district of Nadarivatu, Vatulele, Mamanuca Group, the Yasawa Group, coastal communities in the Coral Coast and along the Sigatoka River in the Nadroga/ Navosa province, and the Southern Lau Island group on Fiji's southeastern perimeter (Fiji, 2020b).

During the night of April 8, TC Harold left Fiji to continue onto Tonga passing south of the capital island of Tongatapu (Figure 3). The capital Nuku'alofa experienced the worst storm surge ever seen when TC Harold arrived in the early morning hours of April 9 accompanying the king tide of the full moon. The swathe of destruction focused on E'ua Island and several resorts on the north side of Tongatapu. The Tonga 'no plastics' campaign organised an extensive clean up campaigns along the seawall in Nuku'alofa. Tonga has no confirmed cases of COVID-19. Tonga declared a state of emergency on 19 March 2020, closing its borders completely when Fiji announced its first COVID-19 case.

Climate change, disaster risk management and COVID-19

Fiji and the Pacific leads with the concept of stewardship motivating actions. The 2016 anniversary of record setting Tropical Cyclone Winston was in February, just days after Fiji had been the first country in the world to ratify the 2015 Paris Agreement. With a population of less than a million people, Fiji went on to serve as both the President of the UN to host the UN Oceans Conference and President of the UNFCCC COP23 in 2017.

Similarly, the 2015 record setting Tropical Cyclone Pam crashed into Port Vila, Efate, Vanuatu, during the negotiation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. Development donor investments in the region are guided by the Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific (Forum Secretariat, 2016) which recognised the need to simultaneously address disaster preparedness, climate change and development of low carbon economies.

Symbolic of the collective nature of Pacific culture, Prime Minister Bainimarama called upon Fiji to honor the power of the spirit of *vei lomani*—that profound sense of love and devotion to the protection of our people.

The Pacific leaders are determined to lead by example to prevent the devastation of COVID-19 in their countries. With the fresh memory of late 2019 measles epidemic in Fiji, Samoa, Tonga and American Samoa resulting in 83 deaths in Samoa, Samoan borders were closed in February.

None of the independent Pacific countries have a robust medical or epidemiological research programme, yet these leaders acted on the basis of science while leaders of other countries were still debating whether stay at home measures were required.

Pacific Islands countries suffered tremendously from the diseases brought by early explorers, including smallpox, measles, syphilis and gonorrhea, and the memory still resonates. In recognition of their limited resources and the advantages of their remote location, Pacific countries have acted early to protect themselves and close their borders, with considerable success to date.

The alarm and fear accompanying COVID-19 has galvanised action. Papua New Guinea with an abundance of natural resources and people, plagued by a lack of adequate medical facilities and decades of struggles, will likely face the greatest challenges in dealing with COVID-19. PNG's 8 confirmed cases were distributed across four provinces.

In recognition of the importance of UN support agencies, like the UN's World Health Organisation, the Pacific leaders welcomed the WHO director Dr Tedras Adhanom Ghehreyesus to the 50th Pacific Islands Forum Leaders meeting in August 2019, establishing an effective network of relations just months before the arrival of COVID-19.

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COVID-19 dissensus in Australia

Negotiating uncertainty in public health communication and media commentary on a pandemic

Commentary: The emergence of an epidemic or pandemic presents significant challenges for public health communication. The shifting and uncertain nature of an epidemic or pandemic necessitates a dynamic communication strategy. However, negotiating uncertainty and information gaps can be challenging for both government and media. This commentary focuses on two aspects of selected Australian media commentary on the COVID-19 pandemic: media commentators' negotiation of gaps in the available information about the pandemic and commentators' assessment of perceived initial inconsistency in the government's public health messaging. It analyses how a perceived inability to reconcile gaps in the expert advice can be interpreted by media commentators as an indication of public health communication failure.

Keywords: Australia, COVID-19, media commentary, New Zealand, pandemics, public health communication, health journalism; science

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ON 7 APRIL 2020, the Australian federal government released the details of the epidemiological modelling that had informed its approach to managing the spread of the novel coronavirus disease, COVID-19, caused by the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus-2 (SARS-CoV-2), in Australia (Grattan, 2020). Reports noted that the epidemiological model used data from international contexts to map various scenarios and predict the likely progression of the spread of the disease in Australia with the introduction of targeted restrictions. Prior to the release of this information, a few media commentators had demanded that the government release the expert advice it had received so that it could be publicly scrutinised (Bowtell, 2020). The government's graded approach to restricting public movement and business activity had been criticised, but, after the release of the modelling data, a few commentators affirmed the government's approach and highlighted its efficacy (Scott & Sas, 2020). This commentary focuses on two aspects of selected Australian media commentary on the COVID-19 pandemic: media commentators' negotiation of gaps in the available information about the emerging pandemic (specifically in the early phase of the pandemic), and commentators' assessment of perceived initial inconsistency in the government's public health messaging. These aspects relate to the critical importance of trust in coverage of health information (Furlan, 2012).

Media coverage of a pandemic plays a critical public awareness role

Media coverage of a pandemic plays a critical role in how public awareness of the pandemic develops and how the community perceives government responses to the pandemic (Davis & Lohm, 2020; Dudo, Dahlstrom, & Brossard, 2007; Pieri, 2019; Yan, Tang, Gabriele, & Wu, 2016). The media's conceptualisation of scientific uncertainty during a pandemic can influence public perception of the government's containment efforts (Holland, Blood, Imison, Chapman, & Fogarty, 2012); 'responsible reporting on scientific uncertainty' serves to inform (rather than alarm) the public (Hilton & Hunt, 2011). Media coverage in Australia and New Zealand of an emerging pandemic with serious health-related, economic and social consequences can influence public health messaging in the wider region (Cullen, 2003, 2014). Research on Australian media coverage of previous pandemics suggests that the media generally tends to focus on disseminating scientific information on emerging threats, highlighting the potential seriousness of these threats while avoiding alarmist language (Fogarty et al., 2011; Holland & Blood, 2010; Holland et al., 2012). In Australia, amid saturation media coverage of the covid-19 pandemic in its early phase (ABC, 2020c), uncertainty about the possible trajectory of the spread of COVID-19 and the efficacy of government interventions shaped the tone of some media commentary on the government's public health messaging. Some criticisms of the government's public health messages demonstrated dissatisfaction about scientific uncertainty about COVID-19; some of these criticisms were made by commentators with experience of public health communication (Bowtell, 2020). Sociologists Mark Davis and Davina Lohm, writing about the 2009 H1N1 influenza pandemic in their book *Pandemics, Publics and Narrative* (2020), comment on the challenges involved in developing and engaging with 'narratives' about pandemics:

> A central communication challenge [during] the 2009 pandemic was advising publics throughout the world to prepare themselves for a possible health catastrophe, but without inspiring panic and therefore jeopardising effective government. (Davis & Lohm, 2020)

This became a central challenge in the initial response to the COVID-19 pandemic in Australia (and other countries). As in the 2009 influenza pandemic, some commentators' reactions to the initial public health messaging in 2020 in Australia evinced dissatisfaction about a perceived lack of urgency and 'necessary' alarmism (Vasterman & Ruigrok, 2013) in the government's public health communications (Davis & Lohm, 2020).

Given the high level of transmissibility of the SARS-CoV-2 virus, media reporting on the emerging pandemic, from early on, highlighted the role of individual judgment and responsibility in containing the disease. Notions about individuals' responsibility to self-isolate and avoid contact with others if sick featured prominently in the early media coverage (McIlroy, 2020). These notions also shaped media commentary on politicians' judgment about matters relating to their personal conduct. Supposedly 'irresponsible' actions by politicians, in the early phases of the pandemic, were highlighted as evidence of their initially lackadaisical approach to the unfolding crisis, and, particularly, their lax approach to promoting 'social distancing' (AusGov, 2020) (in contrast to the stringent approaches to enforcing social distancing that were later adopted in Australia) (Worthington, 2020). These notions about individual acts of irresponsible (though seemingly unpremeditated and innocuous) conduct inflected analysis of government responses to the pandemic. For instance, before widespread COVID-19 cases were reported in the US, news coverage of a journalist's question during a White House press conference about whether US President Donald Trump's personal conduct at public events had been careless (the journalist noted, for example, that he had continued to shake hands publicly, and had chosen not to immediately take a diagnostic test after a meeting with a Brazilian delegation, some of whom had tested positive for SARS-CoV-2) became a part of wider critiques of the US government's perceived initial inaction (Haltiwanger, 2020). Similarly, in Australia, media reports highlighted perceived inconsistencies in Prime Minister Scott Morrison's approach to promoting social distancing to manage the spread of COVID-19. Reports highlighted an inconsistency between the government's notification of the cancellation of all events involving more than 500 people from March 16 and the Prime Minister's statement that he would continue to attend a football match on the weekend before this date as planned (Murphy, 2020a). The Prime Minister was criticised for making this statement, which was deemed irresponsible because it had the potential to confuse and mislead the public about the appropriateness of attending large public events (Murphy, 2020a). He ultimately chose to not attend the match in question, saying that his attendance would be 'misrepresented' (Murphy, 2020a).

On March 13, the Federal government instituted an emergency national cabinet comprising the Prime Minister and the Premiers of all the states and territories. The deliberations and decisions of this cabinet were supported by the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) (which includes the Chief Health Officers of all the states and territories, and is chaired by the Federal Chief Medical Officer). As the COVID-19 pandemic grew, this intergovernmental mechanism became the primary source of public health information for the media, with the Prime Minister and Chief Medical Officer jointly presenting regular national briefings to journalists. At the state level, the Premiers and Chief Health Officers presented local briefings. The epidemiological modelling that was released on April 7 was presented to and used by this body to develop its graded lockdown interventions (Worthington, 2020). The release of this data was a reaction to media commentary critical of the government's decision-making around its graded lockdown approach (Dalzell, 2020). The epidemiologists who produced the modelling supported the government's graded lockdown approach and noted that the government had developed its interventions in accordance with the expert advice (Scott & Sas, 2020). The following section highlights two examples of how media commentators, in the early phases of the spread of COVID-19 in Australia, negotiated gaps in the available information and how commentators' expectations regarding the still-inchoate information influenced criticism of the government's health advice.

Before the introduction of a graded nation-wide lockdown on March 22 and the release of the aforementioned epidemiological modelling data, a sense of dissatisfaction about the quality of the government's public health messaging began to emerge in some media commentary. Instances of commentary on talk shows broadcast by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC), for example, show that, even at a time when definitive information about the emerging pandemic was not yet available, commentators' expectations regarding the consistency and accuracy of information shaped critique of the government's incipient public health response. The ABC's *Insiders* programme on March 15 featured an interview with Federal Health Minister Greg Hunt and Chief Medical Officer Brendan Murphy, alongside a panel discussion, with invited journalists, focused on the latest developments in the news coverage of COVID-19 (ABC, 2020d). On March 13, Home Affairs Minister Peter Dutton's office announced that he had tested positive for COVID-19 (Murphy, 2020a). The panellists discussed whether Dutton may have been infectious at the time of a cabinet meeting he had attended three days before his diagnosis was confirmed and speculated about how he may have acquired the infection. Panellist Peter van Onselen, a journalist, highlighted a purported inconsistency between the WHO's advice and the Australian Department of Health's advice about how long a person remained infectious while speculating about whether Dutton may have been infectious at the time of the meeting. Hunt and Murphy were asked about this supposed inconsistency, and when Murphy argued that the emerging data was not definitive, Onselen noted that the exchange reflected a lack of precision in the government's public health communication. The host of the show, David Speers, asked for definitive information about whether people could engage in a number of activities (for example, take public transport, go to a cinema or gym, and attend events). Speers insisted on definitive advice despite Murphy's comments that it was difficult to take a blanket approach to these issues in light of the available information, and that the pandemic in Australia had not yet reached a stage where quarantine measures of the kind then in place in China, Italy and France were necessary; Murphy encouraged people to exercise their judgment regarding these matters, taking into consideration factors such as whether the activity was essential, they were ill and had symptoms of infection, and they belonged to an at-risk demographic.

Inconsistency in federal and state advice

Speers pointed to an inconsistency in federal and state advice about buying essentials in advance (Murphy recommended shopping for no more than a few days' provisions in advance, whereas the Chief Health Officer in the state of Victoria recommended that people buy two weeks' provisions in advance). This inconsistency was later highlighted by the media panellists as evidence of an overall lack of consistency in the public health messages that were then emerging from different official sources in Australia. Murphy contested this assessment, noting that there may have been differences in how different officials interpreted consensus-based information about the suitability of some degree of domestic preparation for at-home isolation, as well as differences in messages based on jurisdictional needs. The discussion among the media panellists that followed the interview with Hunt and Murphy focused on what were perceived as unresolved inconsistencies in the government's communication, particularly conflicting advice regarding the suitability of various activities at that stage of the pandemic. Media commentary published after this show re-emphasised these discussion points, reiterating criticism of the government's alleged failure to communicate appropriately (Brown, 2020).

On the March 16 edition of ABC's *Q&A,* a talk show in which invited panellists respond to curated questions from a live audience, William Bowtell, a policy adviser, accused another panellist, Federal Minister for Aged Care and Senior Australians Richard Colbeck, of spreading misinformation (ABC, 2020d). Colbeck responded to a question about efforts to protect the health of older Australians, particularly residents of aged care homes, by noting that the available epidemiological information and health advice indicated that older people were at greater risk of becoming ill. Bowtell questioned Colbeck about the accuracy of this information, suggesting that he was misinformed and, crucially, spreading misinformation. Bowtell stated that current information on the situation in New South Wales indicated that most of those who had tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 were under 60. Colbeck replied that the advice that his ministry had received was that older people were at greater risk of dying from the disease, and that his ministry had undertaken efforts to ensure that aged care homes were prepared for quarantine measures and other interventions in accordance with this advice. Bowtell insisted that this was emblematic of the government's misinformed approach. He argued that Colbeck had relied on lazy assumptions and demanded that he publish the advice that he had received for public verification. Bowtell later published a commentary that reiterated these criticisms, claiming: 'Our politicians are not fit to oversee the coronavirus response. It's time they got out of the way.' (Bowtell, 2020)

The above examples reflect a mismatch between commentators' expectations regarding the robustness and accuracy of information about the unfolding pandemic and the inherent limitations of this information. It can be argued that commentators' expectations may be unrealistic in view of these limitations (and competing considerations in government decision-making), leading to necessary public health messages, such as those highlighting the vulnerability of older people and the need for restrictions on access to aged care homes, still being criticised. In relation to the latter example, whereas the published epidemiological information indicated that older people were at greater risk of dying from COVID-19 (Bedford et al., 2020), and Colbeck's comments on the ABC could only be considered appropriate given this (then emerging and inchoate) information, an alleged inconsistency in the advice was interpreted as evidence of government-promoted 'misinformation' (Bowtell, 2020).

Announcements about graded closures of business activity and public movement (starting on March 22) by the government were criticised for being inconsistent and difficult to grasp (Brown, 2020; Murphy, 2020b; Soden, 2020). For example, media commentators perceived an initial refusal to close schools and child-care facilities as inconsistent with broader efforts to limit people's movement and exposure to infection (Hunter, 2020). The public health messaging and the decision-making processes underpinning it were deemed by media commentators to be inconsistent, in large part because they perceived the graded lockdown process and the absence of easily understood guidance as unsuitable for the circumstances (Murphy, 2020b; Wilkinson, 2020). Interestingly, after the government-commissioned epidemiological modelling data were released to the media on April 7, a few media reports and commentaries affirmed the government's graded approach (Doherty, 2020; Grattan, 2020; Scott & Sas, 2020).

The political ramifications of public health messaging during an epidemic or pandemic can be significant. Based on the examples of media commentary cited here, there are two issues that need to be discussed. The first relates to consistency of the message. Government representatives undertaking media engagement need to account for expectations of consistency in the message.

Media commentaries highlighting perceived inconsistencies, even in the absence of definitive information, demonstrate that an expectation of consistency will be a primary determinant of how public health information is received by the media. This expectation should inform government decision-making about its public health messaging, and, even in the absence of definitive information, consistency in governments' messages across jurisdictions should be prioritised. Examples of inconsistency may be perceived by media commentators as indications of government mismanagement (Murphy, 2020b). Where the public health advice is inconsistent, or where a graded or differential approach is required, the relevant information pertaining to the substance of this advice should be disclosed to provide justification for the perceived inconsistency or differential approach. This will enable an appropriate acknowledgement of the factors that have shaped the public health message.

The second issue that should be highlighted is a lack of acknowledgement of the limitations of the information or advice that may be available to the government at any given point during an epidemic or pandemic. Journalists and commentators with greater experience of reporting on epidemics and other public health emergencies will likely demonstrate more of an appreciation of these limitations. While it is expected that the media will scrutinise the adequacy of government efforts to manage a pandemic, it is questionable whether highlighting dissensus on official health advice based on incomplete information or inchoate expert advice is conducive to better public health messaging. The media's reporting of gaps in the emerging information on specific aspects of an epidemic or pandemic (for example, information about the apparent risk profile for specific demographics) may serve to educate the public. However, when the incompleteness of this information is used to cast doubt on official health advice, the effect on public health efforts may be deleterious. Conflicting perspectives on the 'correctness' of health advice (without adequate acknowledgement of the limitations of the available information) can undermine public health messaging during an epidemic or pandemic, possibly leading to mistrust of health advice from the government (*Economist,* 2020). This was the message that the Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA) sought to promote when it wrote to its members asking them not to criticise the efforts of the AHPPC and the public health professionals advising it on the COVID-19 pandemic through media commentary. It argued that using media appearances to challenge, undermine or generate uncertainty around the advice provided by the committee would 'increase confusion and anxiety' (Baum & Laris, 2020). Some members criticised this advice, to which the PHAA replied:

> It was not our intention to stop or stifle evidence-informed debate . . . At a time of significant confusion and anxiety, our intention was to reinforce the best available public health advice—[that of] the Australian Health

> Protection Principal Committee. We remain of the view that this is currently the best available structure to lead the response to this crisis and advise government. (Sweet, 2020)

Conclusion

The emergence of an epidemic or pandemic caused by a novel pathogen necessitates significant public health communication from governments and there are numerous challenges involved in both developing and engaging with media coverage of the epidemic or pandemic (Davis & Lohm, 2020; Dudo et al., 2007; Pieri, 2019; Vasterman & Ruigrok, 2013). This commentary notes that the level of consistency of the public health information that is provided by government is a critical factor that shapes reception of public health advice (Yan et al., 2016). Both government representatives and media commentators face significant challenges in negotiating critical gaps in the available information, and need to account for public expectations regarding the consistency of advice (Dudo et al., 2007). A more sophisticated approach to negotiating gaps in the emerging information and communicating uncertainties and a coordinated approach to disseminating critical information—particularly information about interventions such as lockdowns—is required. The news media serves a critical function in disseminating public health information. Media coverage of significant health events (particularly pandemics) in Australia and New Zealand can have wider ramifications in the region (Cullen, 2003, 2014). In New Zealand, the government was lauded for the clarity of its public health messages and broader public health strategy (Richter, 2020). Public broadcasters particularly play a key role in shaping how the government's public health advice is received. The success of special broadcasts or resources developed on COVID-19, such as the ABC's *Coronacast* podcast programme (ABC, 2020a), demonstrates that there is a high level of public interest in media content on health emergencies (2020b). Media commentary on the validity of government advice, which will necessarily and inevitably evolve in response to changing circumstances, should explicitly acknowledge the limitations within which such advice is developed and proffered. Media commentators' demands for definitive information and stringent recommendations during an epidemic or pandemic may be justified. However, an acknowledgment of the limitations of the information that may be available through the vicissitudes of an epidemic or pandemic caused by a novel pathogen would be appropriate and help contextualise key public health messages.

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The future journalists of Timor-Leste

Job expectations, knowledge and skills in multimedia journalism

Abstract: In April 2019, Jakarta-based UNESCO with two lecturers from the Department of Communication Science at Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM) and one researcher at PR2Media prepared a plan to hold multimedia journalism training workshops at the Department of Social Communication (DSC) of the Universidade Nacional Timor Lorosa'e (UNTL) in Timor-Leste (East Timor). This article describes the current aspirations of the trainees related to their future media and journalism career in East Timor as well as the reflective evaluations of the Indonesian trainers on the training complemented with students' pre-test and post-test survey on multimedia journalism knowledge and skills. Participants on the multimedia journalism training carried out in July-August 2019 were adept with the required technological skills. Their biggest challenges came from basic language and journalism skills, such writing in good Tetum, Portuguese, Indonesian or English (in East Timor, Tetum and Portuguese are the official languages, while Indonesian and English were designated as 'working' languages), covering the stories, and presenting the stories in a journalistic style. Despite these challenges, they were finally able to produce basic multimedia stories with a local perspective on the designated news site.

Keyword: East Timor, journalism education, multimedia journalism, Timor-Leste, UNTL

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Journalism education in the global and Asia Pacific contexts

IN 2015, Hanusch et al. (2015, p. 143) stated that 'studying journalism students allows us to examine future journalists at a very early stage of their career, providing an insight into the way in which their views are shaped through the university experience'. The prominent reflection is on how journalism education can improve the employability of graduates in the workplace (Weaver, Beam, Brownlee, Voakes, & Wilhoit, 2007). Unfortunately, it is not often experienced by journalism school graduates in Asian countries with mostly limited media freedom (International Freedom of Expression Exchange, 2006).

Working in countries with a media freedom status that is still partly free or not free is another obstacle in achieving professionalism for journalists in Asia (Southeast Asian journalists, for example) (Arao & Löffelholz, 2011; Chongkittavorn, 2002, 2011a, 2011b; Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, 2014; Parahita & Nyarwi, 2019). In an Asian context, journalists share a cultural identity and work collegially through associations to fulfill the human rights for freedom of information at various levels of life (Opiniano et al., 2018).

Like Western countries, journalism educators in Eastern countries are also based at various universities teaching communication, media, and journalism for undergraduate and graduate degrees (master's and doctoral programmes). They also have followed Western learning models, especially from the United States (Sarkar, et al., 1990; Hwa & Ramanathan, 2000). What makes a difference between the two educational contexts is that at the postgraduate level, journalists are equipped with additional knowledge and skills that are more focused and specific to accommodate challenges in the workplace (Folkerts, 2014; Opiniano, 2017; Schultz, 2002). Thus, educators are expected to be capable of presenting contextual learning material for each level to enable their students to achieve graduate competency targets in line with expectations.

In this case, it is also important to underline that journalism instructors with specific educational backgrounds and different interests are allowed to provide varied perspectives in learning, but it would be ideal if it does not leave the essence of journalism on the practical or theoretical side. By so doing, the proportional creations and innovations in learning journalism at the higher education level can be achieved. Journalism educators take part in preparing learning curricula that can enhance the mastery of journalism skills of learners, enabling them to participate in achieving democracy (UNESCO, 2007).

Related to learning materials, journalism educators need to arrange and ensure that the curriculum taught has coherence, for instance, with the aims of the media industry. This is considered important because some Western countries—as the central model for journalism education in Eastern countries—are still facing challenges regarding how to design a comprehensive journalism education curriculum with the emphasis on journalistic basic skills such as interviewing, reporting, writing, and editing. However, it also creates a strong attachment and sustainability between what has been learned at the undergraduate level and what will be applied in the workplace or studied in greater depth at postgraduate level (Adam, 2001; Morgan. 2000).

It is undeniable that the relations of the workplace and the academe which are increasingly emerging in the era of convergence contribute to create more intensive joint learning spaces to discuss a number of current journalism issues (Dweyer, 2010; Kolodzy, Grant, DeMars, & Wilkinson, 2014). Nevertheless, it is also important to know that graduates of communication, media and journalism schools will not always work as journalists for certain media. Other related professional options are also available such as being a researcher, trainer, lecturer, or content creator.

Regarding the encouragement of journalism education, it is necessary to revisit the set of practical skills and competences acquired from journalism education in the higher education institutions (Donsbach, 2014). According to Donsbach (2014), journalism education should involve teaching students a new set of specific competencies which are general competence, process competence, journalistic skills, and professional values.

Deuze (2004) has argued that new media technologies require journalists to master newsgathering and storytelling techniques in all media formats and reconfigure the news producer-consumer relationship. Multimedia journalism skills range from a comprehensive overview of what news is, what good reporting is, where news is found, how a text-based news report should be written and structured, and how multimedia reporting with the effective use of text, still images, audio, and video should be integrated (Bull, 2010).

Contemporary issues of the East Timor press

Language, limited internet speed and other technological facilities, financing, and quality have become current challenges of the East Timor press. Education and language of delivery are the central issues after most of East Timor's teachers, who were transmigrants, returned to Indonesia (Smith, 2002). Currently there is no one language that all East Timorese speak. Officially, Portuguese has become the official language of the country and Tetum has been taught in schools, while English and Indonesian are working languages since 2000 (Taylor-Leech, 2005). As Tetum lacks formal functions and genre, abstract language and technical terms, journalists often borrow words from Portuguese although this causes ambiguity and confusion (Taylor-Leech, 2005). The language confusion is reflected in the newspaper *Suara Timor Lorosae* (*The Voice of East Timor*) featuring stories in Indonesian, Portuguese, English, and Tetum.

The press in East Timor was rebuilding steadily although the rest of the world has been unable to access local news stories due to the fact that none of the Dili-based news media appeared online (Cokely, et al., 2000). Although this has changed with the advent of the multilingual Tatoli (Timor-Leste News Agency) website in 2019 http://www.tatoli.tl/. After the end of Indonesian rule, telecommunications were handled by Telstra and the districts were reliant on a full user pays cellular service (Smith, 2002).

To rebuild the country's press, in its early years after the Referendum, East Timor received a hand from the East Timor Press Project organised by the University of Queensland, Center for International Journalism (CIJ) and Reuters Foundation. Twelve East Timorese journalists from the new newspaper *Timor Post,* developed by former journalists of *Suara Timor Lorosae*, *Lalenok* and *Tatalikum* news magazines attended a post-conflict journalism training programme in Brisbane, Australia, in February 2000 (Cokely, et al., 2000). *The Timor Post,* headed by former managing editor of *Suara Timor Leste* Aderito Hugo da Costa (Steele, 2007), published its first edition in Tetum using computers and printing equipment provided by Queensland Newspapers.

Xanana Gusmao invited *Suara Timor Lorosae,* a newspaper developed during the invasion of Indonesia, to resume publication in July 2000 (Steele, 2007). *The Independente* emerged in 2011 and become the island nation's fourth daily newspaper (Perrottet & Robie, 2011). The newspapers which circulate with less than 1000 copies each survived because of the government subsidies (Steele, 2007). Many Timorese public officials today express disappointment with the quality and performance of the press (Steele, 2007). On the other hand, East Timorese journalists face a lack of understanding and realisation of press freedom among government officials. Although members of the Timorese government generally support the idea of freedom of the press, they are divided in opinion over the issue of criminal defamation (Steele, 2007).

David Robie (2013), who joined a team organised by the New Zealand Electoral Commission in 2007 to monitor progress with the evolving media since the first election in 2002 noted that, while commending the Timorese media for their efforts in covering the first elections, an overall information strategy for Timor-Leste was absent and he predicted that the nation would risk 'being information poor' for years to come. The mission witnessed that leading politicians lacked a 'whole-hearted commitment' for a free and independent media (Robie, 2013).

Method

At UGM, communication students with a specialisation in journalism are equipped with practical multimedia skills such as photography and videography as well as working with an online news environment. Our training materials for UNTL students was adapted from the online journalism course of UGM. Thus, our goals in the training were to enable the students to understand the basic concepts of photo-journalism and video-journalism and enable them to produce one-minute journalism videos and a photo-story for *Notisia Lorosae* (http://notisialorosae.net).

To understand the expectations and skills of the communication students with a journalism major at UNTL and evaluate the training, we conducted pre-test and post-test surveys with the trainees. The trainees of the short course were selected from the fourth year (2016) and third year (2017) intakes of communication students with 50 percent from each cohort. Interviews with some trainees were intended to comprehend the goals, opinions, and existing skills in multimedia journalism.

Of 70 trainees, only 63 questionnaires were completed. The pre-test questionnaires were distributed to the students on the first day of the training before the materials were given (Table 1). Sixty five percent of the trainees were female. The post-test questionnaires were filled on the 14th day of the training. The training materials comprised the elements of journalism reports, the ethics to conduct interviews and the way to edit photos and videos with easily downloaded software for smartphones or free download ones for desktop computers. The students were divided into three classes and the trainers moved between each of the classes after two or three days.

The name of the web platform, '*notisia lorosae'*, was chosen after consultation with some locals who had studied on a master's degree programme at the Department of Communication Science at UGM. The website contains several categories such as business, community, environment, sports, education, politics, art and culture, and society.

On the first two days of the training, trainees were given short explanations on current professional standards relating to online media and digital platforms, journalism ethics, and knowledge on journalistic skills. On the third day, the trainees conducted field reporting and produced news photos. They visited popular public spaces in Dili such as Colmera Tais Market, Taibesi Market, Coconut Beach, and Cristo Rey. On the fourth day, they collaboratively worked in groups or individually to create photo stories and uploaded them on *Notisia Lorosae* (http://notisialorosae.net). On the fifth day, trainers moved to the next scheduled class and taught video journalism. The main focus in the video journalism training was to present how to create a simple video story about the lives of locals and tourist destinations in Dili and surrounding areas. They conducted the field reporting on the sixth and seventh days.

Video editing was conducted on the eighth and ninth day using personal laptops and smartphones. Software used included Movavi, VivaVideo, Adobe Premiere and Kinemaster. Many of the students brought laptops with Windows processors under Core i3, for example AMD, Atom and Intel Inside. On day 11, each class held an evaluation and completed the questionnaires. Language became a communication barrier between the trainers and trainees. Only some students understood the Indonesian language in each class but the class managed to produce photos and videos in Indonesian and Tetum.

The pre-test and post-test were answered using Likert model in which score 1 represented *very positive* and score 5 represented *very negative*. The Parametric T-test Paired Analysis was used in the survey analysis because the questions'

Table 1: Timor-Leste journalism skills, 2019

No.	Aspect	Questions
1	Goals in attending multimedia journalism course	Which profession in communication are you interested in?
		1. Print media journalist
		2. Online media journalist
		3. Online citizen journalist
		4. Online content creator
		5. Public relations officer
		6. Social media administrator
		7. Campaign consultant
		8. Columnist
2	Opinions on multimedia journalism	In your opinion, which journalistic skills need to be mastered?
		1. To differentiate facts and opinions
		2. To sonduct interviews
		3. To produce written journalistic reports
		4. To edit text reports
		5. To produce photo journalism
		6. To combine photos into slideshows
		7. To cover events for video news
		8. To edit video news
3	Skills on journalism	Currently, which journalistic skills are already mastered?
		1. To differentiate facts and opinions
		2. To conduct interviews
		3. To produce written journalistic reports
		4. To edit text-based reports
		5. To produce photo journalism
		6. To combine photos into slideshows
		7. To cover events for video news
		8. To edit video news

Note: The questionnaires were conducted on the 17th day of the training course in Dili, Timor-Leste, July 2019.

sets were the same in both tests and we intended to see the change. Interviews with students were conducted to probe further about their career aspirations. Additionally, to comprehend the current practice of journalism education in UNTL and job opportunities in East Timor, we interviewed the commissioner of the Press Council Jose Ximenes and the Head of the Department of Social

Communication Marcellino. The triangulation analysis was applied for all interviews and statistical analysis. Our perception as the trainers complemented the triangulation analysis of the study.

Results and discussion

When arriving in Nicolo Lobatou Airport on sunny bright day at the end of July 2019, we were told by the locals that the country was in economic crisis. Kingsbury (2017) analysed that the economic problems of East Timor were related to a high dependency on petroleum. On the way to UNTL on the first day, we bought and read an edition of *Suara Timor Lorosae* (previously *Suara Timor Timur*) with 16 pages of eight columns priced at 50 centavos (or US$0.5). The Opiniaun, Internasional, Naran and Atividade (people and activity) sections were in Indonesian while the rest were in Tetum and Portuguese. The fact that the paper had its online version on *Suara Timor* (http://suara-timor-lorosae.com) assured us that teaching multimedia journalism was relevant to the future career needs of communication students in UNTL.

Communication students at UNTL were engaged with social media. On average, the trainees spent US$5 a month for internet usage. This means that while US$5 only allowed them to buy *Suara Timor Lorosae* ten times, with the same amount of money they were able to access WhatsApp, YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter. However, the internet connection with US$5 might not last a month. Often they went online for a limited period as the data quota allowed. During the training, the trainers bought extra internet data packages and shared them in the classes as many students did not have internet data.

Once they were able to connect to the internet, they watched YouTube personalities such as Maria Vittoria, Feliz Official and Ary Bargon. When the trainers presented the career possibilities a journalism graduate can have, the trainees were enthusiastically responding with questions like how they could gain money from YouTube, how they could set up a PayPal account, what kind of content they should focus on to create and who would watch their content.

However, when students were asked for the names of news media they consume, they mostly read print media. They placed *The Timor Post* and *Jornal Independente* at the top of the list, followed by *Suara Timor Lorosae* and *Jornal Nacional Dia ´rio*. Radio Liberdade was the most familiar radio station among the trainees but some of them also listened to Radio Televisiau Timor Leste (RTTL), Radiu Groupo Media Nacional (GMN) and Radiu Akademika. GMN TV and TV Telemor were the most watched local television channels besides Gardamor and RTTL. Some of the students watched programmes on RCTI and SCTV; both are Indonesian television channels. *Tempo Timor, Tatoli, Tafara* and *Sapo Timor Leste* were the local online press read by the students.

If the percentages of both broadcast stations were combined, 60 percent of

Table 2: Media type preferred by Timor Leste trainees, 2019

Media type	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent
Terrestial TV	21	33.3	33.3
Terrestial Radio	17	27.0	60.3
News Agency	8	12.7	73.0
Newspapers	6	9.5	82.5
Magazines	2	3.2	85.7
Internet-based Media	4	6.3	92.1
Not knowing yet	3	4.8	96.8
Others	1	1.6	98.4
Do not want to be a journalist	1	1.6	100
Total	63	100.0	100.0

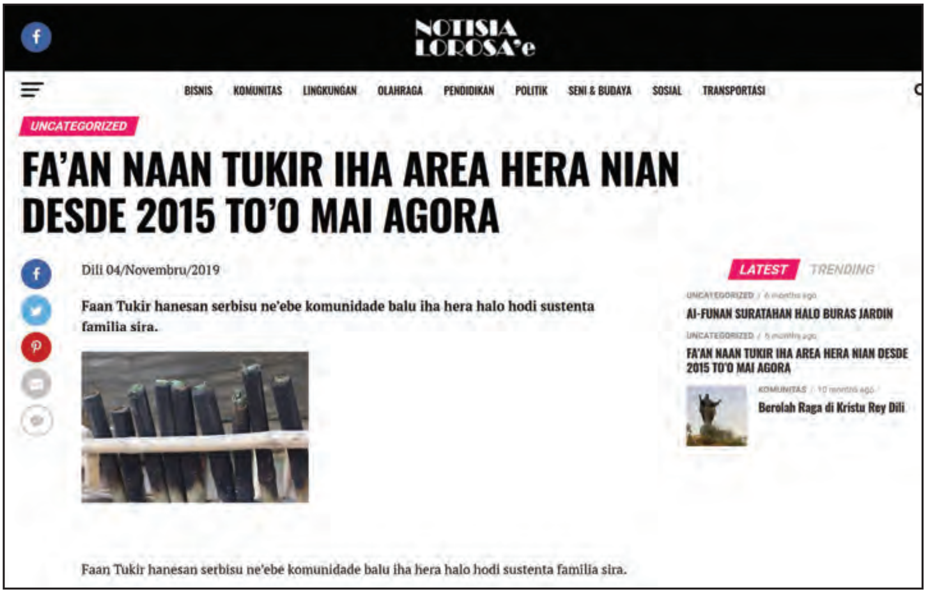
the students aspired to work as television and radio journalists (Table 2). Only some of them were interested in working for news agencies, print media and internet-based media. Almost all of the students intended to work as journalists.

The declining media company business did not discourage journalism students at UNTL from pursuing a media career after graduation. From the statements of the students we interviewed, they all wanted to be media workers, ranging from radio broadcasters, cameramen, television presenters, television reporters, filmmakers, to media officers in government offices.

One of the students, Iriana Soares, before starting college, wanted to be a radio announcer. However, after three years at college and trying out audio visual equipment, she now wants to be a television presenter or an independent filmmaker. According to her, the most important thing she had learned so far was the ability to make videos and edit them. 'It's very fun and challenging. I want to be an independent filmmaker because I can be free to create any stories, as I wish,' said Soares.

The Department of Social Communication at UNTL has a number of professional cameras provided by the Australia government, well-kept in the storage room of the laboratory, and two working desktop computers with Adobe Premiere and Audition software. Technical challenges faced during the training were the slow internet connectivity and limited numbers of students possessing laptops. We bought Telemor for US$10 per class during the two-week training for uploading the trainees' works but the connection speed was limited. Given the situation, we spent a day in the UNESCO office in the United Nations Compound to upload the videos of the students. We further published the testimonies of the trainees on *Notisia Lorosae* YouTube channel.

The technical difficulty resembled the East Timor Press Project led by QUT's



FA'AN NAAN TUKIR IHA AREA HERA NIAN DESDE 2015 TO'O MAI AGORA

Dili 04/Novembru/2019

Faan Tukir hanesan serbisu ne'ebe komunidade balu iha hera halo hodi sustenta familia sira.

UNCATEGORIZED / 6 months ago

AI-FUNAN SURATAHAN HALO BURAS JARDIN

UNCATEGORIZED / 5 months ago

FA'AN NAAN TUKIR IHA AREA HERA NIAN DESDE 2015 TO'O MAI AGORA

KOMUNITAS / 10 months ago

Berolah Raga di Kristu Rey Dili

Faan Tukir hanesan serbisu ne'ebe komunidade balu iha hera halo hodi sustenta familia sira.

NOTISIA LOROSAE.

Figure 1. A photo-story in Tetum created by a student at UNTL uploaded on *Notisia Lorosae*.

journalism programme in 2000. Cokely, et al. (2000, p. 32) reported that 'the poor state of communication infrastructure and the widespread devastation of East Timorese society means that the impact of the Project as a wealth-generation strategy and as an exercise in democratic nation-building will initially be extremely limited.' We did not ask through questionnaires about the students' perceptions of the website and the use of website to publish their work but during the class, students showed enthusiasm in learning how to upload photos and videos and felt proud of their work being published.

Based on the responses on the pre-test and post-test questions, not much change was found in the trainees' perceptions on their future goals, opinions on required skills in multimedia journalism, and existing skills. In both surveys, trainees mostly agreed that multimedia journalists should be able to differentiate fact and opinions, conduct interviews, produce written journalism reports, edit text reports, produce photo journalism, combine photos into slideshows, cover events for audiovisual news, and edit audiovisual news. They also perceived that their current skills were sufficient, high or very high.

According to the data, not much change was found in the trainees' perceptions on their future goals, opinions on required skills in multimedia journalism, and existing skills. The students felt that they know what they want to do after they graduate, and they have the relatively high knowledge and skills on multimedia journalism. In other words, the trainees have had pre-existing expectations regarding their future jobs and these are typically found among journalism students who are living under digitally saturated environments like their counterparts in Indonesia.

The lack of attitude change in the surveys might be due to the answers of the students being in ordinal/Likert, not in intervals. Thus, the responses tended to be subjective. In addition, the questions did not cover the area of online literacy, especially in uploading content on website and ability in expressing news in written text. The language barrier (questionnaires written in Indonesian) and the tendencies to answer with positive conformity could be other factors. The short duration of the training might contribute to the low significance.

The high ability of the students to take and edit photos and videos has been consistent with our subjective assessment. In our opinion, trainees were able to produce quality photo and video. However, students found it difficult to conduct interviews and create the stories based on the interviews for the pictures' captions and videos subtitles. For example, on the video of the limited number of Taibesi Market, students needed to be guided in mentioning the name and the age of the news sources more accurately, and in explaining the stages of the story. The next training should stress the basic journalism skills such as how to develop news ideas into news stories, prepare questions and develop them during the interviews to conduct interviews and verification, and differentiate facts from opinions.

Writing the captions and subtitles was the slowest part of the process. As the trainers were Indonesian, students strove to speak and write in Indonesian. They were allowed to write in Tetum and a lecturer at UNTL would orally translate them for the Indonesian trainers. However, most of the students wrote their subtitles and captions in Indonesian. Only some of them wrote in Tetum (Figure 1).

Despite the language and cultural challenge, the trainees came up with unique and publicly relevant news angle ideas. The first thing we explained in the class was the importance of news in society, for example, the ability of news media to criticise public services and facilities, and the way simple daily life stories might interest the audiences. The angles of their journalism reports were varied from places-bound focus to activities and people. As they became more critical, one group covered littering problems at Taibesi Market in Dili and a famous tourism spot, Cristo Rey.

At UNTL, journalism education is part of the Department of Social Communication, which was established in 2008 as a part of the Faculty of Social Sciences. It is one of only two communication schools in East Timor—the other is the Department of Social Communication at Universidade Oriental de Timor Lorosa'e (UNITAL), a private university located in Dili. With ten lecturers, there are always 80-100 students enrolled at the UNTL's Department of Social Communication every year. 'But for the class of 2019, we were forced to accept 300 students because there was a policy from the university to accommodate the children of veterans of the war of independence,' said Marcelino Magno, chair of the Department of Social Communication at UNTL. The tuition fee is as low as US$5 per semester.

According to Magno, the imbalance in the number of lecturers and students is one of the main challenges of education here. With a total of 10 lecturers, added with six guest lecturers, the Department of Social Communication is struggling even to fulfill its schedule. In addition, not all lecturers have a communication education background. In fact, Magno is the only one with a background in journalism in which he graduated from the Universitas Gadjah Mada's Department of Communication in Indonesia and had worked as a reporter for *Tempo* magazine in Indonesia for one year.

Regarding teaching in the Department of Social Communication in general, Magno said, during the first three semesters, the students specifically study the theory. 'In the first semester, they study general subjects such as Mathematics, Portuguese, English, Introduction to Political Science, and Introduction to Social Sciences. In the second and third semester, they only learn communication theories, including journalism,' he said.

During semesters 4 and 5, they specifically take practical courses, both to make journalistic and non-journalistic products, using a variety of multimedia tools. 'We strongly emphasise the importance of technical skills, so that after graduation they are ready to work for the industry. But their storytelling ability is still weak. So, we are very pleased to have this multimedia training supported by UNESCO. This will strengthen their multimedia journalism capabilities,' Magno said.

Multimedia technology facilities at UNTL are quite complete. The basic shortcoming is only the internet infrastructure. But it is hoped that by mid-2020, with the help of the Australian government, there will be free internet services for the entire campus.

The Department of Social Communication also has Radio Akademia, a campus radio station managed by alumni of the department. Both junior and senior students do internship programmes at the radio, which is funded by the university and advertising. This terrestrial analog radio covers the whole of Dili.

According to Magno, almost all media institutions in East Timor rely on communication graduates to work as journalists. This also includes government offices, which employ communication graduates to work as public relations and media officers.

Another major challenge faced by the department is related to the very low mastery of written language by students. 'In daily conversation, they use Tetum, but for written language, Tetum must absorb a lot of Portuguese vocabularies to meet the needs of its users,' he said. According to Magno, students still find it difficult to adopt Portuguese vocabularies in Tetum; as a result, most of their sentences are grammatically incorrect.

Meanwhile, they also cannot write and speak Portuguese, English, and Indonesian adequately. So, in our opinion, they do not master writing in any language adequately. For spoken language, they only fully master Tetum, and a little Portuguese and Indonesian.

'When a student writes a thesis and they take references from Indonesian, I ask them to always include the original Indonesian text. Because they cannot even copy Indonesian text correctly, it is always mixed with Tetum-style writing,' Magno said.

The inadequate mastery of the written language of prospective journalists then becomes the task of the news media that employs them in the midst of the depressed media business conditions in East Timor. According to Jose Ximenes, a member of the East Timor Press Council, the political and economic crisis in 2017-2018 caused government spending to decline dramatically, including advertising spending on news media. In East Timor, news media advertisements, for both print and broadcast, mostly come from the government.

Instead of developing journalist competencies, media companies have to reduce the number of employees due to the lack of advertising revenue. For example, the largest circulation newspaper in the country, *Timor Post,* was forced to reduce the number of journalists in 2018 from the previous number of 20. The circulation of the *Timor Post* and other newspapers also depends heavily on government offices as their daily subscribers. According to Ximenes, the proportion of advertising is received mostly by newspapers, followed by television stations, while news sites still receive little due to the lack of internet access in the country.

With such difficult conditions, broadcast media cannot also be expected to recruit journalists every year. East Timor has one public television called RTTL (Radio dan Televisi Timor Leste) and two private televisions, GMN and Education TV. GMN is the largest media group in the country, whose business includes television, radio, print media, and a news website.

Today, there are 216 journalists registered with the Press Council (those who have journalist IDs published by the Press Council) and they mostly work in printed media. Meanwhile, communication school graduates who want to obtain a Press Council journalist card must have an internship in a media company for a minimum of six months. For non-communication graduates, they must have an internship of at least one year.

Conclusion

This research found that Timor-Leste journalism students in general expected to work for legacy media organisations such as television and radio stations, which might be influenced by the popularity of legacy media in the country. The interviews with students showed that they aspire to be journalists in the news industry, despite the lack of journalism job opportunities, to be information officers at government offices, and to be entrepreneurs in multimedia production.

In addition, the students showed promising ability in producing news stories as they easily adapted to cultural differences with the trainers and with new approaches in motivating learning in multimedia journalism supported by the students' interviews. The journalism training, which was conducted in less than two weeks, might have not yielded a highly significant impact on their multimedia journalism knowledge and skills.

However, during the consultation process, the real challenge came from interviewing and writing skills. As these skills are only developed if journalism students regularly practise journalism, the curricula and facilities should provide the opportunities. Meanwhile, the interviews with a lecturer at the department and a member of the East Timor Press Council showed that to be competitive in the difficult job market, there was a need for the East Timorese journalism students to highly improve their skills in written language and journalism.

The sustainability of the website to publish the students' works depends on the UNTL's Department of Social Communication. Some students have learned how to upload and publish the photo-stories and video on both the website and YouTube. However, they were due to graduate soon. Thus, the trainers shared the knowledge to some fellows at the department as well. As the department will recruit new lecturers in future, the website will be sustained if the lecturers are able to use the website and the technology incorporated into the course process. Although the news site is not as popular as legacy media in East Timor due to the expensive internet connection, the penetration level of the internet is expected to rise in the future years as planned by the East Timorese government.

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What’s in a name?

A history of New Zealand’s unique name suppression laws and their impact on press freedom

Abstract: The principle of open justice, including the media’s right to attend and report on criminal courts, must be balanced with the protection of individuals’ privacy and an accused person’s fair trial rights. Prohibiting media from identifying those involved in criminal cases is one way privacy and fair trial rights may be protected in New Zealand. Court news was not always restricted in this way: 115 years ago all parts of criminal court proceedings could be reported and media decided what information was censored. In 1905, New Zealand judges were given the power to suppress court evidence to protect public morality, and 15 years later, the power to suppress the names of certain first offenders to give them a second chance. The laws now stretch to suppressing many kinds of evidence and the identities of some people accused and convicted of New Zealand’s most serious crimes. Investigation of the 115-year-long evolution of New Zealand’s name suppression laws illuminates a piecemeal, but severe, curtailment of media freedom and a trend of imposition of increasingly complex laws which journalists must keep abreast of, understand and observe to prevent appearing before the courts themselves.

Keywords: court reporting, contempt of court, crime reporting, fair trial rights, media law, name suppression, New Zealand, press freedom, privacy, open justice

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Introduction

THE PRINCIPLE of open justice, maintaining that justice should be transparent and open to the public, has been entrenched in British law for centuries (Davis, 2001; Pearson & Graham, 2010). New Zealand has firmly adopted the principle of open justice and, in most cases, allows media to be present and report in the criminal courts as public representatives (Buckingham, 2011; Patel, 2018). The media’s role in court reporting is vital to the open justice principle by informing the public broadly about the operation of the judicial system (Pearson & Graham, 2010). The media’s right to report on criminal court proceedings is supported by the *New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990* (NZBORA) which stipulates that 'everyone has the right to … seek, receive, and impart information and opinions of any kind in any form' (NZBORA, s 14). In criminal court cases, however, name suppression orders may prevent media from identifying some people.

In New Zealand, name suppression is codified in legislation and either automatically applied or granted at judicial discretion. Name suppression has been controversial in New Zealand since it was introduced in the *Offenders Probation Act 1920*. Since then, academics, lawmakers and the judiciary have debated two broadly opposing interests involved with name suppression: individuals' rights versus the principles of open justice (Davis, 2001; Jones, 1995; Patel, 2018; Pearson & Graham, 2010). On one hand, naming the accused may encourage participation of further witnesses or victims (Davis, 2001; Pearson & Graham, 2010), be considered part of the punishment for offending, and deter reoffending (Jones, 1995). On the other hand, identifying the accused may damage reputations and/or cause distress and embarrassment (Pearson & Graham, 2010), and remove the presumption of innocence and thus destroy fair trial rights (Davis, 2001). Fair trial rights are also enshrined in NZBORA which states everyone has 'the right to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial court' (NZBORA, s 25(a)). The words 'fair' and 'public' in section 25(a) aptly illustrate the conflict between the concepts of fair trial rights and the public's right to know. Despite the importance placed on open justice in New Zealand, the most recent Justice Ministry figures show that in 2018/19 permanent name suppression was granted to 315 people, of whom 56 percent (n=176) were convicted and 18 percent (n=56) were imprisoned (Ministry of Justice, 2020). The names of those 315 people will never be allowed to be published in relation to those crimes, even after they have died, unless a court rescinds suppression. New Zealand's more than 100-year journey to today's name suppression laws has steadily restricted press freedom in reporting on criminal courts. Little has been written about the controversy that has surrounded New Zealand's name suppression journey, the exclusion of media representatives from Parliamentary discussion over the formulation of the relevant legislation, or the arguable erosion of press freedom.

New Zealand's suppression journey

New Zealand's first legislation allowing suppression of criminal court evidence aimed to protect public morality and followed public outrage over unsavoury details published in newspapers about a man who impregnated a 15-year-old employee and escaped prosecution after she died during childbirth (A man's iniquity, 1905). The *Criminal Code Amendment Bill 1905*, as then Justice Minister James McGowan told the House, aimed to protect under 21-year-olds from exposure to morally corrupting information and prevent media reports 'not of an edifying character' (McGowan, 1905, p. 238). Member of Parliament (MP) Charles Lewis had unsuccessfully argued for inclusion of name suppression in the bill, stating an acquitted person may be 'damned for his lifetime because of what occurred' (Lewis, 1905, p. 239). It appears from the *Hansard* transcript that although judges were consulted over the bill, the media was not (McGowan, 1905). Certain quarters of the media expressed outrage. The *Lyttelton Times* presciently warned the legislation would be the 'first step to establishing a Press censorship in New Zealand' (The Criminal Code Amendment Bill, 1905). *Hansard* also showed some MPs disagreed with publication prohibitions, as newspapers generally complied with judicial requests not to publish details (McLean, 1905). However, the 1905 launch of the tabloid-style *New Zealand Truth* newspaper, noted for its 'muck-raking' (Papers Past, 2020), may have hardened some MPs' opinions on media trustworthiness. MP John Jenkins described the newspaper as 'one of the vilest productions that ever issued from the printing press' after it published evidence from an upcoming court case (Jenkins, 1905)(1). The Act, enacted on August 30, 1905, allowed judges to clear the court (to protect public morality) of everyone except the prosecutor, defence lawyer, accused, and, in a late addition, the media, and also to order certain evidence be suppressed from publication (Criminal Code Amendment Act 1905, ss 3 & 4). Recurring themes were beginning to emerge in the progression of suppression legislation—wilful antagonism toward media expressed by some MPs, and discounting of media interests and their potential to be sound moral agents.

Prior to 1920, the media held the sole right to determine whose names were published in criminal court news. An informal agreement between most major newspapers stipulated that all accused persons would be named except for first offenders of drunkenness, children under 15 years in Juvenile Court, and debtors who successfully argued against imprisonment for unpaid debts (A flaw in the law, 1920). This all changed when, at the request of probation officers seeking to give young, first offenders a second chance, Justice Minister Ernest Lee included provision in the *Offenders Probation Bill 1920* giving judiciary the power to suppress names of first offenders eligible for probation (Lee, 1920). In response, one newspaper editor warned that suppressing names of offenders would, 'arouse in the public mind such suspicions … that there is one law for the rich and another for the poor' (Very inadvisable, 1920). The *Offenders Probation Act 1920* passed on October 28 that year. Some newspaper editors were vociferously opposed to the legislation. One described the law as a 'hush-hush policy' and warned that not naming 'thieves and other lawbreakers' would 'undoubtedly encourage crime' (The 'hush-hush' policy, 1920). The editor continued, 'It is certainly time that the newspapers of the Dominion combined to protect their rights, which are gradually being filched from them' (ibid.). One of the earliest name suppression applications, on 24 November 1920, involved a 16-year-old girl who stole a wristwatch (The courts today, 1920). The magistrate declined name suppression saying he would instead just request that newspapers not name her (ibid.); newspapers did not publish her name. Name suppression was, however, granted on 21 December 1920 to mother-and-daughter first offenders who twice stole hats from a milliner (Not for publication, 1920). It appears that media, despite being upset with the new judicial powers, continued to cooperate with requests not to publish and also complied with name suppression orders; however, from the outset judicial application of the law was inconsistent.

Little advice had been provided to the judiciary about the application of name suppression (Local and General, 1921a). Magistrate Robert Dyer, in remarking that too many name suppression requests were being made, noted, ‘A law has been passed giving Magistrates the right to order the suppression of names, but on what basis we are to act I do not know’ (ibid.). Confusion about the practicalities of name suppression led some judges to set inconsistent boundaries. Magistrate Joseph Poynton declared: ‘The names will not be suppressed unless the offender is under 21 years, and is a first offender’ (*Auckland Star*, 1921). Two months later, Magistrate Samuel McCarthy took a narrower stance stating, ‘Mr Poynton has decided not to extend this provision of the non-publication of names to any over the age of twenty one, or beyond the first offence. In my opinion, that is too wide. I intend to confine it to juveniles under the age of sixteen’ (Local and General, 1921b). Newspapers were also inconsistent in publication of names. In one 1923 case, despite a judge explicitly requesting publication of the name of a convicted sex offender, the newspaper did not print his name (Grossly indecent act, 1923). The *Waikato Times* stated in an editorial that publication of names was the greatest deterrent to crime and congratulated one magistrate for refusing to suppress the name of a man charged with being drunk and disorderly; however, it did not name the accused (Day by day, 1924). *NZ Truth,* one of the greatest critics of name suppression, in 1925 did not identify a woman convicted of stealing money from her employer, despite describing her lawyer’s unsuccessful name suppression request as ‘monumental cheek’ (Quite pardonable difference, 1925). The media’s failure to name some criminals, even in cases when judges allowed or recommended it, may indicate some editors’ growing discontent with the new laws and may have amounted to a protest against having to follow the courts’ rulings.

The media won a victory against the limitation of their freedoms in 1929 when MP Rex Mason failed in a bid to introduce *compulsory* name suppression for almost all first offenders, (*Offenders Probation Amendment Bill*, 1929). The victory, however, was only won with the support of business groups (Local and General, 1929), and was only temporary. The following year name suppression was extended to include publication of ‘any other name or particulars likely to lead to the identification of such person’ (*Offenders Probation Amendment Act*

1930, s 2(2)). Justice Minister John Cobbe told the House some newspapers had published enough detail to easily identify persons granted name suppression (Cobbe, 1930). The Act made it contempt of court to breach name suppression, with a maximum fine of 100 pounds (*Offenders Probation Act 1930*, s 2(3)). The inclusion of identifying particulars to name suppression increased potential for a breach if media inadvertently published too much information. It also meant that if media felt suppression was unjustified they could no longer simply circumvent it by giving hints to identity. In just ten years, the media's right to determine what information was published in court stories, had been seriously undermined. If editors retaliated by ignoring suppression orders they believed unjustified they faced being found in contempt of court and fines which could financially ruin them.

The original intent of name suppression, to protect identities of first offenders, changed significantly in 1954 when eligibility was extended to include those accused or convicted of any crime as long as they had no previous convictions for imprisonable offences (Criminal Justice Act 1954). Initially, Justice Minister Clifton Webb had intended name suppression to cover all people who appeared in court, but after media argued such broad suppression was against the public interest, agreed to reduce the scope (Webb, 1954). Despite Webb's concession, antagonism towards the media's position was again evident when MP John Stewart described the media's response as 'exaggerated as usual' (Stewart, 1954, p. 1941). He accused newspapers of scaremongering by falsely claiming trials would be held in secret and stated newspapers had abused their privilege by suppressing the identities of prominent figures and newspaper controllers' friends while ruthlessly exposing the names of those they did not like (ibid.). Stewart's claim, made without any supporting evidence, reveals a degree of enmity that likely shaped some lawmakers' decisions about restricting media freedoms.

In 1967 MPs finally fulfilled the wishes of some of their earlier counterparts and extended, at the request of the Law Society (Hanan, 1967), name suppression eligibility to *all* offenders (*Criminal Justice Amendment Act 1967*, s 9). Justice Minister Ralph Hanan's statement to the House indicated that, while all would be eligible for name suppression, it should be infrequently used (Hanan, 1967). Hanan described, in example, the possibility of revealing an incest victim's identity because the accused was ineligible for name suppression (ibid.). The contention that MPs intended only occasional use of name suppression is supported by a statement made by MP Dr Martyn Findlay, who said while name suppression should be allowed for everyone, it should be used sparingly (Findlay, 1967). Name suppression laws were again to extended in 1969 to allow accused persons to apply for temporary, or interim, name suppression (*Criminal Justice Amendment Act,* 1969).

In 1975, a legislative change that automatically suppressed the names of *every* accused person, up until their case was concluded, brought media and MPs to loggerheads. The change, a recommendation by the Criminal Law Reform Committee (CLRC), made up of the Solicitor General, law professionals, and representatives from government departments and universities, was the greatest alteration to reporting court news in New Zealand's history (Eckersley, 2016; NZ move to suppress accused's name, 1975). Government had initially intended automatic name suppression only for victims of sexual offences aged under 16 years and those charged and/or convicted of incest with a child under 16 (Findlay, 1974). When the bill returned for its second reading, however, the new clause had been added to automatically suppress the identities of all defendants up until conviction, unless the court ordered differently (Eckersley, 2016). Name suppression could be lifted if the accused requested it, or if any member of the public felt they or their family would be prejudiced if an accused's name was not revealed (*Criminal Justice Amendment Bill 1975*, cl 14).

The proposal was opposed by not only media, but also a number of lawyers (NZ move to suppress accused's name, 1975). Journalists claimed the proposed law meant that 'no effective and sustained reporting of the case is possible' and it would result in court news stories becoming mere lists of guilty parties (ibid.). Thirty-two public submissions were made on the bill, ten from media organisations or journalists, and all ten expressed opposition (Stace, 1976). The Press Council president warned of the dangers of secret trials; the editor of *The Sunday News* defended the public's right to know about criminal matters; and journalists claimed court reports would be made confusing and dull (ibid.). The police commissioner, two other organisations representing police and the New Zealand Law Society also opposed the blanket suppression law (ibid.). Nonetheless, the *Criminal Justice Amendment Act (No.2) 1975* passed on September 19.

Blanket suppression lasted only 10 months. During its time of enforcement, MPs were suddenly exposed to one of its negative consequences when fellow MP Gerald O'Brien was charged with molesting two boys (Gay, 2019). Reports of O'Brien's arrest, which could not include his name because of the suppression law, saw several other male MPs approach the media to declare the accused person was not them (ibid). The governing Labour Party was ousted at the 1975 general election and the new National Party government repealed the automatic suppression-for-all law, on 29 July 1976, returning the law to the 1967 position where name suppression was available to all but only by order of a judge (*Criminal Justice Amendment Act 1976*, s 2(1)). The 1976 act retained automatic suppression of names in specified sexual offences introduced by the repealed 1975 act (ibid, ss 2 & 3).

Further extensions of name suppression were to follow in subsequent years. Automatic name suppression was extended to: members of the New Zealand Security Intelligence Service (except the director), and anyone connected with them (*New Zealand Security Intelligence Service Amendment Act 1977*); and all victims of sexual offending (*Criminal Justice Amendment Act 1980*, s 23). Each extension of name suppression legislation meant further erosion to press freedom, and an ever-growing and complex number of situations where media might inadvertently breach an order, particularly when these were automatic and not vocalised in court by the judge.

In 1982, for the first time, media could be ordered to leave the court during closed court hearings, but only in the interests of national security or defence (*Crimes Amendment Act 1982*, s 4(1)). The legislation did not give journalists the right to challenge an order to leave court and, as the hearing was closed, they could not subsequently determine whether the order was justified.

Extension after extension to name suppression continued over subsequent years, each making the laws more complex and each concealing further information from the public. In 1985 judges were given power to suppress the names and identifying particulars of witnesses and any evidence given during times when the court was closed and also any person's address and occupation (*Criminal Justice Act 1985*, ss 138 & 140). Additionally, a different act prohibited disclosure in open court of the names and addresses of victims of, and parties to sexual violation-related crimes; inducing sexual connection by coercion; and compelling another to do an indecent act with an animal, effectively suppressing these from publication by media (*Evidence Amendment Act (No. 2) 1985*, s 23AA). In 1986, undercover police officers were also granted a form of anonymity when, in giving court evidence in serious or most drug-related crimes, they were allowed to use the fictitious names used during the investigation (*Evidence Amendment Act 1986*, s 2; *Summary Proceedings Amendment Act 1986*, s 4). In 1989, automatic name suppression was extended to cover witnesses aged under 17 years in criminal cases (*Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1989*, s 454). In 1995, those ordered to submit a sample for DNA testing were also granted automatic name suppression unless they were charged with an offence relating to the reason for the test (*Criminal Investigations (Blood Samples) Act 1995,* s 14). The *Evidence (Witness Anonymity) Amendment Act 1997* allowed some witnesses in serious criminal trials to be identified only as 'Witness A' or another initial (ibid., s 3). A breach of witness anonymity attracted much harsher punishment than other suppression breaches: a maximum of seven years in prison for a deliberate breach, and maximum fines of $2000 for individuals or $10,000 for bodies corporate for an accidental breach (ibid.). One difficulty in witness anonymity was that mandated anonymity included a witness's address, occupation and other identifying particulars (ibid.) making it sometimes difficult for journalists to write about the witness without inadvertently revealing too much information. The need to give context to witnesses, while also avoiding breaching anonymity, and potential harsh penalties, added considerable complexity to reporting such cases.

Inconsistencies in the application of name suppression and concern over erosion of open justice and press freedom led to a major review of suppression laws in 2008 (*New Zealand Law Commission*, 2008). Some review submitters stated name suppression had become so common it was granted on first appearance 'almost as a matter of course' (*New Zealand Law Commission, 2009,* p. 18). Prominent people were also more likely to be given name suppression, some claimed (ibid). The commission made 35 recommendations to government (ibid.), many of which were included in the subsequent *Criminal Procedure Act 2011,* including a guide for judges on grounds for granting name suppressions. The guide included consideration that refusal would: cause 'extreme hardship' to the defendant or others; cast suspicion on others; endanger any person; identify another person whose name is suppressed; risk ongoing, or other, investigations; prejudice the security or defence of the nation; and create a real risk of prejudicing a fair trial (*Criminal Procedure Act 2011,* s 200 (2)). The act also stipulated that a defendant being well-known did not constitute 'extreme hardship' (ibid., s 200 (3)). In 2011, for the first time, the media was granted the right to challenge name suppression orders in court (ibid, s 210). This was a significant development acknowledging the media was a party to proceedings, and giving journalists the right to stand up in court and oppose a name suppression order. However, some journalists lacked the experience, confidence and legal skills to present a compelling case. The legislation also required judges to provide reasons for granting name suppression; however, the reasons themselves could also be suppressed in exceptional circumstances (ibid., s 207). In some cases, suppression of reasons for suppression has placed the onus on media to explain why open justice principles cannot be upheld (Hurley, 2019). The 2011 act also granted automatic name suppression to victims in criminal cases aged under 18 years, unless they were dead, and increased the age for automatic suppression for witnesses by one year to cover those aged under 18 years (*Criminal Procedure Act, 2011*, s 204).

Juvenile offenders

Some of the most stringent of New Zealand's suppression laws relate to children and young offenders. Special Children's Court sessions were introduced in 1906 for offenders aged under 16 years, and, while hearings could be closed to the public, reporters could remain and publish all details of the cases (*Juvenile Offenders Act 1906*). Automatic name suppression for offenders aged under 16 years, their parents or guardians and any other name which could identify the child was introduced in Children's Court in 1925, with journalists having to seek permission to be present and to publish stories (*Child Welfare Act 1925,* s 30(2)). The age for being considered a juvenile offender was increased in 1927 to those aged under 17 years (*Child Welfare Amendment Act 1927*, ss 22 & 27).

In 1974, automatic suppressions in the renamed Youth Court were extended to include the name of the accused's school (*Children and Young Persons Act 1974*, s 24). In 1982, automatic suppressions were removed for youths aged 15 years or over sentenced as an adult in a District Court for serious crimes (*Children and Young Persons Amendment Act 1982*, s 6). Youth Court automatic suppressions were again extended in 1989 to include the names of victims (*Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1989*, s 329). The strict suppression laws for young offenders echo the calls of those 1920 probation officers who justifiably fought for a second chance for young people; however, complexities of reporting proceedings and these strict laws have resulted in much of the Youth Courts' work going unreported.

Other suppressions

In addition to the automatic and discretionary name suppressions outlined above for criminal courts, there are numerous other suppressions which add complexity for journalists and many more possibilities for accidental suppression breaches. These include suppressions around bail hearings; questions disallowed by a judge; anything said in court while the jury is not present; Family Court proceedings; and tribunal hearings (Cheer, 2015). While many of these suppressions have valid reasons, they are also arguably symptomatic of growing and wide-ranging restrictions on press freedom.

Where to from here

The new *Contempt of Court Act 2019*, expected to come into effect on 26 August 2020, has codified some legal constraints and made some laws clearer for journalists working in criminal courts. The Act has, however, added other problems by codifying the ability for judges to order media to remove from websites stories that might prejudice a fair trial. A timeframe has been stipulated for the *sub judice* period, the time in which information that poses a 'real risk' to a fair trial cannot be published (*Contempt of Court Act 2019*, s 7). Under the new act the *sub judice* period is codified, for serious offences, as being from the time of arrest or charge, whichever happens first, through to: a guilty plea or jury verdict; when a charge is withdrawn or dismissed; or the start of a judge alone trial (ibid.). Previously, *sub judice* applied from the imprecise time of 'when an arrest was imminent', and while 'time of arrest or charge' is more concrete, journalists are generally reliant on this information being provided by authorities. Information which poses a 'real risk' to a fair trial is also defined in the act, meaning journalists have a list to refer to rather than relying on previous case law (ibid., s 8). Another major change is the codification of takedown orders relating to stories which include a defendant's previous convictions or information that might risk a fair trial (ibid.). While takedown orders only apply to the *sub judice* period, the possibility is raised that once the information is removed, it may not be reinstated due to cost and time constraints, resulting in a de facto kind of lasting censorship. While takedown orders for online news websites have been granted in recent years, these have been limited. It is possible that enshrining the option of takedown orders in legislation could see lawyers seeking these much more frequently with a consequent rise in the number of these orders served on news media. So far there has been little reaction from media to the new act, arguably because it has yet to come into effect so the implications have not been tested.

International context

In comparison to the straightened New Zealand context, Australia has no bill of rights founded protection of freedom of speech or a public and fair trial (Pearson, 2010). Name suppression is available in Australian courts; however, practices vary considerably across the country's nine states and territories (Pearson, 2010) and are unequally applied. Ackland (2018) reports in the 49 weeks to 8 December 2018 a total of 703 name suppression orders were made, the greatest number in Victoria (301) and the lowest in Tasmania, Australian Capital Territory and Western Australia (1 each). Australia's states have numerous and varying provisions for suppression orders although in all, names of victims of sexual offences and child defendants are automatically protected. These legislative differences pose problems for journalists whose publications cross state boundaries (Pearson, 2010).

The United Kingdom's name suppression regime is a mixture of common and statutory law. Judges may order the names of participants in criminal cases not be used in open court if there is a real risk to the administration of justice, and, thus, these names cannot be published (Judicial College, 2016). Judges also have discretion to suppress the names of certain people involved in criminal proceedings. Automatic name suppressions apply to victims of sexual offences and children involved in Youth Court proceedings (except in cases involving breach of an Anti-Social Behaviour Order). Defendants in criminal trials must be named except in rare circumstances (ibid.). Courts may also order a postponement of publication of reports of proceedings if there is a significant risk to the administration of justice (ibid.). Postponement orders are not intended to permanently prevent publication (Crown Prosecution Service, 2018).

In Canada, freedom of expression is protected by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Canada has a number of statutory suppressions, called publication bans, few of which are automatic (Canadian Judicial Council, 2007). Automatic, permanent suppression is given to victims of, and witnesses to, sex-related crimes, and young people aged under 17 in the Youth Court, except if they are sentenced as an adult (ibid.). Reihle (1996) states free expression is often restricted by the scope and extent of publication bans. Similarly, the Canadian Journalists for Free Expression organisation argues that publication bans are too broadly and frequently used and stifle public discussion about the justice system (Metcalfe, 2018).

In the United States of America, the media's right to report in the courts is protected by the First Amendment of the Constitution, which enshrines press freedom. According to Brandwood (2017), American judges have few options for preventing publication of court proceedings. Judges have the ability to issue gag orders preventing lawyers and others involved in cases from speaking to the media and, if they believe publicity may risk a person's fair trial rights, they may order a trial be held in another venue. Brandwood (2017) suggests that in the USA some accused persons do not get a fair trial due to unrestrained publicity. This poses an extreme contrast to the situation in New Zealand.

Conclusion

The development of New Zealand's name suppression laws are disquieting on a number of fronts. At the beginning of last century, New Zealand's media were entrusted with deciding what information was or was not published from criminal court hearings in the public interest, but over the past 115 years that freedom has steadily been eroded. The initial intent of suppression was to protect public morality, then turned to also give young first offenders a second chance. The practice of name suppression has ballooned to now offer anonymity to those accused, or convicted, of a wide range of crimes, and others involved in court cases. While some name suppressions are warranted, particularly for the protection of victims of sex-related crimes and young people, other measures appear to have been developed by politicians through an unfounded but long-standing mistrust and enmity towards the media.

Media were for decades excluded from any formal discussion of, or contribution to, the early legislative development of New Zealand's name suppression laws, which effectively, without consultation, eroded the media's freedom and right to determine which information was in the public interest. The continued development and extension of name suppression laws has seen them become increasingly complex and disjointed. For example, several acts include automatic name suppressions that apply to rare situations, creating pitfalls into which even seasoned journalists, without the benefit of specialist court knowledge, could easily stumble. The most recent legislative moves have solved some of the problems of interpreting a small area of suppression-related legislation, but other problems still loom large. The effect of the raft of court-ordered and codified name suppressions is the restriction of New Zealand's media in a way that is extremely unusual in comparison to other Western nations.

Notes

1. Unfortunately, no 1905 copies of *Truth* exist in any library so what exactly incensed Jenkins cannot be read.

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REVIEWS

The sacking of an editor

How the editor of the *New Zealand Listener* was dismissed after a row with the board

Commentary: On 25 July 1972, the Board of the New Zealand Broadcasting Corporation decided to terminate the editorship of Alexander MacLeod with three months' pay, effective immediately. *The Listener* had only had three editors since its launch as a broadcasting guide in 1939. Its founder, Oliver Duff, and his successor Monty Holcroft, the revered editor of 18 years, built it up as a magazine of culture, arts and current events on top of its monopoly of listings of radio and television programmes. Both men managed to establish a sturdy independence for the magazine which was still the official journal of the New Zealand Broadcasting Service, later to become the New Zealand Broadcasting Corporation. So, the dismissal of the editor was a sizable event. The National government of the day in New Zealand ordered a Commission of Inquiry into whether the sacking was above board and whether it was politically influenced. This article is the story of the commission's findings.

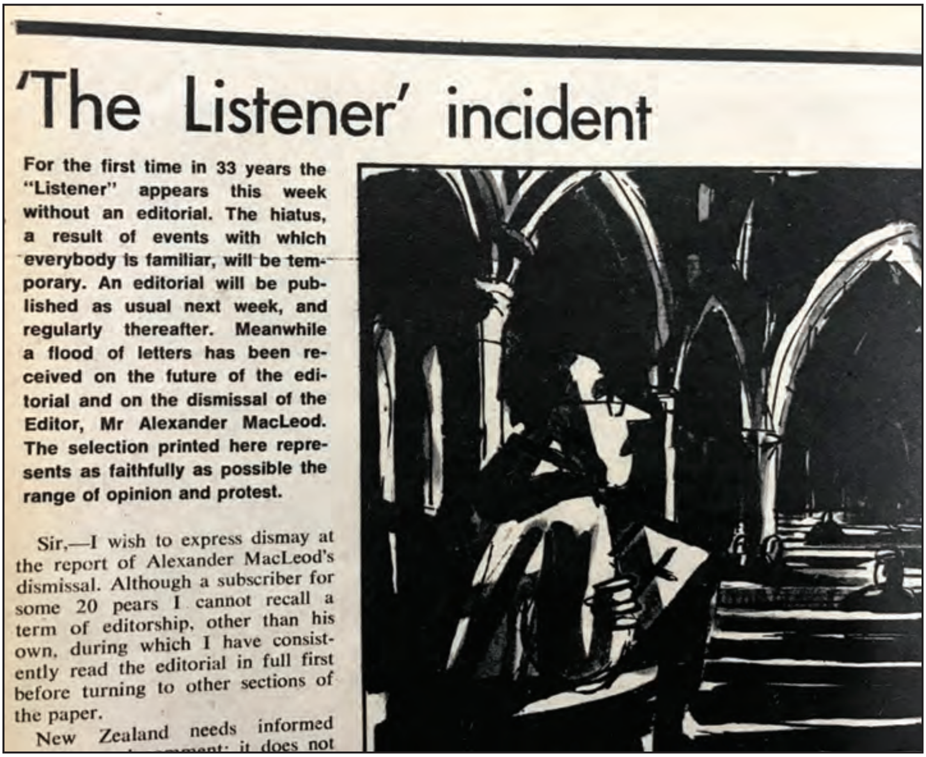
Keywords: editorials, journalism, magazines, media freedom, New Zealand, NZBC, NZ Listener

JEREMY REES
Radio New Zealand

FIVE years ago, when I left *The New Zealand Herald* after 15 years employment, I decided I would leave carrying my belongings packed in a brown cardboard box. It is not quite as odd as it sounds now. One of the most common images after the Global Financial Crisis was employees leaving the office with their belongings packed in a distinctive box. You can search it now. Enron? There are the employees leaving with cardboard boxes. Lehman Brothers? The same cardboard box. Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae? Same thing. Every time I looked at press agency photos of people leaving work, I looked for the cardboard box.

So, when I left the *Herald* for another job in 2015, I bought myself the cardboard box and packed up my few things. I said goodbye to colleagues, had a drink or two and then picked up the box, took it home and stored it in the attic.

Some years later, I found it. It didn't look how I remembered On the outside was written in felt pen, 'Library, bin'.



'The Listener' incident

For the first time in 33 years the "Listener" appears this week without an editorial. The hiatus, a result of events with which everybody is familiar, will be temporary. An editorial will be published as usual next week, and regularly thereafter. Meanwhile a flood of letters has been received on the future of the editorial and on the dismissal of the Editor, Mr Alexander MacLeod. The selection printed here represents as faithfully as possible the range of opinion and protest.

Sir,—I wish to express dismay at the report of Alexander MacLeod's dismissal. Although a subscriber for some 20 pears I cannot recall a term of editorship, other than his own, during which I have consistently read the editorial in full first before turning to other sections of the paper.

New Zealand needs informed

Figure 1: Letters of protest over the dismissal of *Listener* editor Alexander MacLeod and the end of editorials, including from historian and journalist Michael King.

I had picked up the wrong one. Inside were dozens of unwanted and browning reports from the 1960s and 1970s. My box was long gone to the landfill. I had the reports even the *Herald* Library didn't want.

During the COVID-19 lockdown, I climbed into the attic to toss it out. But, curious and with a bit of time to kill, I decided to pick one report to see if it was interesting. I picked out *Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Dismissal of the Editor of the New Zealand Listener* (1972).

On 25 July 1972, the Board of the New Zealand Broadcasting Corporation decided to terminate the editorship of Alexander MacLeod, with three months' pay, effective immediately. *The Listener* had only had three editors since its launch as a broadcasting guide in 1939. Its founder Oliver Duff and successor Monty Holcroft, the revered editor of 18 years, built it up as a magazine of culture, arts and current events on top of its monopoly of listings of radio and television programmes. Both men managed to establish a sturdy independence for the magazine which was still the official journal of the New Zealand Broadcasting Service, later to become the New Zealand Broadcasting Corporation.

So, the dismissal of the editor was

a sizable event.

Straight away, news reports raised the possibility of political interference.

The year 1972 was a turbulent one. It was the year of Nixon in China and anti-Vietnam War protests. In New Zealand, the Holyoake years were ending, the electorate tired of National after 12 years; there were protests about the impending 1973 Springbok tour. On all these issues, MacLeod was a liberal. His editorials would later be characterised as 'idealistic liberalism'.

Some of his editorials worried the Board. They thought they lacked 'balance'.

By all accounts, MacLeod was a good journalist, but *Te Ara Encyclopedia of New Zealand* (n.d.) describes him as 'erratic'. He had been recruited from England to replace Holcroft and immediately increased *The Listener's* foreign coverage. Witnesses praised his literary ability. He took his weekly editorial very seriously as a public figure.

At the same time, the Board had been warned of some troubling dealings with staff. The Public Service Association forwarded staff complaints about him. There was a falling out with a 'sub-editor in Auckland'. In another incident, MacLeod objected to the choice of the 'Listener Appointments Committee' (one of three *Listener* committees cited in the report) of a new 'Listener Secretary/Typiste'. He threatened to give her no work if she was hired. She didn't stay long.

Into this volatile mix was thrown a magazine redesign. The 'Listener Sales Committee' (another committee) wanted change to arrest circulation declines, maybe even a change of direction. It had discussed the possibility of running a little less culture and current events and a bit more entertainment and listings, like the BBC's *Radio Times*. It proposed a 'popular magazine of good quality and not subject to criticism over controversial editorials'. Did it really need an editorial? The Board said it would consider it.

In early July, the NZBC Board formally asked its editor for his thoughts on the editorials. It invited him to the meeting of July 25 to discuss the matter.

The result was unexpected and fateful.

A week before the meeting, MacLeod sent the Board a letter. Ostensibly setting out his views on editorials, it is an oddly rambling missive, setting out a series of complaints, among them that the Director-General of Broadcasting had not acted properly, according to the *Listener Staff Manual* in a staff dispute.

MacLeod goes on to say that he does not wish to speak to the Board about editorials; he only wants to be heard if the Board decides to drop them. The later commission report pointed out it was not quite clear if he was coming to the July 25 meeting or not.

Certainly, the Board thought he was. It was one of the first items of business. The Board duly convened at 11am, on the floor above the *Listener* editor's office.

At 11.20 am, the Board's secretary rang MacLeod's secretary and asked

NEW ZEALAND
listener
LET'S LEARN MAORI - PART 1
FRIENDS OF SOUTH AFRICAN RUGBY
TV & RADIO
MAY 22-28
15c

Figure 2: A *Listener* cover during the final year of Alexander MacLeod's editorship.

that he come up. The editor rang back to say he was busy. He said he had indicated he couldn't come. At 11.35 am, the chairman asked the secretary to ring again. He got through and asked him to come up. MacLeod again said no. He had had no notice of the meeting, he had no wish to speak, he couldn't leave his desk as *The Listener* was going to press in two hours. At 11.45 am, the editor wrote a note to the chairman. 'I am short of staff and my presence here is absolutely required. No disrespect is intended, it is merely for professional reasons I cannot leave.' He went on to say that he had had his say in his letter and only needed to talk to the board if it 'did certain things'.

At 12.55 pm the Board wrote a note to the editor directing him to come at 2.30 pm. MacLeod did not see it at first; he had gone to a lunch meeting of the New Zealand Institute of International Affairs to hear the speaker. When he found it, he wrote another letter to the Board upstairs. 'I regret that for reasons I have already explained—namely that this is a press day and my chief sub-editor and chief reporter are both absent—it will not be possible to attend.'

(The chief subeditor gave evidence to the commission that the editor had given him the rest of the day off and said he could handle the magazine himself.)

At 2.50 pm, the Board secretary rang the editor and, in effect, told him to get up to the board now. The secretary said he told the editor to 'drop everything' and 'come right up'. In the language of the commission he was told that the direction to attend was 'absolute and unqualified'. MacLeod replied, he couldn't right now but he could come at 4pm.

At some point in all these to-ings and fro-ings, Mrs MacLeod came to the office for two hours and she and her husband phoned their lawyers.

By mid-afternoon, the Board had had enough.

At that point the Board passed a motion: 'the employment of Mr A J MacLeod, editor, *New Zealand Listener*, be terminated on three months' notice.'

And it resolved he be relieved of his duties forthwith.

Into this fraught moment, dropped one last letter from MacLeod downstairs. He said his editorial duties should have passed by 4pm: 'This is to confirm my availability.'

Such a dramatic action was always going to make headlines and raise questions. A few weeks later, the National government of 'Gentleman Jack' Marshall ordered a Commission of Inquiry under Ernest Albert Lee, OBE, a retired Christchurch judge, perhaps best known for his work in getting the Totalisator Agency Board (TAB) established. He was to determine if the Board had acted properly and if was there any political interference.

One by one, the Board members gave evidence to the inquiry that they had lost confidence in MacLeod. In different ways, they felt he was challenging their authority and had to go. One felt that there would only be 'chaos' if officers could ignore the Board.

MacLeod's lawyers claimed the editor's letters and notes to the Board were at all times respectful. And anyway, they asked, why couldn't the Director-General of Broadcasting, who was at the meeting, just walk downstairs and talk to MacLeod, rather than summoning him repeatedly?

Commissioner Lee found that the editor's behaviour was 'completely inexcusable'.

'He obviously had made up his mind.... he would go in his own time.'

Lee found that MacLeod had enough time to go to a lunch meeting, have his wife in the office for two hours, write notes to the Board, ring his solicitor and give his chief sub half a day off, but couldn't walk up the stairs to talk about editorials.

'It seems to me that it was not the editor's privilege to decide if he would go or not.' And as for the Board going down to see the editor, there was no reason at all for them to 'go cap-in-hand' to an employee.

But was the Board influenced by politics?

Commissioner Lee was attracted to the somewhat tortured argument that the Board could not have been political because if it was, it wouldn't have done something as stupid as sacking a liberal editor just months before the 1972 General Election.

Interestingly, he does provide a snapshot of the political affiliations of the NZBC Board.

First up its chair, Major-General Walter McKinnon, who had just retired as the NZ Military's Chief of General Staff. He was also the father of the McKinnon siblings who have been prominent in politics, diplomacy and public life. Don McKinnon was the Deputy Prime Minister under Jim Bolger and a former Secretary-General of the Commonwealth.

Commissioner Lee finds that the chairman bent over backwards on July 25 to ask the editor to attend but as to politics, he had little interest. 'He made a small annual payment to an electorate branch of the National Party but had never participated in any political activity.'

Another member, Mrs McNab had been active for National for 20 years and was a Dominion Councillor. Melville Tronson had been a National Party member for '8 or 9' years and had once been asked to be a candidate but declined. B E Brill was a National Dominion Councillor and became the National MP for Kapiti as Barry Brill. Set against that was James Collins who was non-political; his interest lay in sales marketing. The inquiry report drily points out that Collins had made just one reference to *The Listener* in his time on the Board, when he had suggested it explore every avenue to get more radio ads. 'That was the sole reference he ever made to *The Listener*.'

Lastly, Reverend K Ihaka had once been asked to stand for Labour in Northern Māori but said no and pointed out that he dealt with all sorts of people from different parties. So, was the decision to sack the editor political? Definitely not, concludes Commissioner Lee. His investigation finds the Board felt it was dealing with a turbulent editor, who was challenging their authority by refusing to appear. He finds no direct evidence of interference. But it's hard not to escape MacLeod's counter-argument in the commission report. The Board may have acted with no political intent, but the editor believed his job was becoming politicised. MacLeod's view seems to have been that great issues of war, racism and politics were being debated in the country and *The New Zealand Listener* had to be in the centre of them. The Board said it never interfered in *Listener* editorials, but it had also become concerned about 'balance'. At least part of the problem seems to have stemmed from the government ownership of a magazine which dealt with current affairs. Throughout the commission, board members question how *The Listener* sat within the *1961 Broadcasting Act* which demanded equitable, balanced reporting on radio and television. They were often exercised how their magazine could have opinionated editorials when radio and TV didn't.

A year earlier, the 'Listener Committee' (the third committee of *The Listener* mentioned to the inquiry) wrote a report to MacLeod saying *The Listener* had to maintain balance 'along the same lines as the corporation is required by statute to follow in its broadcast programmes'.

And just a month before the July board meeting, the Listener Committee had met (along with MacLeod) to discuss ways to make the paper more popular and to criticise 'the controversial character of editorials'—it not being a broadcasting function to 'express any particular point of view'. MacLeod said he remembered being told by a Board member his editorials were 'politically embarrassing' to the NZBC. Board members told the inquiry they could recall conversations about some of MacLeod's editorials. General McKinnnon remembered phoning MacLeod to offer information about the Vietnam War for which the editor, he said, was 'grateful'. MacLeod, on the other hand, claimed McKinnon rang him after every anti-Vietnam War editorial, I 'have no hesitation in saying... pressures were exerted'. MacLeod remembered every discussion of an editorial; General McKinnon felt they were hardly discussed by the Board at all.

Things weren't helped by a cover story on the impending Springbok tour showing some All Blacks with the headline, 'No tour'. MacLeod said the Director-General of Broadcasting objected to it as 'politically slanted journalism'. Furthermore, MacLeod had angered the NZBC by suggesting in an editorial it had caved in to political pressure to 'balance' a news report on losses in Vietnam. His editorial was thought disloyal to colleagues in the NZBC.

All of this came at a sensitive time when the government was discussing whether to allow a second TV channel.

Perhaps, a different man may have handled all this differently. In his writings presented to the Commission of Inquiry, MacLeod comes across as a prickly and difficult cove. And the pressure seems to have crystallised in his mind around his editorial freedom. Commissioner Lee rather harshly calls it his 'blind jealousy of his editorial role'. So how independent could an editor be, especially the editor of a publicly funded magazine? The commission sought several views. One of its oddities is that MacLeod seemed to find his greatest support from experts outside the media, particularly a Victoria University business professor with the wonderful name of Stewart Wilfred Nivison Ransom. His argument appears to be that editors are likely to be single-minded, ambitious and aggressive, so harmonious relations with boards are unlikely. If there was conflict with the Broadcasting Act then maybe the Act should be changed—or ignored. At this point, Commissioner Lee grants Ransom his own exclamation mark of disapproval, the only one in the report! Much more to his liking was the evidence of former *New Zealand Herald* editor, Orton Sutherland Hintz. He quotes him approvingly at length (although with a Christchurch judge's knowledge of the media north of the Waimakariri he refers to Hintz's paper as the 'Auckland Herald'). Hintz argued that editorial independence is not absolute, that it is set by the direction of the proprietor or the Board. And that editorials are not the view of the editor alone; they represent the view of the journal. In other words, the editor and an editorial are subject to the Board's policies. If an editor received a directive from the Board, they had three options; put it into effect, resign, or refuse and be dismissed. Hintz was firm; the Board had the absolute right to keep an eye on the content of *The Listener*.

He did not believe the number of times the Board sought to speak to MacLeod about his editorials was excessive.

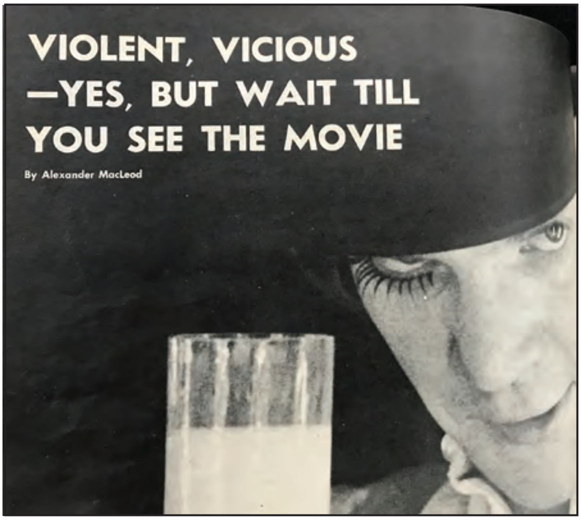
The Commissioner's verdict

In the end, the Commission of Inquiry found completely in favour of the Board.

Sitting on a box in my attic marked 'Library. Bin', I read the conclusions. They have the rhythm of a tumbril drumbeat.

Did the New Zealand Broadcasting Corporation act properly in dismissing Alexander Joseph MacLeod as editor? The answer, said Commissioner Lee, was Yes.

Was any political interference or



VIOLENT, VICIOUS —YES, BUT WAIT TILL YOU SEE THE MOVIE

By Alexander MacLeod

Figure 3: A *Listener* article by editor Alexander MacLeod in 1972. His editorials often highlighted issues such as foreign affairs, the Vietnam War and the campaign for a nuclear-free New Zealand.

influence brought to bear on the corporation in making its decision? The answer was No.

Was the corporation influenced by any political consideration? The answer again No.

The report was delivered to His Excellency Sir Edward Denis Blundell, Knight Grand Cross of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint Gorge, Knight Commander of the most Excellent Order of the British Empire, Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief in and over New Zealand on the 13th day of October 1972. And that was largely that. The country was in the midst of an election; six weeks later National's long reign was ended by Norman Kirk's Labour. Within a few months Kirk withdrew New Zealand troops from Vietnam, recognised China and ended the proposed 1973 Springbok tour.

Some 48 years later, reading a brown cardboard box of old reports, I haven't been able to get one image out of my head. It's like a film shot of a building with the outer wall removed to show the floors. On one floor, the Board of the New Zealand Broadcasting Corporation. One floor below, an editor, joined occasionally by his wife, putting *The Listener* to bed and steadfastly refusing to walk upstairs to defend editorials.

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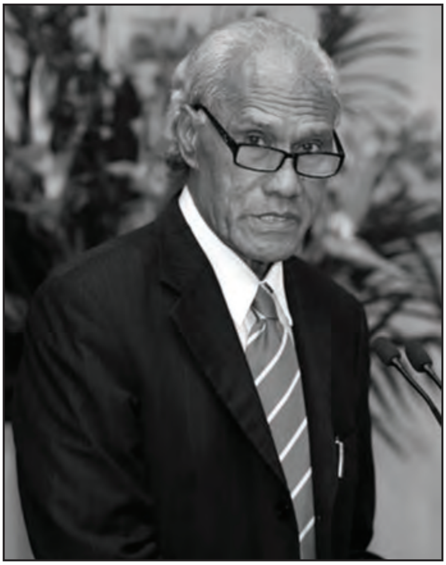
Tonga needs Pōhiva’s message so kingdom can move forward

THE LATE Tongan Prime Minister ‘Akilisi Pōhiva was a clear visioned man whose message is still current, according to veteran Pacific journalist Michael Field. Field, who is writing a biography of Pōhiva, says a book about his life would be useful to the kingdom. Tongans need Pōhiva’s message, he says (Field, 2020).

Since Pōhiva died aged 78 on 12 September 2019, the Democratic Party has been wracked by infighting and competing claims about his attempts to resign and the various stories about what advice he was given. Democracy and political progress appear to have largely disappeared from the Tongan political discourse under the current government. Field says developments in Tonga have come as no surprise. In the past he has warned that Pōhiva’s democratic reforms could unravel and that dangerous times lie ahead for the kingdom. (Latu, 2020; Field, 2020)

Disentangling what the written records say happened and what people remember happening is not hard, Field says.



> It was not harder than any of the other various projects I worked on. The advantage is that if you’ve been around a while as a journalist you know how to keep pulling the right strings and then knitting it together into a story. The problem with some of it is that the research can be a bit tedious; lots of wading through documents. But biography is not exceptional in that sense—you just have to get used to drinking a lot of coffee. (Field, 2020)

Field says it will be hard to pick a political biography that has inspired him or informed the way he has approached the task. He says political biography could often be influenced by how recently events have occurred. In respect of the Pōhiva biography, he says he was influenced by recent journalism and by Elizabeth Wood-Ellem’s work on Queen Salote and Patricia O’Brien’s work on Samoa’s Taisi O.F.Nelson.

Field says he would like to do a biography of Mata'afa Iosefa, the only man in global history to have beaten Germany, Britain and the United States on the battlefield. A critical biography of the Tongan royal family would be interesting and controversial. He says he has often thought a biography of the 'common soul' of the ordinary people of the Pacific would be an intriguing project (Field, 2020).

In 2010, Field said it would be unwise for Pōhiva to become Prime Minister because he was more revolutionary than leader. In his book *Swimming with Sharks,* he said:

Sadly, I've been proven right; at 76 he has proven to be a mess. He has performed in much the same way that the inept and hopeless royal governments before him did. My sense is that many Tongans—nobles and commoners—have realised this too (cited by Cass, 2020)

However, when Pōhiva died, Field described him as 'remarkable'. Speaking to *Kaniva News* in January this year, Field said he saw 'no problem between the mess and his remarkableness'.

> I stand by my original claim in 2010 that the premiership ended up as a mess. What I did not know, but know now extensively, is how disruptive the anti-democratic forces have been on Tongan governance.
>
> 'Akilisi's inability to get audiences with the king and the subsequent refusal by the king to sign the six bills has been enormously disruptive. That said, I strongly believe that 'Akilisi's finest and most useful work was as the leader of a movement which happened to be in opposition for much of his political life.
>
> In many ways, even before he had become Prime Minister, he had saved Tonga. I will leave the argument for why until the book's publication.
>
> As for calling him 'remarkable,' I totally stand by that: I've known most of the Pacific leadership since 1975, and there was no one quite like him. (Cass, 2020)

While Pōhiva was a champion of democracy, he was accused by his enemies of corruption and sometimes seemed to have laid himself open to charges of behaving in erratic and not entirely democratic ways. However, Field says many leaders could be accused of being erratic for a variety of reasons. 'The first Prime Minister I worked for used to go to events without shoes and could not use a phone, but he was brilliant all the same,' the veteran journalist says. 'People who go into politics full-time are different to the rest of us' (Cass, 2020).

Field says Pōhiva's entire life was one of intense struggle in everything he did.

> My sadness, as an observer and writer, is that he was among the many Pacific leaders who died in office. I never said it to 'Akilisi, but I did on other occasions to other politicians, point out the merits of retiring to enjoy life with the grandchildren, at the beach or somewhere, but Pōhiva and all the others, seem driven by their politics. (Cass, 2020)

Field's previous books include *Speight of Violence* on Fiji's 2000 coup and *Swimming with Sharks*, a collection of tales of the Pacific. His book *The Catch* investigated the scandal of the global and New Zealand fishing fleets.

He was banned from Tonga for exposing corruption in the Tongan royal family, implicating King Taufa'ahau Tupou IV who died in 2006, his successor, King George V who died in 2012 and Princess Pilolevu who was the subject of an intense legal battle with Pohiva.

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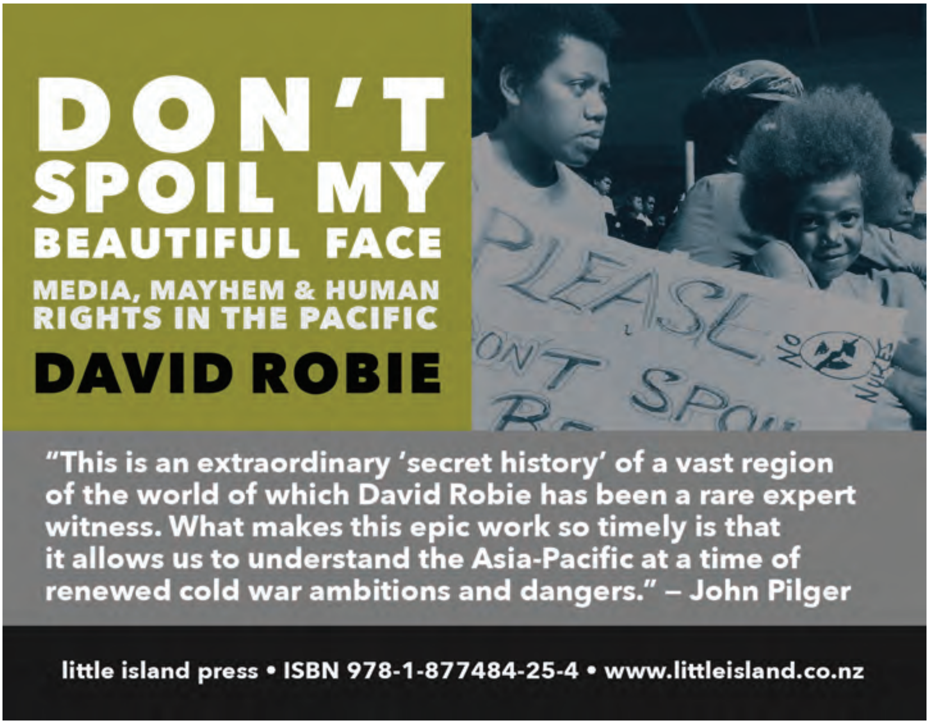

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DAVID ROBIE is editor of Pacific Journalism Review.

West Papua's highway of blood and betrayal

The Road: Uprising in West Papua, by John Martinkus. Carlton, Vic: Black Books Inc. 2020. 114 pages. 978-1-760-64242-6

THE RUGGED mountainous highlands of New Guinea stretch from the Owen Stanley range in the east of the independent state of Papua New Guinea through the Star mountains straddling the border with Indonesian-ruled West Papua westwards through the perpetually snow-capped Puncak Jaya, at 4884m the island's highest peak.

Papua New Guinea is fairly unique in the world in that its capital, Port Moresby, is separated from the highlands in the absence of a highway from the south. On the western side of the border, however, it has been the dream of the Indonesian colonialists for five decades to one day 'tame' the highlands with a militarised road.

That dream is rapidly coming to fruition, but at a savagely high cost.

The 4300-km Trans-Papua Highway costing some US$1.4 billion was supposed to bring 'wealth, development and prosperity' to the isolated regions of West Papua. At least, that's how the planners and politicians envisaged the highway tucked safely far away in their air-conditioned Jakarta offices.

JOHN MARTINKUS
THE ROAD
THE WAR IS NOT ENDING, IT IS BEGINNING.
UPRISING IN WEST PAPUA

President Joko 'Jokowi' Widodo is so enthusiastic about the project as a cornerstone for his national infrastructure strategies that he had publicity photographs taken of him on his Kawasaki trail motorbike on the highway (Robie, 2017). However, that isn't how West Papuans see 'The Road'.

In reality, writes Australian journalist John Martinkus in his latest book *The Road: Uprising in West Papua*, the highway brings military occupation by Indonesian troops, exploitation by foreign companies, environmental destruction and colonisation by Indonesian transmigrants.

> The road would bring the death of their centuries-old way of life, previously undisturbed aside from the occasional Indonesian military incursion and the mostly welcome arrival of Christian missionaries. It was inevitable, really, that the plan by the Indonesian state to develop the isolated interior of the West Papua and Papua provinces would meet resistance. (p. 43)

The Nduga area in the rugged and isolated mountains north of Timika, near the giant Freeport copper and gold mine, has traditionally been a stronghold of pro-independence supporters. For centuries the Dani and Nduga tribespeople had fought ritualistic battles against each other—and outsiders. That is, until the Indonesians brought troops and military aircraft to the highlands that 'did not play by these rules'.

On 1 December 2018, a ceremony marking the declaration of independence from the Dutch in 1961 by raising the *Morning Star* flag of a free Papua—as Papuans do every year—ended in bloodshed. Usually the flag waving—illegal as far the Indonesian authorities are concerned—goes unnoticed. But the highway has now come to this remote village.

Indonesians took photos on their cellphones of the flag raising and this sparked the kidnapping of 19 road construction workers and a soldier (although pro-independence sources argue that many of the workers are in fact soldiers) and they were shot dead.

The Indonesian military have carried out reprisal raids in the 18 months since then, forcing some 45,000 people to flee their villages and become internal refugees. Two thousand soldiers, helicopters and 650 commandos are involved in security operations and protecting the highway. 'It is the helicopters that are the worst. They are used as platforms to shoot or drop white phosphorous grenades or bomblets that inflict horrible injuries on the populace,' writes Martinkus.

The Trans-Papua Highway would realise the boast of the founding Indonesian President Sukarno for a unified nation— 'From Sabang to Merauke', is what he would chant to cheering rallies. Sabang is in Aceh in the west of the republic and Merauke is in the south-east corner of Papua, just 60 km from the Papua New Guinean border.

The Indonesian generals, not wanting anything to interfere with their highway exploitation plans, have vowed to 'crush' the resistance. However, the contemporary Papuan rebels are better armed, better organised and more determined than the earlier rebellion that followed the United Nations mandated, but flawed, 'Act of Free Choice' in 1969 when 1026 handpicked men and women voted under duress to become part of Indonesia.

Martinkus, a four-time Walkley Award-nominated investigative journalist specialising in Asia and the Middle East, has travelled to both ends of this highway. He reported in the early 2000s from West Papua until the invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan became his major beats. One of his earlier books, *A Dirty Little War*, exposed the hidden side to the Timor-Leste struggle for independence.

The Road traverses the winding down of Dutch rule, early history of Indonesian colonialism in West Papua, the environmental and social devastation caused by the Grasberg mine, the petition to the United Nations, the Nduga crisis, the historic tabling of a 40 kg petition—1.8 million signatures—by the United Liberation Movement for West Papua calling for a referendum on independence, the so-called 2019 'monkey' uprising that began as a student clash in the Java city of Surabaya and led to rioting across Papua, and now the coronavirus outbreak.

Martinkus pays tribute to the handful of earlier journalists who have risked much to tell the story that Australian and New Zealand diplomats do not want to hear and which has been denied by Indonesian authorities. An ABC *Foreign Correspondent* programme, including West Papuan journalist Victor Mambor in the crew, in mid-May 2020 was one of the rare exceptions (see review by Nicole Gooch).

Amnesty International has estimated that more than 100,000 Papuans have died since the Indonesian takeover. Four Australian-based researchers have embarked on a new project to map the violence in West Papua. Notes Martinkus:

> Eventually, in the 1980s and the 90s, writers such George Monbiot ventured into the areas cleared out by the Indonesians [for palm oil plantations and timber]. Robin Osborne also produced a landmark account of that time. Filmmaker Mark Worth, photojournalist Ben Bohane and ABC-then-SBS reporter Mark Davis continued to try to cover events in West Papua. Lindsay Murdoch of Fairfax provided excellent coverage of the massacre on the island of Biak, off the north coast of Papua. (p. 23)

As in Timor-Leste, Martinkus recalls, the fall of the Suharto regime in May 1998 provided a 'period of confusion among the military commanders on the ground'.

'They didn't know if they could expel, arrest or kill journalists as they had in the past,' explains Martinkus, 'and it created an environment where it was finally possible for reporters to get to previously inaccessible places and speak to people. The turmoil in Jakarta had created a kind of stasis among the military commanders in the far-flung provinces.'

Nevertheless, the Indonesian military watched and waited—and noted and recorded who the Papuan dissenters were; who to arrest and kill when political conditions became more helpful.

A notorious example is the case of the so-called Jakarta Six, Indonesian People's Front for West Papua (FRI-West Papua) spokesperson Surya Anta and students Charles Kossay, Deno Tabuni, Isay Wenda, Ambrosius Mulait and Arina Elopere, who were convicted of 'collective act of treason'—flag-waving and speeches—during the West Papua Uprising in August 2019. It was a virtual verdict due to the COVID-19 pandemic. All the activists were handed a nine-month prison sentence, except for Isay who was punished with eight months' imprisonment.

Why has it been so difficult to tell the Papuan story—to get past the media

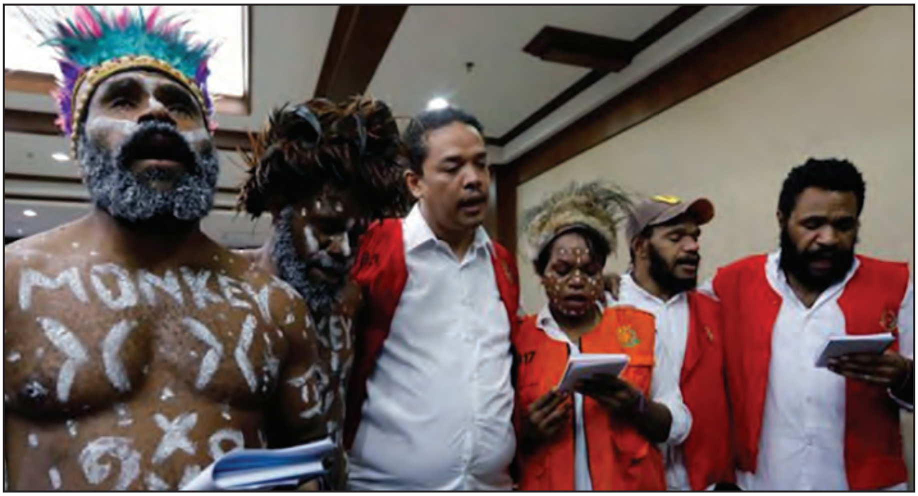
ASIA PACIFIC REPORT

Figure 1: The Jakarta Six: Surya Anta (centre) is the first non-Papuan Indonesian convicted for an independence protest.

gatekeepers? There are several reasons, according to Martinkus. First, the daily oppression that West Papuan people face—and have faced for half a century—has been of little interest to news editors.

‘But it [is] that daily fear, and the casual violence and intimidation, that [is] the story,’ argues Martinkus. ‘For Papuans it [has] become a way of life: constant intimidation and violence and extortion by the Indonesian military, punctuated by short, sharp moments of protest and resistance, followed by the inevitable crackdown.’

Martinkus recalls in his typically compelling storytelling style his experience of when reporting in East Timor, ‘in order to get a story run you had to have more than 10 dead; the daily grind of one shot there, one beating there, one arrest there, never made it into the press.

> I’ll never forget the cynical words delivered down the phone by one Australian editor after I had watched a man—a boy, really—shot dead in front of my eyes as I cowered in a ditch to avoid Indonesian gunfire in East Timor. ‘So what are your plucky brown fellows up to today?’ he said. (p. 24)

He didn’t run the story.

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NICOLE GOOCH is assistant editor of Pacific Journalism Review.

Documentary records continuing independence struggle in West Papua

The War Next Door, reported by Sally Sara. Foreign Correspondent. Australian Broadcasting Corporation. Broadcast: 12 May 2020. 30 minutes. https://www.abc.net.au/foreign/the-war-next-door/12239998

WE GOT to keep on pushing forward,' sings the band *Sorong Samarai*, which means from the tip of West Papua, Sorong, to Samarai, the island which lies at the eastern tip of mainland Papua New Guinea, 'One people, one soul, one destiny.'

The reggae tune echoes across a festival field in Port Moresby where a crowd has gathered to celebrate the *Morning Star* flag, West Papua's symbol of independence.

It's a message of hope mixed with despair that keeps on resonating throughout the ABC *Foreign Correspondent* documentary *The War Next Door*. It aired in the wake of months of escalating violence and unrest in Indonesian-controlled West Papua.

'Before independence we will kill. We will fight. Continue to fight. No compromise,' a former political prisoner and spokesperson for the armed wing of the West Papuan independence movement tells *Foreign Correspondent* reporter Sally Sara.

Media are banned from entering West Papua, but the ABC collaborated with West Papuan newspaper editor Victor Mambor to provide the world with a rare glimpse inside the country's struggle for independence.

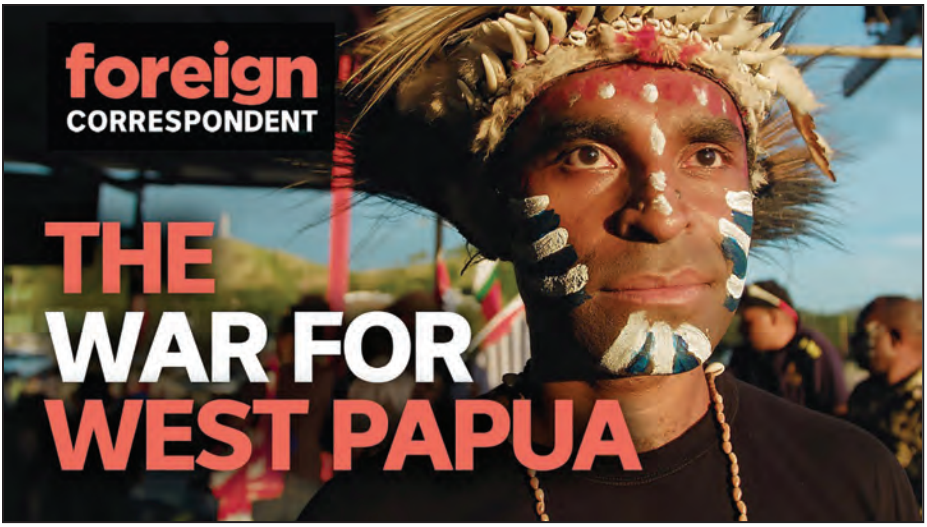
It's 'the story Indonesia doesn't want the world to know'. It's the story of the death of more than 100,000 West Papuans since the former Dutch New Guinea became officially part of Indonesia in 1969 following a sham referendum.

It is also the story of torture, human rights abuses, racism and political repression.

'I think it is very important for the world to know what happened in West Papua, because human rights abuse happen every day and in every place,' says Mambor.

In December 2018, tensions boiled over when young West Papuan independence fighters killed at least 16 Indonesian road workers building the controversial 4300 km Trans-Papuan Highway through the country's central highlands. Retaliation by Indonesia's security forces, was swift and brutal, causing a humanitarian disaster. More than 40,000 West Papuans were displaced and hundreds killed. Footage obtained by *Foreign Correspondent* shows houses burned to the ground and abandoned villages.

Late last year, more violence erupted, sparked by the racist abuse of a group of West Papuan students, followed by mass protests and more deaths.



GREG NELSON/*FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT*

Figure 1: Ronny Kareni wears the colours of the Morning Star flag, the symbol of West Papua independence movement.

‘All the people of West Papua worry about their lives. There is no future for people of West Papua today,’ says a leader of West Papua’s civil resistance.

He is Indonesia’s most wanted activist and has illegally made his way across the border in the early hours of the morning to meet with *Foreign Correspondent* in a safe house.

Asylum seekers who fled last year’s violence are housed in a camp on the outskirts of the border town of Kiunga in Papua New Guinea’s Western Province while they wait to be processed. However, the stories of these refugees will remain untold as, despite approval from the Prime Minister’s office, local officials refuse to allow the ABC crew into the camp in order to protect their relationship with the Indonesian government. The ABC’s footage of the refugees in the camp’s courtyard is the first to get out into the world.

There are already up to 8000 West Papuans living in refugee villages along the border. They first started arriving in 1960 after West Papua was handed over to Indonesia by the Dutch, followed by another mass exodus of refugees in 1969 after the referendum, and again in 1984 after political unrest. Despite poverty, lack of healthcare and education, the generation of refugees which grew up on the banks of the Fly River is determined to stay and keep on fighting: ‘The only dream that we have is to fight for our freedom.’

Much further north, in the nearby coastal town of Vanimo, in Papua New Guinea’s Sandaun Province, West Papuan refugees, torn from their families and home by the border, are stuck in limbo.

‘Just because we are black and happen to be Melanesians, and we don’t have tanks, we don’t have fighter jets, you forget that there are people on this island suffering,' says a West Papuan human rights and environmental activist.

'Something has to be done.'

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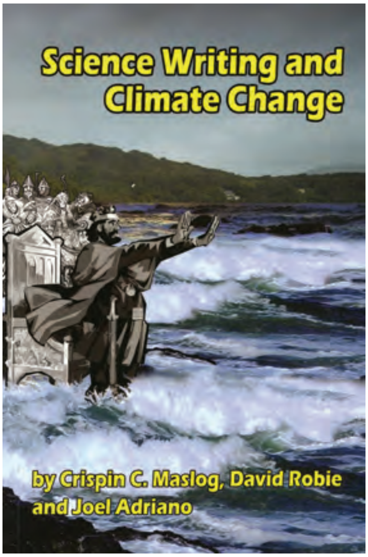
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BOOKSHELF

Guide to best practice journalism in the future

IN THIS edition of Pacific Journalism Review we begin a new section, Bookshelf, where we ask our regular contributors to pick three books that have played an important part of their academic, professional and writing lives. We begin with this selection by retired journalism academic, blogger and regular contributor to these pages, LEE DUFFIELD.

SuperMedia: Saving Journalism so it can Save the World, by Charlie Beckett. Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell. 2008. 216 pages. ISBN 9781405179249.

The Paradox of Power for Journalists: back to the future of news, by Charlie Beckett. London, UK: London School of Economics, 2018. https://bit.ly/2YnVz6x

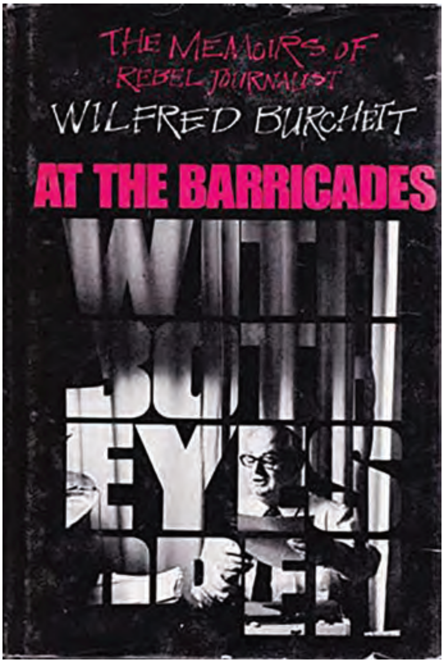
BRITISH journalist Charlie Beckett published his influential book *Supermedia* on the response of news media to the advent of digitisation in 2008, then updated it a decade later.

He saw both the threats to journalism in the 'new economy', and opportunities contained in developments like citizen journalism; producing his own scheme for working journalists to collaborate with audience members. As a university professor in 2018, he published a revision, *The Paradox of Power for Journalists*, confirming the original thesis that: journalism, both 'threatened and empowered' by new forms like social media, had adjusted, and could have 'more impact than ever before'. Beckett's perceptive analysis of sweeping changes has become a guide to the continuation of best practice in journalism into the future.

At The Barricades, by Wilfred Burchett. London, UK: Macmillan, 1981. 341 pages. ISBN 0333337271

WILFRED Burchett's memoir *At the Barricades* is recommendable to aspiring journalists, showing how pursuit of news can be a consuming motivator in professional and personal identity. This mentality led him to memorable stories, eclipsing the obloquy he suffered for left-wing sentiments.

In 1945, Burchett avoided covering the Japanese surrender in Tokyo, instead travelling alone to Hiroshima after hearing rumours of a deadly sickness, from radiation. His London *Express* headline 'Atomic Plague' scooped reports of the predictable surrender. As an Australian farm boy travelling in China he'd been shocked by cruelty and exploitation in the factories. He reported decades of the Cold War for Western media from the communist side. When he visited Australian prisoners of war in North Korea, the gesture was rejected, and his passport cancelled.



Paradise Lost, by John Milton. First published 1667. This edition edited by Alastair Fowler, London, UK: Routledge, 2013, 744 pages. ISBN 13:978140583278-6

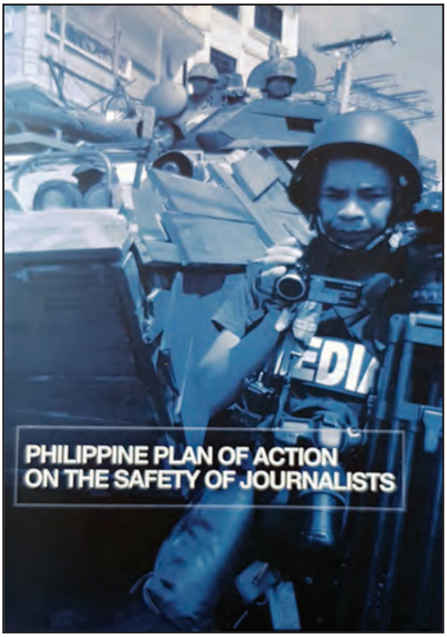
WITH any journalism being ultimately about writing, John Milton's 1667 epic poem *Paradise Lost* is among the purest models available. Drawing on Genesis, classical mythology, other writers such as Dante, lessons from the English civil war; Milton's Adam and Eve story creates suspense even though its outcome is known in advance. The blind poet would dictate lucid passages mostly to his daughter. Readers can identify and gasp at whole sections which hold together almost as discrete works, yet which are integrated with the whole. One of the richest celebrates the filling of the air and seas on the World's fifth day, with birds, and sealife, 'that with their fins and shining scales glide under the green wave' (Book VII, 401-2).

The lessons of Milton's writing are clear: Have depth, knowledge; consider each word, each image; be steadfastly clear; accept that even if you can't ever be this good, trying is valuable.

DAVID ROBIE is editor of Pacific Journalism Review and New Zealand country representative of the Asian Media Information and Communication Centre (AMIC).

Safeguarding press freedom, ending impunity in the Philippines

Philippine Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists. Manila: Asian Institute of Journalism and Communication and International Media Support. 2019. 45 pages. ISBN 9789718502204



A DECADE after the world's worst atrocity inflicted on journalists in a single event, a remarkable publishing event happened in Manila that could set a trend in the global fight against impunity for the killers of journalists. On the eve of the date marking the massacre of 58 people—including 32 journalists, a broad coalition launched a strategic blueprint for the survival of news workers.

I was privileged to be present at this stellar event, the only New Zealand journalist or media academic to be invited to the launch of the Philippine Plan of Action in the Safety of Journalists (PPASJ).

The modest 45-page booklet outlines an ambitious strategy in the face of attacks on the media and journalists across the globe that have been increasing at an alarming rate over the past three decades. It is the first action plan of its kind in the world and reflects the growing urgency about the challenge of impunity, a programme launched by the United Nations in 2012.

'Despite the restoration of democracy and human rights by the 1986 People Power revolution that ended two decades of the Marcos dictatorship [1972-1986], attacks against Filipino journalists and the media have persisted,' notes the Action Plan in its introductory overview. 'Indeed, today the Philippines annually ranks as one of the most dangerous countries in the world for journalists.'

Journalists in the Philippines face both physical and online threats of violence for covering issues related to corruption and crime, explains the Action Plan. At the Pacific Media Centre we have had several students go on internships to the Philippines and they have witnessed some of the risks first hand.

From July 2016 to October 2018, at least 85 attacks and threats were recorded, 23 of them targeting women. 'Female journalists particularly carry the brunt of sexual harassment and online trolling and attacks, not only for their stories, but also because of their gender,' warns the Action Plan.

No less than 165 journalists have been killed in the Philippines since 1986—and 13 have died since the current President Rodrigo Duterte came to power in 2016.

Violence against journalists in the Philippines takes place in a climate of impunity, as reflected in the Maguindanao atrocity of 23 November 2009 on the southern island of Mindanao when a private army of the powerful, corrupt and ruthless Ampatuan clan slaughtered 58 people, including 32 journalists. Of the victims, 20 were women. The assassins then attempted to cover up their gruesome crime by trying unsuccessfully to bury their victims in shallow graves dug with a backhoe. Some bodies remained scattered on the ground, uncovered or with just a thin layer of banana leaves over them.

A decade later, there was still no justice, even though the trial of 109 accused had been taking place over nine years and arrest warrants were out for a further 80 suspects (Robie, 2020). Fortunately, two weeks after the Action Plan launch, on 19 December 2019 the Philippine Quezon City court judge in the Ampatuan massacre case made judgments in a partial resolution and in defiance of fears for her own personal safety.

Judge Jocelyn Solis-Reyes found the 'masterminds of this horrific crime'—brothers Andal Ampatuan Jr and Zaldy Ampatuan Jr—guilty and sentenced them to life in prison without parole. A total of 28 were convicted of murder and were imprisoned for 40 years minus up to 10 years already served and a further 15 were jailed as accessories (Conde, 2019).

The New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists 2018 Global Impunity Index report, *Getting Away With Murder*, ranks the Philippines as the fifth worst among countries where journalists are killed and their killers go free (Witchel, 2018).

'Crafting the Philippine Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists gives us a sense of optimism that we can address the scourges of press freedom in the country,' notes Ramon Tuazon, president of the Manila-based Institute of Journalism and Communication (AIJC) and secretary-general of the Asian Media Information and Communication (AMIC), one of the plan's co-authors and a speaker at the launch. He adds:

> Not to plan is to surrender to our fate. Not to plan should not be an option for the Philippines and many other countries worldwide experiencing similar challenges.
>
> The stakeholders we've worked with in developing the PPASJ may represent diverse interests and backgrounds, but we have a common goal:

> to safeguard press freedom in the Philippines. (UNESCO, 2019)

The PPASJ was developed under the Safeguarding Press Freedom in the Philippines Project funded by the European Union and the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and implemented by the AIJC and International Media Support (IMS). IMS and AIJC forged partnerships with Filipino media organisations to form the Journalist Safety Advisory Group (JSAG), which helped develop the PPASJ and will monitor its implementation.

The Philippine partners are the Centre for Community Journalism and Development (CCJD), Centre for Media Freedom and Responsibility (CMFR), National Union of Journalists of the Philippines (NUJP) and the Philippine Press Institute (PPI). UNESCO provided technical advice throughout the project and supported the launch.

As one of the plan's supporters, IMS, notes in its own Annual Report for 2019:'One of the antidotes to disinformation is a healthy media ecosystem, with ethical and investigative journalism as important pillars to ensure this'. To achieve this laudable objective, the safety of journalists is vital.

The Action Plan provides a roadmap for addressing the 'concrete flagship areas' regarded as crucial to improving the safety of journalists and the media environment in the Philippines over five years from 2020 to 2024. These five key areas are: 1. Integrity and professionalism; 2. Conducive working conditions; 3. Safety and protection mechanisms; 4. Criminal justice system; 5. Public information, journalism education and research.

Clearly this is an enviable model for other countries to emulate and there is much to inspire journalism educators and researchers.

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A symbol of all that is wrong with the 'war on terror'

Prisoner 345: My 2330 days in Guantánamo, by Sami Alhaj. Doha, Qatar: Al Jazeera Media Network, 2019. 126 pages. No ISBN.

The Refugee's Messenger: Lost Stories Retold, edited by Tarek Cherkaoui. Istanbul, Turkey: TRT World Research Centre, 2019. 192 Pages. ISBN 9786059984287

A RECENT article in the *Middle East Eye* pilloried the United States' lack of preparedness for the onslaught of the coronavirus pandemic. It lamented that if only the world's richest democracy could have, instead of frittering away trillions of dollars on 'endless wars,' invested in the country's health infrastructure, the world would be in a better place today.

Washington had 'built an entire infrastructure to counter terrorism and criminalise Muslim communities', spending almost $6.4 trillion on pointless wars that had killed half a million people since September 11 2011 (Hilal & Raja, 2020). Yet, which was the biggest threat—the elusive target of the so-called 'war on terror', or the pandemic, which killed more than 20,000 Americans and infected a further 500,000 (with numbers still rising when this edition of *PJR* went to press)?

Prisoner 345
MY 2330 DAYS IN GUANTANAMO
Sami Alhaj

Two books published by two of the most challenging television networks—Doha-based Al Jazeera and Turkey's newly emerging TRT World News—pose some really timely and uncomfortable questions about this reality.

In *Prisoner 345: My 2330 Days in Guantánamo,* Sudanese journalist Sami Alhaj recounts his heart-rending, horrifying tale of seven years he spent at the hands of US military tormenters before eventually being released. He was innocent, of course.

His story isn't anywhere near as well-known as that of Australian Peter Greste, a fellow Al Jazeera journalist, detained by the Egyptian state for 13 months in the wake of the Arab Spring before being freed (while two other colleagues remained in jail) and now UNESCO professor of journalism at the University of Queensland. But it is far more disturbing.

Alhaj had arrived in Pakistan just weeks after the Twin Towers attack on September 11 to report on the 'war on terror' in Afghanistan for the Qatari-based television news channel. He was detained 'by mistake' and 'sold' by Pakistani security authorities to the US military in the early stages of the notorious rendition programme.

Although Alhaj well knew in 2001 that journalism was already one of the most dangerous occupations in the world, he could never have imagined that he would spend more than six years incarcerated and tortured in three US prison camps, most of this time in the horrendous Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, before charges were dropped and he was released in 2007.

His employers, Al Jazeera—from the journalists, through to the director-general to the legal team – fought continuously to have him freed during all those years. They have described Alhaj in this publication as 'a symbol of all that is wrong with America's "war on terror" and the camp of horrors sent up to support it'.

Alhaj's painful story, based on his recollections of those cruel years in Guantánamo after he returned to his media home in Doha, were published on the 22nd anniversary of the founding of Al Jazeera Media Network. It was described by the network's chairman, Sheikh Hamad Bin Thamer Al Thani, as 'exemplary of the sacrifices' made by Al Jazeera employees in the course of their professional mission of providing impartial reportage to the world.

Sami Alhaj was first flown to Bagram airbase in Afghanistan, and then to Kandahar, finally to Guantánamo in late June 2002. But the first prisoners transported to Cuba were flown there on 11 January 2002—'was this a coincidence, or did [the Americans] choose the four-month anniversary of September 11 to transport those they thought [were] responsible for those attacks? (p. 55)'.

After he had been already imprisoned for at least 39 days with no idea what he was accused of, he finally had an interrogation that actually acknowledged he was a journalist. The interrogation went like this:

> [One of the interrogators]: 'We have a journalist with us here?'
>
> 'What kind of journalism do you do?'
>
> 'I work at Al Jazeera,' I said, and he slapped me across my face. He insulted Al Jazeera and called it all sorts of indecent things. Then slapped me again.
>
> 'Okay, so you're fighting us,' he said. 'And you hate America and are fighting against it.' He pushed me to the next person.
>
> They stripped the entire group naked, cutting all our clothes with scissors, then asked us: 'Do you have anything to complain about?' (p. 46)

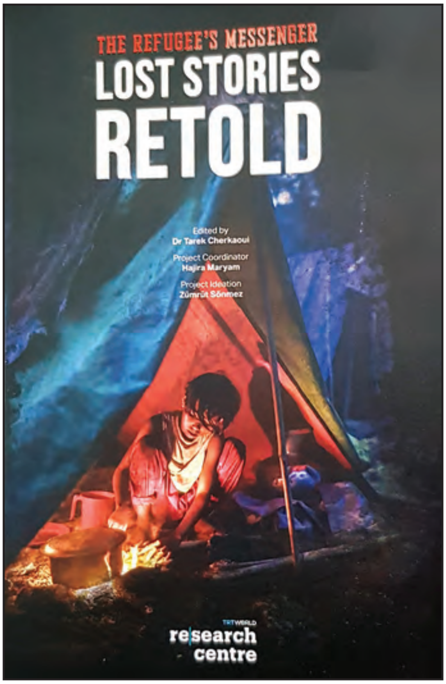
The interrogation was actually a ruse to later pressure, unsuccessfully, Alhaj to inform on fellow prisoners because 'you're a journalist and find out information'.

After DNA tests with blood, hair and saliva samples, eye scans and fingerprints, Alhaj and the group were taken to an aircraft to fly from Afghanistan to Cuba. They were trussed with short chains that forced down their heads, tight hand and leg restraints, black hoods over their heads, and gags.

> They beat us all over, no matter how we moved, kicking and punching us until they had dragged us onto a bus waiting on the airfield tarmac. There were no seats on the bus, so they sat us down on the floor in rows …
>
> Guantánamo … a place filled with injustice and hatred. It saw the crushing of every single principle and belief to which believers are called. An ugly face that sent humanity down a slippery path worse than life in the jungle, and worse than what history says about the Middle Ages. Guantánamo was the embodiment of the beating heart of force's dominion—a nightmare. (p. 59)

As Alhaj writes, the 'war on terror' has produced new forms of rights abuses, contrary to all international treaties and conventions: 'Torture, detention in secret facilities, handing over suspects to countries practising torture, and extending detention without trial. All based on mere suspicion.

> The prisoners of the 'war on terror' were deprived of their right to litigation and the right to silence, to retain a lawyer or legal representation. One could never have imagined that it would be the United States (democratic protector and leader of the free world) that would resort to [such authoritarian] practices, would run secret prisons, carry out cross-border prosecutions and kidnappings on the slightest suspicions, and use physical and mental torture as a matter of course. (p. 61)



Added to these violations were the summary executions without due process by US drone attack—with at least 8,845 killed under the Obama and Trump presidencies (Bureau of Investigative Journalism, n.d.)

THE OTHER timely book featured is this double review, *The Refugee's Messenger: Lost Stories Retold*, also a global television channel publication, is the work of 10 journalists who are contributors to TRT World News from different parts of the globe. Turkey is home to the world's largest refugee population of 4 million—the Syrian war has contributed 3.7 million, almost a third of them in camps close to the border. It is unsurprising that TRT has produced this book.

The range of human rights storytelling represented in this collection owes its vision to the editor, Dr Tarek Cherkaoui, manager of the TRT World Research Centre, and incidentally a gifted doctoral graduate of Auckland University of Technology, who believed there was a need to produce a publication as an antidote to the so-called 'CNN effect' of the 1990s.

While that expression represented a widely held belief that news television in general, and CNN in particular, had a very influential role in shaping the US foreign policy agenda, Cherkaoui argues that such optimism was short-lived.

'A series of in-depth quantitative studies demonstrated that these humanitarian narratives were used for self-serving motives and that the US agenda was mostly interventionist and militaristic in nature,' he notes (p. 16).

Although TRT World (launched in 2015) was a late-comer to the ranks of global television broadcasters, Cherkaoui is already optimistic about its growing contribution to social justice: 'TRT World has positioned itself among the very few outlets that champion the causes of the South, avoiding not only some of the stereotypical political and cultural representations disseminated by corporate mainstream news media, but also by challenging them.'

This book demonstrates empathy with contemporary essays such as *The Rohingya Refugee Crisis: A Textbook case of Ethnic Cleansing, Women of War—Boko Haram Wives, The Objectification of Refugees: Why We Must Not Lose our Humanity in Search of a Headline* and *My Refugee My Teacher*.

Among the most poignant of the essays are the final two, My Journey as a Journalist by editor-at-large Ahmet Alioglu, who negotiates a chilling pathway through the brutality of Israel's repression against Palestinian Gaza to the defeat of Daesh, and Mary Saliba, who covered the Arab Spring and narrates a depressing cameo with an Australian connection in The Syrian Brides of Lebanon's Bekaa Valley.

The writers and other contributors reveal a resolute longing for an end to both the devastation and devastated lives.

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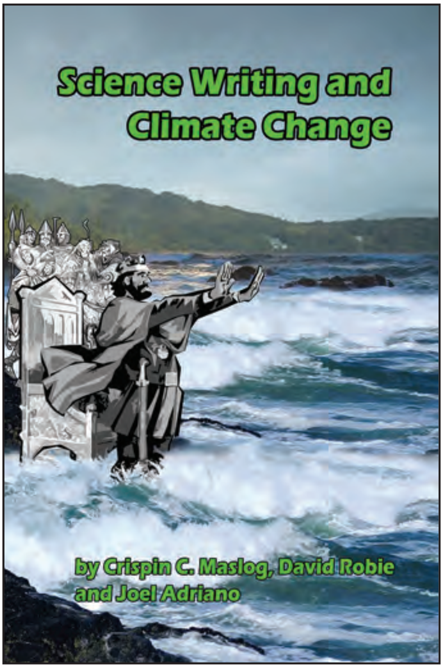
NOTED

Building bridges for climate change science

Science Writing and Climate Change, by Crispin C.Maslog, David Robie and Joel Adriano. Manila, Philippines: Asian Institute of Journalism and Communication, 2019. 106 pages. ISBN 9789718502198


Science Writing and Climate Change
by Crispin C. Maslog, David Robie and Joel Adriano

DESPITE the omnipresent threat of climate change, journalists still face an uphill battle communicating accurate and timely information to the public and governments, many of whom, sadly, still need to be convinced that the looming catastrophe is real. This book is aimed not just at print journalists and editors, but also teachers educating their students to write about science, trainers and broadcast and online writers.

As Maslog notes in the introduction, science communicators 'are the bridge between science and the scientists on the one hand and the people who will use their scientific discoveries on the other'.

Divided into two sections, this slim volume will be a useful guide for journalists reporting on the greatest threat to our planet.

The first part begins with an extremely useful section explaining what science is, what science does, how it works and how difficult the science beat can be. Journalists are expected to be Jacks (and Jills) of all trades, but scientists are wary of journalists unless they can demonstrate their knowledge or at least a willingness to learn and ask sensible questions.

The second section of the book, which will be useful for teachers, is a lengthy analysis of science writing columns by Crispin Maslog, looking at the issues raised and how they were dealt with.—*PHILIP CASS is reviews editor for* Pacific Journalism Review.

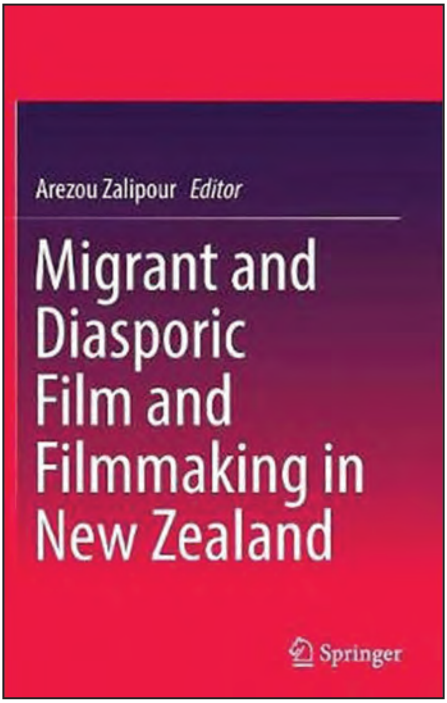
Study of diasporic film making raises intriguing questions

Migrant and Diasporic Film and Filmmaking in New Zealand, edited by Aerezou Zalipour. Singapore: Springer Nature, 2019. 209 pages. ISBN 9789811313783.

IF PEOPLE think about diasporic cinema in New Zealand, they probably think about comedies like *Sione's Wedding* or *Curry Munchers* or web series like *Flat3*. What they all have in common is an attempt to portray different aspects of a particular diasporic community's life from the inside. Some films have been more successful than others; some exist only online or at film festivals.

This collection concentrates largely on what is loosely called 'Asian' cinema, but which in fact takes in films from countries with no geographic or cultural links. Using the example of Vincent Ward, it also raises some interesting questions about the work of Pākehā film makers and their own role as products of the European diaspora.

Mainstream and diasporic audience reactions are noted, with *Sione's Wedding* cited for normalising Samoans by putting them in mainstream cinemas. The ability for an audience to laugh at itself, however, is not universal. Roseanne Liang described the ability to laugh at yourself as a sign of cultural maturity and talks about how some members of the Chinese community have reacted angrily to her work.



This book would have benefitted greatly from an index and it is surprising that a publisher like Springer did not include one. The first thing anybody interested in film wants to do is to look for specific films and directors.—*PHILIP CASS is reviews editor of* Pacific Journalism Review.

Pacific Journalism *Review*
PACIFIC MEDIA CENTRE

Vol. 26, No 2, November 2020

Call for articles and commentaries:
Rethinking the Social World

This special issue of *Pacific Journalism Review* is linked to the 'Rethinking the Social World' online symposium on Social Sciences 2020 in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, on August 24-25. This is a biennial international event organised by the Centre for Southeast Asian Social Studies (CESASS), Universitas Gadjah Mada. The journal especially seeks papers either delivered virtually at the symposium or developing the media and communication related themes raised there. Abstracts deadline for symposium: July 18, 2020.

More information at the symposium website: https://soss.ugm.ac.id

Papers can include but are not restricted to:

- Public health, Covid-19 and pandemics
- Social science and power
- Social science, the ICT revolution and the future of humanity
- The future of social science in Asia-Pacific
- Critical media challenges in social sciences.
- Ecological disasters and climate change
- Women and gender human rights issues
- Population, economic development and future mobility
- Communication and media in the digital era
- Film and social change

The above list is a guideline and other related topics will also be considered. The journal has an unthemed section and other papers related to journalism studies, and journalism education, theory and practice will also be considered.

Submissions must be uploaded to the new OJS open access website for Pacific Journalism Review on the Tuwhera indigenous research platform at Auckland University of Technology:

https://ojs.aut.ac.nz/pacific-journalism-review/

Deadline: August 20, 2020

Notes for contributors

Pacific Journalism Review, founded at the University of Papua New Guinea in 1994, is a peer-reviewed journal covering media issues and communication in the South Pacific, Asia-Pacific, Australia and New Zealand. It is now published by the Pacific Media Centre, AUT University, and has links with the University of the South Pacific. While one objective is research into Pacific journalism theory and practice, the journal is also expanding its interest into new areas of research and inquiry that reflect the broader impact of contemporary media practice and education.

A particular focus will be on the cultural politics of the media, including the following issues—new media and social movements, indigenous cultures in the age of globalisation, the politics of tourism and development, the role of the media and the formation of national identity and the cultural influence of New Zealand as a branch of the global economy within the Pacific region. It also has a special interest in environmental and development studies in the media and communication—and vernacular media in the region.

Main sections:

- *Research:* Academic research and analysis papers (up to 6000 words)
- *Commentary:* Industry insights, developments and practice (1500-3000 words)
- *Frontline*: Reflective journalism research and exegesis (up to 7000 words)
- *Reviews & Bookshelf:* Books, films, online developments, multimedia (800-1500 words).
- *Noted:* 300-350 words.
- *Forum:* Letters, brief commentaries (up to 800 words)

Submission of papers:

Within the editorial scope of the journal, we invite the submission of original papers, commentaries and reviews. Submissions are reviewed by the editor, or editorial board.Submissions are double blind peer refereed.

Editorial deadline for next issue:

February 20, 2020. Submissions should be filed through the new submissions website on Tuwhera: **ojs.aut.ac.nz/pacific-journalism-review/**

Correspondence should be emailed to the managing editor,
Professor David Robie:
pjreview@aut.ac.nz
School of Communication Studies
AUT University

Style: Use *APA (American Psychological Association) Style* for author-date system of referencing. See full style guide at **www.pjreview.info**

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Cover: The Jakarta Six Papuan self-determination protesters accused of makar (treason) and Morning Star flag protest faces during the 2019 Papuan Uprising. Montage created by Pamela Valenzuela from images: Antara, Al Jazeera

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