

Chapter Five

The Return of the Two Sisters: Administration and Mission after World War II

...everywhere where there are signs made, there is the possibility and the likelihood that the sign-maker and the sign-seer will have a manipulative strategy to effect in someone else some meaning (Denning 1993:81)

INTRODUCTION

This chapter considers Kamoro engagement and interpretation of the “foreign” following World War II. After an initial period relatively free from of foreign presence marked by a revival of formerly banned ceremonies such as *mirimukame* (nose-piercing), the Kamoro were faced with the return of the *Kompeni* (the Dutch Administration) and the Catholic Church. Unlike their previous experience of a gradual escalation in interactions with the Dutch resulting in unbalanced exchange relationships in the foreigner’s favour, post-war engagement was radically different; the foreigners seemed to make *kata* increasingly available to the Kamoro. At the same time the Dutch seemed increasingly interested in understanding the internal dynamics of Kamoro culture. Indeed through the concerted efforts of the Dutch mission and administration, the period between 1945 and 1962 became the best-documented era of West New Guinea history and ethnography, and Mimika stands out as exemplary of the wealth of information

generated from this period. The depth of Dutch interest and documentation of Kamoro social organisation, spirituality, and history created a more lively conjunctural space between the Kamoro and the outsiders. While the *amoko-kwere* that I presented in the previous chapters tended to *suggest* various aspects of engagement and incorporation of foreign elements, the *amoko-kwere* collected during this period mark a more comprehensive and explicit incorporation of the foreign. This is due both to increased investment in socio-economic development activities (for the Kamoro this most tangibly meant an increased flow of *kata*) and to explicit attempts of the Dutch to engage with the Kamoro via indigenous means. The church for example actively sought indigenous parallels for Biblical lessons and the administration attempted to use indigenous social organisation in village administration. From Kamoro perspectives, the intensified efforts of the Dutch were easily understood, as one of the *amoko-kwere* presented in this chapter explains. Among Kamoro in the heavily populated Wania River area, the Catholic Mission and the Dutch Administration were perceived as the descendants of two sisters who were Kamoro *amoko-we*.

From the perspective of the Dutch, the focused engagement with the Kamoro was part of a much broader political battle with its former colony, which had become the independent Republic of Indonesia. Together, the administration and the church emphasised *kemajuan*, progress, in Mimika in a combined effort toward the decolonisation of West New Guinea. After a brief introduction to the political agendas and events that shaped Dutch administrative policies in West New Guinea, this chapter analyses how the Kamoro interpreted and reformulated the activities of the two most prominent executors of these policies: the Catholic Mission and the Dutch Administration. The chapter closes with an account of Kamoro expectations of large-scale changes by the end of the period of Dutch decolonisation. Surprisingly, these changes had little to do with the impending transfer to the United Nations then Indonesian administration.

CONTEXTUALISING THE POST-WAR ERA IN WEST NEW GUINEA

On August 17 1945, not long after Japanese capitulation, Sukarno and Hatta proclaimed Indonesian independence. For them the end of World War II meant liberation for all of the former Netherlands East Indies, including West New Guinea, from the Dutch. The Dutch however had other ideas and had already by the end of World War II determined that West New Guinea should be held apart from the rest of the Netherlands Indies. At the end of the war the Allied Forces installed the Netherlands Indies Civil Administration (NICA) which consisted primarily of former Dutch administrators to take at least short term administrative responsibility for the former colony. The establishment of NICA demonstrated Dutch intentions to re-assert administrative control over West New Guinea prior to any post-war resolutions with the newly independent Indonesian state despite the fact that negotiations had indeed begun. In 1949 talks between the two countries had culminated in a United Nations-assisted resolution: Dutch surrender of the former Netherlands East Indies to the newly independent Indonesian State led by President Sukarno. West New Guinea however was not included in the surrender and was to be the subject of further arbitration, beginning a protracted argument regarding the future political status of West New Guinea.¹ Negotiations over West New Guinea's future had had reached a standstill by 1953. The Indonesian argument questioned the legality of Dutch sovereignty; from their perspective nothing less than the complete decolonisation of all of the Netherlands East Indies was acceptable.² The Dutch argument on the other hand held that New Guinea was geographically, environmentally, and perhaps most important racially distinct from the rest of the Indonesian archipelago.³ Further

¹ The transfer was the result of what became known as "The Round Table" conference held in The Hague.

² The Indonesian inclusion of West New Guinea as a political move mirrors the Dutch inclusion of West New Guinea for similar reasons as discussed in Chapter Three. Although I don't take it up extensively in this thesis, the Dutch argument of the 1950s and 1960s generally resembles current West Papuan arguments in terms of emphasis on racial difference supporting a collective Papuan identity (or identities) as opposed to an "Indonesian" identity.

³ Admittedly this is an oversimplification of both arguments. The "official rationale" for the Dutch desire not to relinquish West New Guinea was in accordance with Article 73 of the United

talks over West New Guinea's future proved futile, with neither side willing to make concessions.⁴ The battle over the future political status of West New Guinea grew increasingly controversial; small-scale tactical skirmishes threatened to escalate into larger scale military engagement with international ramifications.⁵

As talks continued to break down, Dutch financial investment in West New Guinea soared, while the return on the investment remained statistically similar

Nations Charter. This meant that West New Guinea was to be administered as a "non-self-governing territory to be developed as soon as possible to some form of self-government by its autochthonous population" (Jaarsma 1991:130). From the perspective of the Dutch populace at home, domestic political considerations, and a desire to maintain status as a colonial power and to retain influence in the Pacific figured prominently. Also Dutch Eurasians who faced persecution in Indonesia wished to resettle in Manokwari (in West New Guinea) as a safe haven outside of Indonesia. The Dutch were also concerned that Papuans had played no role in the negotiations regarding their own territory. Pouwer (1999) provides a general overview of the Dutch perspective on the decolonisation and Indonesian re-colonisation of New Guinea. The issue of Eurasians seeking to resettle in New Guinea is described in Lijphart (1966:89-105) and in van der Kroef (1953). Metzemaekers (1951) provides another good overview of the situation written from a Dutch perspective. In addition to the Report of the New Guinea (Irian) Committee (1950) which outlines extensively both the Dutch and Indonesian perspectives, see Katoppo (1955) for an Indonesian perspective. See van der Kroef (1959, 1960) for a fairly balanced contemporary assessment. Sukarno himself argued before the United Nations for West New Guinea's inclusion in Indonesia (Palmier 1957:108-110).

⁴ Although accounts of the 1980s and 1990s tend to suggest that natural resource wealth played a strong role in the debates (e.g. Budiarto and Liang 1988), in the early 1950s it appears that even if there was knowledge of sizeable resources, this was not publicly realised. In fact, in 1951 the only Dutch resource company operating in West New Guinea was the *Nederlands Nieuw Guinea Petroleum Maatschappij* (NNGPM), a subsidiary of Royal Dutch Shell and Standard Vacuum, involved in oil production in the Sorong area. In 1950, total output was just 300,000 tons (Metzemaekers 1951:132).

⁵ In Jakarta, a campaign was launched to excite local passions about the West Irian dispute; economic ties with The Netherlands began to be severed. Sukarno vowed "We will use a new way in our struggle which will surprise the nations of the world" (Grant 1966:148). By August of 1957, the American Ambassador to Indonesia, John M. Allison, alerted the US State department about the success of Sukarno and other Indonesian politicians in increasing the passions of the masses regarding the West New Guinea Issue. At the time, he even drafted a proposal outlining a settlement of the dispute based on an eventual hand-over of the territory to Indonesia. That proposal died in the State Department where the initial feelings were that NATO ties to The Netherlands were more important than ties to Sukarno (McMullen 1981:7). In mid-December of that same year, the ramifications of the failed attempts at the United Nations were becoming manifest. President Sukarno announced the "Tripora" also known as the Triple Command for the liberation of West Irian. Soon after, approximately 50,000 Dutch nationals were ordered out of Indonesia, Dutch consulates were closed, and Sukarno's government had issued official decrees initiating the formal process of seizure of all Dutch properties in 1959 (Grant 1966:148). Finally, in February 1959, the "National Front for the Liberation of West Irian was formed" (ibid

over the entire period.⁶ Expanded Dutch investment does not appear to have been matched by an increase in expectations regarding productivity of the land or its inhabitants. Perhaps more importantly, in this political climate the Dutch administration (and subsequently the Catholic Mission) launched a campaign to better understand the local communities through ethnographic research in order to expedite de-colonisation.⁷ The establishment of the *Kantoor voor Bevolkingszaken* (Bureau of Native Affairs) in 1951 was the formal mechanism through which social research was guided.⁸ The Bureau was charged with the coordinating and carrying out social scientific research and advising both the Governor and The Hague on questions concerning the development and welfare of the Papuan population. Ultimately, the Foreign Office at The Hague sent the reports on to the United Nations (Jaarsma 1991:130). As a reaction against Indonesia, after using Malay as the *lingua franca* for over twenty years the administration now promoted the Dutch language for its higher schools.

1966:149). That same year Australian Prime Minister Menzies visited Indonesia and was assured by Sukarno that force would not be used in West Irian (ibid).

⁶ See Djajadiningrat (1958) for a contemporaneous perspective on the talks. In 1950, the Dutch had invested just over forty-seven million guilders into the development of West New Guinea, deriving a “profit” of under twenty-four million guilders (just under half of their investment). The corresponding figures from 1956 are 118 million guilders investment versus a return of less than sixty million guilders (Nieuw-Guinea Instituut 1956:99).

⁷ As an example of the level of both formal and informal ethnographic research conducted by the Dutch, consult Jaarsma’s (1990) thesis, *Waarneming en Interpretatie [Observation and Interpretation]*. It provides an excellent analysis of the political environment of Dutch research in New Guinea and of the varieties of ethnographic research undertaken in West New Guinea from 1950 to 1962.

⁸ Although some mission ethnography of varying quality had been carried out before 1950, West New Guinea had received little anthropological attention (in contrast to its eastern neighbour, Australian-administered Papua New Guinea). Wirz had conducted work among the Marind-anim (see Wirz 1920, 1922, 1924, 1928, and 1929) and Held had worked among the Waropen in the late 1930s (see Held 1942a, 1942b, 1947, 1956). Van Baal’s PhD thesis on the Marind-anim was library-based (van Baal 1934). As Ploeg points out, the lack of anthropological attention may be probably not due to lack of interest, but perhaps more closely related to the fact that until after World War II anthropology remained subordinate to other disciplines in the Netherlands. In particular, Indology was dedicated to training colonial administrators for work elsewhere in the East Indies (Ploeg 2000:10). By the early 1950s, political circumstances had severed access to Holland’s favourite field-site, Indonesia. Of the limited number of students in that Anthropology Department at Leiden, most planned for research or administrative service in New Guinea (see Fox 1989:505-506). Notable among these students for West New Guinea research were van Baal, Held, and Pouwer.

Indonesian Independence and soured relationships between the two countries also necessitated new administrative structures for the Catholic Mission. Because the vicariate of South New Guinea was now fractured, with part of the vicariate administered by Indonesia, the Catholic Church was forced to re-shape its administrative boundaries in the region. Separate vicariates of Amboina (in the Indonesian-administered area) and Merauke (on the south coast of New Guinea) were created.⁹ The new political boundaries also meant that mission teachers now needed to be recruited from among the Papuans rather than from elsewhere in Indonesia. The Catholic Mission in Mimika appears to have been supportive of the administration's goals of promoting independence.¹⁰ As Catholic missionaries stepped up their attempts to better understand more populations to expand their work, they experienced new challenges because they were no longer able to draw from the trained cadre of catechists from the Kei Islands. Instead, they were forced to rely on ill-trained Papuan catechists to start schools in recently contacted areas (Zegwaard n.d.b:5).¹¹

The mission and administrative changes in West New Guinea had direct impacts on Mimika. After having worked for over thirteen years in Mimika, on June 24, 1950 Father Tillemans was appointed and consecrated the first Vicar

⁹ The vicariate of Merauke included the entire south coast from Mimika through the Merauke area.

¹⁰ The New Guinea issue formed a split in the leadership of the Protestant Church in the Netherlands. Some felt that the Netherlands should retain cordial relations with the Indonesian government so missionaries could carry out their work (in Indonesia) without difficulty. Those who subscribed to this perspective also felt that the changed political circumstances could free them from being perceived as representatives of a colonial power. Some other Protestant missionaries held opinions more in line with the government's perspective in terms of moral obligations to the Papuans. In the field, Protestant missionaries were similarly divided; those in Indonesia were almost unanimously opposed to the Dutch government's view while those in New Guinea strongly supported it (Lijphart 1966:152-153). Interestingly, a similar rift occurred between the Catholic missionaries in the Netherlands and in the field, but because the Catholic Church's ties were ultimately to the Vatican (i.e. not to the Netherlands) the issue was not grounded in domestic Dutch politics, but more in the perspectives of missionaries in the field.

¹¹ According to Lijphart, the Catholic missionaries, in their strong support of Papuan independence and the introduction of the Dutch language, viewed the situation as another opportunity to oppose and compete against the Protestants, whose work depended more strongly on the usage of the Malay language. Catholic Missionaries on the other hand had consistently endeavoured to learn local languages; therefore the administration's decision to promote Dutch as a language of instruction was not difficult for them to implement (Lijphart 1966:153).

Apostolic of Merauke.¹² Father Tillemans' personal and somewhat liberal approach paved the way for a more intimate dialogue between Christianity and indigenous belief systems that dramatically impacted mission work throughout West New Guinea. Tillemans' philosophy is clearly reflected in a statement by Father Zegwaard, one of the first post-war missionaries to work in Mimika:

I think that the post-war-generation missionaries had a different approach. They had a greater openness toward those aspects of the local culture that one at that time labelled "congenial elements" as a way to open the door for Christianity...(Zegwaard, 29 Sept. 1987, cited in Jaarsma 1990:74, my translation).

Zegwaard and his successor Father Coenen proved to be devoted observers and students of Kamoro culture.¹³ In both cases, the underlying goal of documenting and understanding indigenous beliefs was to facilitate Catholicisation, which I will address in more detail below. Another keen researcher, Jan Pouwer, arrived to conduct ethnographic fieldwork in Mimika at the end of 1951. He was one of only two anthropologists employed by the Bureau of Native Affairs to conduct long-term field research in West New Guinea.¹⁴

The combined research in Mimika led by Father Zegwaard, Father Coenen, and Jan Pouwer provided hitherto unparalleled insight into Kamoro worldviews. Each built on to the work of the others: Zegwaard's particular strength was in the documentation of oral traditions and ritual life; Coenen's understanding of the spiritual world (as described in Chapter One) of the Kamoro was unequalled. Pouwer's research contributed important information on social structure and

¹² Northern New Guinea, where Franciscan Fathers had worked since 1937, along with the central highlands became a prefecture apostolic based in Hollandia.

¹³ Father Zegwaard was the last MSC missionary to work in Mimika. In 1953, responsibility for work in Mimika was transferred from MSC to OFM responsibility. Father Coenen was among the first OFM missionaries in Mimika.

¹⁴ Jaarsma explains that the only long-term projects carried out on behalf of the Bureau of Native Affairs were by Pouwer and by van der Leeden. The projects began in 1951 and 1952 and resulted in academic theses in 1955 and 1956 respectively. While projects were certainly completed well within the time-parameters for academic theses, that amount of time was too long for administrative purposes and both researches failed to adequately satisfy the Administration's immediate needs for information. As a result, future Bureau research was short-term and focused exclusively on explicit questions directly relevant to administration needs (Jaarsma 1991:132-133).

changes brought about by the Dutch administration.¹⁵ Most importantly for this thesis, the combined trio of researchers provided useful insights into the merging, incorporation and reformulation of elements within indigenous frameworks via the *amoko-kwere*.

TAXONOMY OF THE *TENA-WE*: INDIGENOUS PERCEPTIONS OF THE FOREIGN

In the last chapter, I showed how *amoko-kwere* exhibited a clear differentiation of foreigners from one another. Prior to the war, Chinese merchants, Ambonese civil servants, and Kei Islander mission personnel were the dominant faces of the foreign for the Kamoro; all were classified generically as *Tena-we*, literally China people. By the time the Dutch administration had returned to Mimika after World War II, the moniker *Surabaya-we*, Surabaya people, seems to have fallen out of use, and at that time the Kamoro seem to have classified all of the foreigners at the most basic level as *Tena-we*. This is not to say that the Kamoro assumed that all of the *Tena-we* were the same.¹⁶

At the most basic level, the Kamoro divided the *Tena-we* into those who were white and those who were not. Perhaps more interesting is that the increased concern on the part of the Dutch with social research was also clearly picked up by the Kamoro. Influenced by Zegwaard's work (and perhaps Tillemans' before him), the Kamoro seem to have interpreted white priests as un-married men who were concerned with narratives and rituals (Pouwer 1973:7). The District Officer, the main figurehead of the administration, seems to have been most closely associated with the short survey trips he took throughout the region in order to take censuses, which he normally collected via an administration-sponsored

¹⁵ Although there was certainly an exchange of ideas in the field between Zegwaard and Pouwer, Coenen's fieldwork began around the time that Pouwer's ended. Consequently, Coenen's usage of Pouwer's work and vice versa occurred after both had finished their fieldwork.

¹⁶ In his thesis, Pouwer notes that white people were also sometimes classified as *Fatema-we* (literally people from Fak-Fak, but often associated with police), *Turabaya-we* (literally Surabaya people), and *we merah-merah*, literally red people, an indication of a white person with sunburn (Pouwer 1955:254).

village chief.¹⁷ The Kamoro clearly did not overlook the significance of the District Officer's notations. As Pouwer noted, for the Kamoro censuses were compulsory and were clearly understood as serving a potentially dangerous foreign power. It also served as the basis for taxation (ibid:6-7). While the activities of the administration and the church differed, the Kamoro clearly understood their activities as related, a point which I will return to later in this chapter.

When Pouwer arrived in the field, he was conscious of these primary divisions. For sake of ethnographic rapport, he actively sought to differentiate himself from mission and administration personnel.¹⁸ Here, according to Pouwer, is the Kamoro interpretation of him, the anthropologist:

Who is this man? He joins government officers on short trips and assists them in taking a census, an activity typical of a District Officer. After giving his attention to men, women, born and unborn alike, he together with the District Officer turns to the job of vaccinating hens. It is true that after one or two months of co-operation with the District Officer, he now mainly travels on his own. But like a prospective District Officer he visits every village in the district and takes a census everywhere. He even asks for more details than the present District Officer does. He takes down the name of your parents and grandparents. He is anxious to know to which kin group you belong. This is a rather embarrassing question, for you may not be quite sure...(1973:6).

Pouwer seemed to be somewhat of an enigma to the Kamoro. In some respects, his ethnographic inquiries into social structure marked him as a foreigner associated with the administration. However, in other respects, he differed from the District Officer and seemed more similar to the Catholic missionaries:

...Just like some Roman Catholic missionaries, he seems to be deeply interested in our sacred stories and our rituals. The District Officer is not really. So the prospective District Officer could equally be a priest. But then how to account for a married priest? (ibid:7).

¹⁷ It is unclear if these "chiefs" were actually remnants of the Moluccan kingdom system or chosen otherwise. Given that some of my informants continued to reckon village leadership to some degree with Moluccan kingdoms I presume the former.

¹⁸ Jaarsma notes that because Pouwer and van der Leeden were able to carry out intensive long-term research projects, they were capable of differentiating themselves from the Administration and the Mission. Subsequently, workers from the Bureau for Native Affairs who were forced to conduct short-term projects to meet more immediate administration needs were unable clearly differentiate themselves and were strictly interpreted as civil servants (Jaarsma 1991:133).

Their notions of missionaries were certainly shaped in large part by the work of Father Zegwaard. Having arrived in Mimika in 1947, Father Zegwaard was already fluent in the central dialect of the Kamoro language before Pouwer's arrival (Pouwer 1955:261). By Kamoro reckoning, the only possible way that Pouwer could have been a priest was if he was either a married ex-priest or a Protestant (which he was, though not a priest). This of course left unanswered questions and some ambiguity to the perception of the anthropologist in the field. Ultimately, according to Pouwer, the Kamoro reasoned that he was also in some ways unique:

...he always carried with him a pencil and sheets of paper, piles of paper. Even when he strides behind the mortal remains of one of our beloved singers and drummers he inquires about the names of those who carry the coffin and takes them down in a note-book...He is *Tuan Torati*, that is, Mr. Paper, Mr. Letter...(Pouwer 1973:7)

Kapitan Tai from Keakwa, watching Pouwer earnestly make inscriptions in his notebook, jokingly commented that his writing was a sign of the foreigner's inability to remember basic information:

You write and you write. We [Kamoro] have no need for paper. We store everything in our heads (in Pouwer 1955:263, my translation).

Kapitan Tai's words however were not the final say on the importance of writing. Just as I have suggested in previous chapters, the Kamoro more explicitly detailed their understanding of the political importance of paper, writing, and language when describing Pouwer's notations:

His letters, although dangerous [e.g. census data, TH], can be beneficial too. If we want to safeguard the ownership and content of our traditional lore so that a storyteller from another village can no longer steal the show or modify its content, we can have our own stories fixated for ever, by the priest or by the Letter-Man. (Pouwer 1973:7).

Clearly the indigenous interpretation (through Pouwer's representation of it) of the utility of both the missionary and the anthropologist appears to have been connected with paper/writing and power; both were considered as having the potential to be at once dangerous and beneficial. The symbolic importance of this

relationship is intriguing given the data already presented in this thesis. Consistently, foreign power appears to have been linked to language and paper/writing. Those who possessed the paper or the ability to communicate in a foreign language were integral to interactions with the foreigner and accessing his goods or his power. Both the paper and the knowledge appear to share an explicit link within Kamoro interpretation as *kata*. As outlined in Chapter One, *kata* is a multivalent word. In the first place, it can be used to describe foreign goods and ritual secrets, things that are at once both cherished and protected. *Kata* can also be used to describe one's possessions or belongings. Another form of *kata* is the ability to influence natural and supernatural phenomena, a sort of power that Coenen labelled *otepe*. The possibility that the Kamoro explicitly understood paper/writing as a kind of *otepe* or *kata* is consistent with the conscious connection they drew between the inscription onto paper and protection of knowledge from theft. This very same kind of protection of secret or ritual knowledge from theft is remarkably similar to the way that *amoko-we*, as well as the Kamoro themselves, protect their *kata* from theft. Already in this thesis I have presented concrete examples of this sort of protection of *kata*. In 1828, Abrauw seemed to use the written charm given to him by Islamic traders to interact with the foreigners. He protected the paper by concealing it in the cloth wrapping around his head. In the last chapter, Tamatu, an *amoko-we*, explicitly protected his *kata* from theft (*otomo*) before revealing it to the foreigners and teaching them to forge iron (p. 125).

As Pouwer's thesis remains the most comprehensive account of a variety of aspects of Kamoro culture and social organisation, I shall summarise his findings below, emphasising those aspects most important to this thesis. Following a brief review of Pouwer's research, I will analyse some of the impacts of the application of his understandings of Kamoro culture both by the administration and the mission. I do not assess the work of the other major commentators directly here as their contributions are treated elsewhere in this thesis. Coenen's insights into spirituality were discussed in Chapter One, and Zegwaard's primary contributions, namely with regards to mission history and his collections of

amoko-kwere are discussed in various other places in this thesis and his explicit mission activities will be discussed in this chapter.

SUMMATION OF POWUER'S FINDINGS ON SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND RECIPROCITY

Over the course of his career (which continues to this day), Pouwer has consistently engaged with contemporary theoretical concerns. His 1955 thesis is an excellent example, fruitfully adapting a Lévi-Straussian brand of structural analysis that clearly separated his work from that of many of his English-speaking contemporaries (Lévi-Strauss had yet to be translated into English). The most substantial parts of Pouwer's thesis address two main themes: the somewhat complicated issue of Kamoro social structure and the relationship of reciprocity to all aspects of Kamoro culture.¹⁹ Combined, these topics account for four of seven chapters. These chapters and Pouwer's more general commentary on Kamoro engagement with foreigners are the most relevant and important for this thesis, and are accorded more attention in this brief summary than are the other chapters.

In Chapter One of his thesis (1955:1-16), Pouwer outlines the geography of the Kamoro region and the boundaries of the fairly homogenous culture. He then provides a general background of the physical and medical state of the population and its size before briefly describing their semi-nomadic lifestyle. The next chapter (*ibid*:17-54) describes and catalogues all forms of utilitarian material culture including hunting, fishing, gardening and sago-gathering implements and their use. Included in his description is information regarding the variety of resources that the Kamoro exploit with these implements. Particularly interesting is his month-long survey of household eating habits that included the

¹⁹ While Pouwer's thesis was his most comprehensive work, he continues to publish based on his fieldwork in Mimika. In addition to his publications, in this thesis I utilise a wide range of Pouwer's unpublished reports, letters and personal interviews to better understand and present his work. A complete list of Pouwer's reports and publications is included in this thesis as an appendix.

documentation of 559 mealtimes (ibid:48-54). He demonstrated that by volume and by frequency, sago was clearly the staple making up more than fifty percent of the diet and being consumed nearly every day.

Pouwer's discussion of social structure stresses horizontal relationships. Descent is shallow, with an emphasis on the matriline. Kinship terminology is bilateral, and distinguishes generation levels, though there is no distinction between parallel and cross cousins. The preferred marriage pattern is balanced exchange (e.g. brother-sister/sister brother).²⁰ Within the descent groups, the two most important elements are *peraeke* and *taparu*. Most generally, the *peraeke* consists of people from the same generation comprised of children and grandchildren descended from a common female ancestor after whom the group is customarily named. Female members form the core of the *peraeke*, though the group includes both sexes. There is a direct correlation between the matri-focus of the *peraeke* and traditional residence patterns, land tenure, and work groups.

There exist no clans among the Kamoro, and genealogical reckoning is usually limited to just two generations, with informants often unable to recall the names of their paternal grandparents or their paternal grandparent's siblings (1955:60-61). In contrast, Pouwer's informants consistently found little difficulty responding to questions about the name of their mother's mother. Often siblings and parallel cousins were terminologically equated. Thus one would refer to the children of the mother's mother, whether siblings or cousins, are all referred to as mother's brother or mother's sister (ibid:61). In terms of naming the *peraeke* within this system, the group most commonly used the name of the eldest among a woman and her sisters. Allied or related *peraeke* form the kernel of larger social units called *taparu*. *Taparu* literally is derived from the word *tapare*, which means land and usually connotes land upon which a group lives. According to Pouwer, the ways *peraeke* form a *taparu* differ slightly depending on geographic region. In West and Central Mimika (where he conducted most of his research),

²⁰ Although Pouwer's informants claimed that in the easternmost Mimika villages, there was a preference for marriage with mother's brother's daughter, Pouwer's genealogical research failed to support the claims.

groups of *peraeko* claiming common descent through related female lines (e.g. from a single woman or a woman and/or her sisters) and living in a common territory form a *taparu*. In this sort of social organisation, marriage is generally *taparu*-exogamous. In contrast, Pouwer describes that in East Mimika (where I conducted my research), unrelated *peraeko* frequently join together to form a *taparu*. In these circumstances, marriage tended to be *taparu*-endogamous (ibid:76-80, 99-100).

Two *taparu* or two groups of *taparu* living along a common river effectively form a “tribe” in Pouwer’s terminology, with what he describes as “diffuse leadership”. Elsewhere in the thesis he describes settlements as “multi-headed”, an indication of the fact that Kamoro social organisation does not favour a singular political figurehead as a leader, but instead relies more on numerous functionaries and ritual specialists (1955:240). Association between two tribes is also quite common. Each *taparu* has one or more *taparu* elders, though the position is non-hereditary and carries few privileges. After the arrival of the colonial administration, collective villages were formed consisting of entire tribes and in some cases more than one tribe (ibid:96-107). In Pouwer’s research he discerned 160 different *taparu* in fifty tribes; though three tribes had “died out” during his research, leaving forty-seven tribes.

Pouwer describes how indigenous regional organisation is loosely related to dialect boundaries. In general, the six dialects (excluding Western Sempan) can be broken down into interior and coastal-oriented Kamoro. These dialect differences are closely associated with different lifestyle orientation (inland vs. coastal) as well as with specific traditional feasts (*Emakame* vs. *Kaware*) and inhabitants utilising adjacent lands on the upper courses of neighbouring rivers or river mouths often form a loose regional group for feasts and ritual practices (points which Pouwer makes even more explicit in Pouwer 1973).

The final element of Pouwer’s extensive account of social structure deals with ownership rights and terminology (ibid:137-160). Both in his thesis and in his more detailed reports published in the *Adatrechtsbundels* (see appendix for complete references to these reports), collections of traditional *adat* laws to assist

in administration, he maintains that there are no clear-cut rules whereby collective and individual ownership among the Kamoro can be accurately and comprehensively expressed. Thus, Pouwer details what he describes as a “variegation” or “gradation” of ownership forms ranging from individual to collective possession of property (physical and intellectual) and resources (ibid:137). Central to ownership are the terms *amako* and *ta*. The former literally means owner and is often associated by the Kamoro with the term *amoko*, which, as discussed throughout this thesis, refers to the time of the ancestral culture heroes. Some *amoko-we* are described as *amako* over certain abilities, goods, land or animals. *Amoko* can also be used as an adverb meaning eternal, effectively making the *amoko-we* both the ancestral and the eternal people (ibid:137-138).

Pouwer’s thesis then describes the nature of the linkages between Mimika and the Dutch administration during the time of his fieldwork. Initially an unofficial advice council for the Mimika Sub-Division was established in mid-1952. It consisted of representatives from all of those responsible for implementing development activities among the Kamoro: administration, police, teachers, mission, health service, and the *Bureau of Native Affairs* (ibid:240).²¹ Initially they attempted to “modernise” the indigenous cycle by alternating periods of work into the traditional feast cycle, a practice that according to Pouwer met with some success (ibid). Also in 1952, this unofficial council made inroads toward the establishment of village councils aimed at inspiring locally-driven development initiatives. These trial village councils consisted of influential members of the community (*taparu* elders), an administration-chosen village headman, and a representative of the youth community. Although his thesis tends to present a third-person perspective, Pouwer drew on his research to take an active part in advising the larger council and assisting in the formulation of the village councils. He says that at the time, although village councils were little more than an extension of the administration, they still showed promise for responsible, locally-driven development (Pouwer 1955:240-241). *Taparu* elders

²¹ Although his thesis does not explicitly say it, Pouwer presumably occupied the seat on behalf of the Bureau of Native Affairs.

were included in the village councils as a means of balancing the powerful influence of the village teachers who served as council advisors (Pouwer interviewed by author, 25 February 1999).²² Overall the activities of the council were geared towards carrying out the administration's aims of rapid economic, social, and religious "development" (Pouwer 1955:241).

Importantly, Pouwer points out that the installation of an indigenous administration representative was a novel idea in a society that had had numerous "heads" or specialists rather than a single political leader (ibid:240).

Aopao

In terms of understanding Kamoro sociality, the longest and perhaps most important chapter of Pouwer's thesis discusses the role of reciprocity in Kamoro culture. Most commonly expressed as *aopao*, reciprocity is seen by Pouwer as something that underlies all aspects of Kamoro life. During his field research, his Kamoro informants used *aopao* to describe the concepts of counter-gift, counter-prestation, counter-service, counter-part, the exchange of marriage candidates (sister exchange), retaliation, and satisfaction (1955:161).²³ Throughout the chapter, Pouwer emphasises that *aopao* is best described as a process of countering or response.

In the Kamoro system of prestations and counter-prestations the paired concepts of labour-food, food-food, labour-labour, and wife-food, labour-goods come to the fore (ibid:192-194). Although there is no inter-group competitive exchange system as found elsewhere in Melanesia, reciprocity strongly influences social and economic relationships. When personal relationships predominate, material gains in economic transactions are of less importance. For instance, one's offerings to spirits in the woods prior to a hunt appear to characterise the

²² Then *Controleur* (District Head) Lagerberg outlined the composition of the village councils in Mimika in an eight-page report to Governor van Baal dated 25 April 1955 (Lagerberg 1955a).

most personal of exchange relations (e.g. between the Kamoro and spirits), and therefore explicit economic values of the offerings and the bounty of the hunt are not compared. If businesslike considerations predominate, Pouwer reports that prestations and counter-prestations are carefully compared, and personal connections are forced into the background. Pouwer classifies work for strangers as most exemplary of this sort of exchange. Of course not all exchanges fall into either of the categories. Relationships with one's wife's relatives mark a blend of personal and businesslike features. Pouwer noted that through western contacts and transactions in commodities, the pattern of prestations and counter-prestations showed an increasing predominance of businesslike relationships, which he claims were especially pronounced in dealings with one's wife's relatives (1955:204-211).

Pouwer's argument regarding Kamoro engagement with the foreign

Both in his chapter on reciprocity and throughout the thesis, Pouwer maintains a clear distinction between indigenous and foreign settings and relationships. He argued that the Kamoro conceive of two distinct worlds—foreign and indigenous—and that there is little mixing between the two. As support for this argument, he shows that the role of money was insignificant in the system of indigenous prestations and counter-prestations, while it played a primary role in exchange with foreigners. Pouwer also outlined the “two-world” concept with regards to feast and ceremonial activities. According to him, foreign feasts (e.g. the Dutch *Oranje--Queen's Birthday--Feast*, Christmas, etc.) are celebrated with separate profane rituals and songs, while indigenous rituals have sacred elements.

Pouwer outlines an escapist attitude among the Kamoro manifested in an indigenous indifference (or resignation) to the presence of foreigners and their world after World War II. He explains that although the Kamoro outwardly

²³ These usages closely resemble ones that Drabbe recorded in his collection of narratives (1947, 1948a, 1948b, 1949, 1950) recorded in the 1930s. I used some of these as explicit illustrations in Chapters Three and Four.



Image 17: Village Council of Yaraya, 1954. Pouwer's main informant, Constans is seated on the far left (photo by Jan Pouwer, published in *de Drietand* 5(1):7. Original held at the Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde, Leiden).

expressed their desire to “follow orders” to appease the administration and the other foreigners, they also often escaped into their own world (e.g. the sago *dusun* or the fishing grounds). In Pouwer’s interpretation, the “Kamoro world” was quite distinct from the “western world” characterised by concerns of the church and the administration (1955:250-255).²⁴

A few comments on Pouwer’s Thesis

While Pouwer’s discussions of social structure, resource ownership/land tenure, and reciprocity are detailed and convincing, I question his interpretations of Kamoro engagements with the foreign, which appear fraught with contradictions. On the one hand, he was of the impression that the Kamoro clearly maintained a complete separation between the “western” world and the indigenous one. Elsewhere, however, he claims that since the arrival of “western culture” business-like exchange has become prevalent within the indigenous exchange system.

While Pouwer’s raw-data and observations are in many ways consistent with what I saw in the late 1990s, I disagree with some of his interpretations on which his “two-world” argument is based. He described at length how profane songs and practices accompanied the celebrations of the foreigners, while the internal festivities had sacred rituals, songs and other activities. I disagree that this is evidence for the Kamoro living in two worlds; I think this has more to do with Pouwer’s own perspective on the classification of sacred and profane than with Kamoro categorisations. Clearly things “sacred” to westerners may or may not be classified by the Kamoro as such. Elsewhere Pouwer points out that while

²⁴ Elsewhere in West New Guinea, Schoorl suggests a similar ideological divide among the Muyu who though prepared to construct village housing, were not willing to live in them for a variety of social, political, and economic reasons (1993:187-190). In another case, Kouwenhoven notes distinct differentiation in Nimboran notions of time for doing western-style work (i.e. administration) and that for indigenous work (i.e. food gathering) (1956:145-146). Quite possibly these interpretations could have been in part influenced by broader theoretical frameworks popular in Holland at the time, in particular the Leiden school. Particular aspects of Pouwer’s

narratives adapt to the time, place, and narrator perspective (e.g. what I have been pointing out throughout this thesis as a primary mechanism of Kamoro engagements with the foreign), ritual remains constant and relatively unchanged. Both Pouver and Zegwaard seem to downplay the significance of the incorporated elements as something spurious, and therefore less authentic. My analysis over a longer period demonstrates that incorporation of the foreign ideas, experiences and things via *amoko-kwere* is a consistent indigenous mechanism for Kamoro social engagement. He argues that the impermeability of ritual supports a two-world argument. Here again, I see no reason why ritual necessarily needs to reflect or incorporate the foreign when the narratives clearly serve that function. In the next section I explore the outcomes of the application of the social research conducted in Mimika during this period to mission and administrative work.

MARIA AND WILHELMINA: A TALE OF TWO SISTERS

Frequently the church attempted to draw analogies between biblical themes and Kamoro narratives to find “congenial elements” to facilitate Christianisation. In Mimika in the 1950s, The Flood, Adam and Eve, God’s creative powers, and Maria were all deemed as sharing commonalities with *amoko-kwere*, and therefore useful as “doors” through which the Kamoro may be reached for conversion. As it turns out, for the Kamoro, the “doors” of the *amoko-kwere* swung both ways, and it was the church and the administration who were “converted” to fit within indigenous schemes of understanding.

Missionaries often used mission journals to compare experiences of their work in some of the remotest parts of the world. Some of them are indeed revealing about the nature of mission work of various religious organisations. An article in Sint Antonius for example attempted to describe the relationship between Kamoro oral tradition and the stories of the Bible. According to Father

thesis and other articles of his also sharply differentiated the Kamoro as Papuans from Moluccans who were Indonesians.

Groen (OFM), as in the Bible, Kamoro storytellers use an antiquated language to explain the histories of their particular tribes (in Pouwer's sense of "tribe" described above). It follows that all of the tribes, like the lost tribes of Israel, have their own unique stories. Groen claims that "here and there" there are stories that remind one of the Old Testament (Groen 1961:65). The most obvious example is a story of a great flood in Mimika.

Just as the missionaries used Biblical narratives to explain and investigate the relationship between Christianity and indigenous belief systems, the Kamoro made sense of the relationships between themselves and the foreigners (and their religious beliefs, material culture, etc.) and of the relationships among the foreigners themselves. Through the use of *amoko-kwere* Akwèripia, the village head of Mupuruka, explained the story of The Flood to Jan Pouwer and how it related to the foreigners in 1952:

An elder sister Mumorekàparé and a younger sister Mumarepa lived in Kaogàremané [literally two women, TH]. They were *Waoka-gàpere-mané*, two Waoka women.

The Waoka-wé, Umuruka-wé, Kana-wé, Pomohé, Timba-wé, Wakapikipa lived on the Uraya river, the women lived on their own a little further downstream. All of them, except for the two women, went to the beach, speared fish, and collected crabs and shellfish. They put the fish in their canoes and returned to the upper reaches of the river and passed by the two women. They pretended not to have caught any fish and only gave them a few crabs and snails. Then they continued to the village. Just before they had arrived some of them shouted on the river bank that they had caught a lot of fish. Towards evening the fish were placed on the fire and roasted. Then they went to sleep.

Presumably not sharing the fish with the two women is a violation of etiquette. The villager's deception of the two women also fuels the next chain of events in the narrative:

In the night a *pètako*, an osprey which belonged to the two women downstream, came without being noticed to steal remains of the fish. The bird took the fish to its mistresses. It appeared above the village again.

Here it is important to point out that the *pètako* "belonged" to the two women in the same sense that a child "belongs" to his parents. As in other

amoko-kwere, the distinction between animals and humans is often blurred. The fact that the bird was able to obtain remnants of fish would suggest that “he” intended to let “his owners” know that the people upstream had indeed deceived them earlier. Of course the bird’s “theft” could be considered another wrongdoing, deserving of retaliatory action (*naware*); fuelling further action in the story:

A *ko-apoka* (adult man) Bitiipia, who was lame, saw the bird drop a fish. He shot the osprey to the ground with an arrow. Bitiipia was not such a nice fellow. The others in the village slept and did not notice anything. Next morning they saw the bird lying there dead and asked Pitiipia: “Why did you kill that animal? Do you not know that this osprey belongs to the two sisters?” They were angry at Bitiipia. The bird’s feathers drifted down the river.

Early in the morning Mumorekàparé was shitting in the river and saw the feathers of her pet bird floating on the water. She told her younger sister.

‘Oh, they have killed our bird!’ screamed Mumarepa. They took the feathers out of the water, took them home and cried. Then they collected wood for a big *sèro*.

A *sèro* is one of the most effective ways for catching smaller fish. The *sèro* is a mat used to close up small creeks to trap fish as the tide goes out (see Figure 18, page 175).

They said to one another, ‘Oh, there is heavy rain coming, there is high water coming.’

The water could not flow into the sea because of the *sèro* and flowed back to the mountains. The people who lived upstream fled to Wèselmor (from the Dutch *Wisselmeren*, Wissel Lakes) because the water rose very high. They were the first Kapaokus (mountain people). They carried a shoulder bag on their head (a typical way of carrying a bag). Others fled to the coast. The *sèro* broke and the two women fled downriver to the coast, following the other people. But the water surged, canoes capsized, and trees crashed down. The people fled further until they reached the mouth of the Makemao River. They slept on the beach.

The narrator marks the first explicit incorporation of the “foreign” when he intentionally uses the Dutch name for the interior lakes as if it had always been the name (now known as the Paniai Lakes, home of the Me people). At the same



Image 18: Fisherman climbing over a *séro* preparing to spear fish trapped in the changing tide. (Photo by Jan Pouwer, image held at the Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde, Leiden).



Image 19: Masked dancers perform in the *Mbiikawane* (literally spirit platform) ceremony in Kokonao in 1954. For a published account of this ceremony see Pouwer 1956 (Photo by Jan Pouwer, image held at the Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde, Leiden).

time, he explains the origin of the interior highland people. This area was increasingly regularly visited after the war as it lay at the headwaters of the river that leads to Uta and Mupuruka, the narrator's home village. Missionaries increased the contact between the Kamoro and the highlanders by using Uta as a base for launching expeditions to the interior. Kamoro rowers were used to travel upstream as far as the river was navigable, before highland carriers assisted the missionaries overland. The fact that the people fled indicates that they were aware that the flood was a retaliatory act for the murder of the osprey, which in turn demonstrated again how a counter-attack (*aopao*) continues to drive the story:

Next morning Bitiipia was the first to see the raging sea and the people were shocked and crying. "Those waves spell trouble for us!" And in anger they struck Bitiipia down dead. A man fetched his *imikik* [I am uncertain as to what this is, TH] and went to the East in his river canoe. Others followed him and became the Karuutya-wé (the people of the East) and the Mano-wé (the Asmat). The ones with a sea-going canoe headed for Kaimana.

Before the arrival of the Dutch administration, evidence suggests that the river canoe was used throughout Mimika (see image from Uta, West Mimika from 1828 in Chapter Three). After the arrival of the administration, West Mimika became increasingly associated with the *torepa* (ocean-going canoe) while the *ku*, the riverine canoe, became more strongly associated with the East. Symbolically, the introduced *torepa* came from (and in this case left toward) the West, the source of all that is foreign. Kaimana was symbolically "the West" as it was the location of one of the first administration posts in the region.²⁵

In the meantime the two women were on the river Yapèrema, near Mupuruka downstream. They went to the beach. Two other women, *Omawkagàparè* (two women from Omawka) came from the East. They saw the two Waoka women near Cape Yapèrema. The elder and the younger sister chopped wood with sharp shells and made canoes in the same way. They

²⁵ An administration report details how "medicines" for healing sickness, attracting women, and softening iron so that it can be more easily worked had originated in Kaimana. Presumably, they were considered to be efficacious because of their origins in the west (Matray 1956:1-3).

saw that the two *karuukaoka*, women from the East, had *parangs*²⁶ and axes with them, as they went to chop wood on the cape.

The two sisters arranged to steal them from the women of the East at night. They loaded the axes and *parangs* in their canoe, and also stole the *akwère*, the language from their mouth (the present-day language of Mupurupa). They also stole the Malay language that the two women from the East used so that no one would understand what they said. They also stole the rifle and the fire. (The narrator glances at the Pouwer's travelling things and continues.) They also took a gas lamp, a primus stove, hiking boots and tin cans. The two sisters took all these goods to Kaimana.

Here it is significant that the Omawka women from the East (an area that forms the easternmost cultural and linguistic border of Mimika) had the more modern tools, which are stolen *kata* taken to the West.

In the morning the two women from the East awoke and were horrified to discover that everything had been stolen. They returned to the East, crying in dismay. The two Waoka women came to the Mapar River and called, "There will not be any sago here."

They unloaded only a little sago in Poraoka. In Umari they shouted, "There will be plenty of sago here!"

And they unloaded a lot here. They had brought all this sago from the Waoka. They unloaded a lot of sago at Aindua, Potoway, Omba and Sarera (Tarera), Wanete (Nanesa), Kipa, Sernata (Ternate). They spent the night in Tapruka, where they made houses, airplanes, mirrors and spectacles. They also made writing (*torati*). They put all these goods in the airplane and agreed that the younger sister would go to *Negeri Belanda* (lit. Malay for Holland), the land of the whites, while the elder sister would fly to Opè, the heaven.

Having stolen the western goods, the *kata*, from eastern Kamoro people, the sisters went to Holland and to Heaven, the places of origin of the administration and the church respectively. The implication is that the Europeans had indeed stolen the goods from the most backward of Kamoro.

And that is what they did.

²⁶ *Parang* is the Malay/Indonesian term for machete.

“So,” continued the *kepala*, “white and blacks are the same.”

The informant related this very enthusiastically. Later he added, “Mumorekàparé who went to heaven has the Christian name Maria. Her son is called Jesus.” (The young people present give this name; the *kepala* no longer remembers it properly.) The younger sister Mumarepa has the Christian name Wirèremina (Wilhelmina, the name is spoken by the young people; she was the queen of Holland at the time). She made the Kompeni [the Dutch administration, TH]—it was not there before. This story is from the *wé-airogeta*, the ancestors of the *amoko-wé*. (Pouwer personal communication; for summary versions of the same story see Pouwer 1957-1958 and Groen 1961).

Thus Mumorekàparé and Wirèremina, Mary and Wilhelmina, the church and the administration are not only directly related, but also originate from Mimika during the *amoko*.

The church also used their understandings of the activities of Kamoro cultural heroes and indigenous feasts as vehicles to explain Christianity. The puberty feast *Taori*, for example, was likened to baptism. In another example, Father Coenen tells of the application of this knowledge along the Wania River where Father Zegwaard attempted to express God’s creative abilities as analogous to those of the *amoko-we* Mapurupiu’s.²⁷ In most versions of the Mapurupiu story a violation of the rule of reciprocity brings death to human beings. Pouwer succinctly tells the story as he heard it in the 1950s:

Mapurupiu is stung to death by bees because he violates a taboo. He then finds out that his wife remarried too quickly with his younger brother. This lack of respect for the dead has to be revenged (*aopao*) Mapurupiu has his wife and children killed by ghosts. The ghosts are paid for their services with secret goods (*kata puri*, a term that also denotes Western commodities). Mapurupiu, the ‘stinker’, the dirty old man seduces women on his way upstream. Their relatives give chase. Mapurupiu removes a tree and disappears into the underworld (the Mimika equivalent for heaven) through a hole under the tree. The people find the hole but are unable to proceed to the underworld. Mapurupiu will not come back (in Pouwer 1973:89).

Thus, a sacred ancestor of the Wania people is living in the underworld where he has access to *kata puri*, which Pouwer defines as “western

²⁷ The story of Mapurupiu, also known as Mapuru and Mapuru-wow, although known throughout Mimika is generally associated with the Kamora and Wania River communities, particularly with the latter.

commodities” or “secret goods”.²⁸ For the Wania River communities, Mapurupiu is more than a mythical figure; he is at once the original and eternal owner associated with the region. In a short paper on the standpoint of Catholicism in East Mimika in 1956, Father Coenen described the role of the church in relation to Mapurupiu and the Wania River Kamoro:

In our catechism lessons we used a culture hero to make the concept of divinity (*gods-begrip*) clear to the people. This is how the culture hero Mapurupiu came to be used as an example to explain the power of God. According to the story, Mapurupiu was responsible for planting sago and other trees; he gave birds their colours, and so forth. The community interpreter—the old man of the kampong—translated this sermon (from Father Zegwaard) as follows: the God of the Pastor is from a later date. Mapurupiu is the real God, the God that was over the people before Adam and Eve, and that they are his only descendants. He took the “soul of his daughter and gave her the name of his wife Maimari,” she was the Virgin Mary. When the teacher in the school gave an explanation of God, the children promptly confronted him, and they gave him the lesson according to what the old men had told them.²⁹ Mapurupiu comes from Pigapu and his wife is from Mware [sic Moare, TH], the Wania-people are his descendants (Coenen 1956a:3).

Elsewhere, Pouwer reports another Mimikan interpretation of Catholicism that held that Mapurupiu was the “Mimikan Adam” because he, like Adam, brought death to the world by indulging in forbidden (taboo) foods (Pouwer 1973:89).

The rapid increase in access to western/foreign material goods during the post-war Dutch administration also fuelled a rumour that someone in Pigapu may have been successful in pulling Mapurupiu from the underworld! According to accounts told to Father Coenen, Mapurupiu himself had recently given “western goods” including a washing pail, a plate, and a sarong to someone from Moare (Coenen 1963:105). Zegwaard and some of the administrative officials in Mimika at the time commented that such interpretations were an outgrowth of the rapid process of acculturation (*vis-a-vis* Cargo beliefs) which was a constant source of

²⁸ As explained in Chapter One, *kata* literally refers secret or ritual secrets or goods/possessions. I propose that Kamoro consistently use the word in a manner implying both meanings. Pouwer defines *puri* in his thesis as “taboo” (1955:307). Earlier Drabbe had elaborated that *poeri* is a degeneration of the Malay term *pemali* (1937:123). Echols and Schadily define *pemali* as “sacred, forbidden, or taboo” (1994:418).

²⁹ The original read (D) “...werd hi op de vingers getikt” which has the connotation that he was “slapped on the wrist” as a parent or teacher would scold a child.

difficulty (Zegwaard n.d.b:3). In some ways, perhaps Zegwaard was right, but I think that he and his contemporaries had acknowledged but not understood the significance of the Kamoro mechanism for engaging with and interpreting the world around them via the *amoko-we* and the *amoko-kwere*.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Looking toward the Future: Natalis Nokoryao's Solemn Prediction

By the 1960s, East Mimika already had had over thirty years of direct mission and administration influence. The years since the end of World War II witnessed increasingly intensive contact and related social and economic investment in the lead up to decolonisation. Despite the fact that the region was on the verge of seemingly momentous political change, the Kamoro remained most concerned with local politics which proved to have direct connections with the *amoko-kwere* and other aspects of the spiritual world. The ramifications of local disputes are particularly relevant because they not only superseded the importance of the international political events for the Kamoro, but also seemed to demonstrate an indigenous concern for and knowledge of remarkable changes, including access to wealth, that were about to occur. According to the last administrative Memorandums of Transfer for the region, unrequited exchange marriages and land/resource disputes continued to be the most pressing concerns in Mimika. These issues were prominent in disputes within and between Mioko and Iwaka-Temare, Moare and Hiripao, and Neikeripi and Waoneripi (Mampioer 1961:18).³⁰

Underlying threads of several of the disputes were access to the spiritual world (and thence *kata*) and ownership of *amoko-kwere*. In this case, the land in

³⁰ Of course an argument could certainly be made that women, as part of politically motivated exchange marriages organised by parents, could be in some ways objectified and considered as resources.

dispute was Maraoka, a beach location just east of the mouth of the Wania River.³¹ While details of the dispute are unclear, evidence of Maraoka's spiritual significance is mentioned in the final Dutch Administration report. According to informants from Hiripao:

Under the ground at Maraoka beach, resting quietly and motionless, are people of great importance.³² In the near future, they will open a secret door, revealing a city of affluence (I: *kota kelimpahan*) to the inhabitants [e.g. the Kamoro] (Mampioer 1961:10).³³

One land dispute in East Mimika, which appears to have been even more serious judging from the fact that it merited its own appendix in the administration report, was between the villagers of Keakwa and Timika over the land linking their settlements.³⁴ When Japanese marines arrived in November of 1942, the area was the site of a settlement of two of the *taparu* of Timika: Iraowirepiimara and Nimae (Pouwer 1955:238; Mampioer 1961:a3). During the Japanese occupation, the settlement was moved to a nearby location closer to the coast so the Japanese could broaden the former settlement clearing into a road and an airfield.³⁵ In 1960, both Keakwa and Timika invoked *amoko-kwere* which explained settlement histories linked to the migrations caused by the Utakae War to support their cases to the administrative officer, but no resolution was reached. Finally, the government officer, A. Mampioer, proposed that to promote better

³¹ Mware and Hiripao had both begun to request relocation to the coast as far back as 1954. Investigating a report by his predecessor Paliama that both villages wished to be relocated primarily for reasons of health, Lagerberg established that one of the main reasons that Mware wanted to relocate was to return to "the ground of their ancestors" where according to this report, they used to hold the nose-piercing feast (Lagerberg 1955b:5). This suggests that there has been an ongoing conflict over the location and both communities not only rationalised their access through "ancestors" but also utilised government development concerns to their advantage in attempts to meet their own political needs.

³² The actual words are (I) "*berpangkat tinggi-tinggi*" which could also feasibly be translated as "very tall people".

³³ An administration report describes how Laurentius Towaho, also of Hiripao had made the same proclamation in 1956 (Lamers 1956:1).

³⁴ I cite this section of the report by attaching an "a" for appendix to the page reference.

³⁵ It is unclear as to whether or not the Japanese compensated the people of Keakwa and Timika for their land and troubles. Given the rather brutal accounts of their occupation, compensation

relationships, the village councils in each settlement might settle the dispute the way a similar one had been handled in Inanwatan (on the southern part of the Bird's Head peninsula). In that case it was determined that the land for the airstrip was to be publicly used for the good of both sides (Mampioer 1961:a4). The story failed to inspire a similar solution between Keakwa and Timika.

On the surface, reasons for the land dispute in this case were somewhat unclear. The land had no sago, it was pockmarked by allied bombings, and it was subject to flooding (see Wilson 1981:166). Indeed, in recent memory the entire settlement of Timika had been inundated by a spring tide (Pouwer 1955:6). Nor had any gardens been planted on the barren landing strip and road. In recent years, the landing strip had seen only limited, non-commercial use for mission aircraft. While I certainly can make no definitive claim to the underlying reason for the strife between Keakwa and Timika over the land of the airfield, I can offer at least one possibility.

Throughout Mimika, it was commonly held that one could interact with ancestral spirits and spirit people; these were ideas set out in the *Amoko*. At the same time, during the period immediately preceding the United Nations interregnum, the Netherlands New Guinea Petroleum Company had employed numerous young Kamoro men during their aggressive exploration campaign.³⁶ During their travels to urban areas like Sorong and Hollandia, the young and impressionable men had learned of various "cargo" beliefs. While Pouwer mentions that a few of these beliefs surfaced in Mimika when the workers returned home, he strongly asserts that they were always imported and rarely held any credence among older Kamoro who still held the strongest influence over community affairs (Pouwer interviewed by author, 25 February 1999).

seems unlikely. If so, it is possible that the Timukans may have continued to seek compensation for their move.

³⁶ Pouwer explained to me that the oil drilling installations of the *Nederlands Nieuw Guinea Petroleum Maatschappij*, the Netherlands New Guinea Petroleum Company (or NNGPM) in the Inanwatan area of the Bird's Head were also explained as having Mimikan origins. Apparently the oil wells and textiles and tools were created when the *amoko-we* Mapurupiu's head was severed (at his request) then rolled away and bored into the ground. (Pouwer interviewed by author, 25 February 1999).

Notwithstanding Pouwer's observations with regards to the lack of support for "cargo-style" beliefs at the time of his fieldwork, by the early 1960s a number of circumstances may have contributed to an atmosphere of expected change among many of the communities in West New Guinea including the Kamoro. Since the post-war return of the Dutch administration, the amount of attention afforded to the indigenous communities in terms of funding, education, economic investment, and ultimately empowerment was on the rise. As mentioned previously, Dutch reports generated in the early 1950s indicate that financial investment in the future of West New Guinea had grown exponentially between 1950 and 1956, though the return remained statistically similar. Indeed, my informants in the late 1990s tended to look at the end of the Dutch Administration as a period of benevolence, whereby they were given access to a myriad of *kata*. The land disputes described above which involved potential access to such wealth seem to be concrete evidence of Kamoro expectations by the end of the post-war Dutch decolonisation.

Within this atmosphere, Natalis Nokoryao made a prediction. From his hospital bed in 1960, the same year as the fights between Keakwa and Timuka and coincidentally the same year that Freeport Sulphur had conducted its initial exploration activities with the East Borneo Company (OBM)³⁷, Nokoryao claimed that he had prepared roads for cars at Timika in order to receive goods that would arrive on large boats. He went on to say that the goods and the boats were already present, but not always visible. Here I should say that although the Dutch administrative officer who recorded this story tended to characterise it as a sort of a delusional vision of a dying man, all of the characteristics support another more meaningful explanation—that his statements were *imakatiri*.

In many of the *amoko-kwere*, culture heroes make what is described as *imakatiri*. According to Pouwer, *imakatiri* is a pronouncement of something in a solemn voice and is used for the institution of *adat* practices, behavioural rules, and sometimes in the creation of new things or beings as a result of the migration of

³⁷ OBM is the abbreviation for *Oost Borneo Maatschappij*, the Dutch company which held the concession to the interior area around what later became the PT Freeport Indonesia Mine.

souls (Pouwer interviewed by author, 12 February 1999). In one *amoko-kwere*, Paotajao, an *amoko-we*, permanently ascends a tall tree in order to hold up the moon. When the people on the ground ask what they should do in his absence he uses an *imakatiri* to change them into various animals. He said: “From now on, you shall be pigs, snakes, cuscuses, rats, mice create animals such as pigs” (Zegwaard 1952:55). It seems to be a combination of a performative act of creation and a prediction.³⁸ The fact that numerous Kamoro from Timika came to his bedside lends further credence to the expectation of an *imakatiri*.³⁹

Thanks to the intensified research of the era, there was a well-documented understanding that various spirit beings sometimes manifested themselves to Kamoro people (see esp. Coenen 1963). The spirit people (*mbii-we*), who once lived on the surface of the Earth with the real people (*we-nata*), continued to frequently interact with them. Spirits of the dead were also often present, though rarely visible except during the *Amoko* or in the corporeal form of a newborn. Natalis Nokoryao’s *imakatiri* held that at some point the goods would become visible and very quickly be spread throughout Mimika by one their ancestors, Naitemi, and “be very influential” (Mampiooper 1961:a11).⁴⁰ He did not describe precisely when or under what circumstances or in what manner “Naitemi” would manifest himself. Seen in this light, the final reports of the Dutch era could have been a documentation of a deeper dispute over ownership to access to *kata* between Keakwa and Timika.

Around the time of Natalis Nokoryao’s *imakatiri* talks between Indonesia and Holland had broken down. The political skirmishes had now escalated into

³⁸ My own informants describe how a person able to do *imakatiri* can do such things as forecast weather and predict a carving before it is begun (e.g. all of its styles, motifs, shapes, etc.).

³⁹ Other examples of *imakatiri* include prescribing actions and consequences of a woman’s death during childbirth (Zegwaard 1952:43-45); predicting torment of the humans from the spirits (ibid:88); and as a means of recognising the signs that a particular cultural hero has been killed and thus the people must wage war (ibid:26-28).

⁴⁰ Another government report from around the same time claims that “naitimi” [sic] is a generic name for “ancestors” (Jong 1959:34). Since it is mentioned in connection with certain people’s ability to create “medicine,” (I) *obat*, that allows access to the spiritual world it is likely that the word may actually be a general term for ancestor. In my notes I documented the word “*naiti*” as

small-scale military operations. From bases in Aru and the Kei islands, the Indonesian military sought to evade the Dutch Marines who were patrolling the south-west coast of New Guinea. On the 24th of March 1961 Kamoro communities discovered an abandoned bivouac which was not one of their own. Situated near the mouth of the Jera River in West Mimika, it was evidence that the Indonesian forces had indeed landed. Immediately, the Kamoro reported the find to the Dutch Marines (Holst Pellekaan et al. 1989:141). Within three days, along with the Dutch Marines, they discovered and captured between thirty and forty Indonesian infiltrators some ten kilometres upstream. But this incident was not isolated. Indonesian infiltrators repeatedly landed on the Mimika coast.

Just a few days after the initial find, on the thirteenth of March Kamoro at Aindua reported infiltrators landing on their soil (ibid:142). Under the leadership of a Papuan Corporal, Octavianus Marani, a group of Kamoro set out along with Dutch Marines on an expedition into the jungle in order to capture the infiltrators. The process occurred many times over the next several weeks. Between 24 March and 6 April 1961 thanks to Kamoro assistance, the Dutch Marines captured around sixty-five Indonesian infiltrators (ibid:141-143).

During this period, Kamoro political allegiance was unquestionably with the Dutch, the most visible authority who were rapidly pushing the region towards decolonisation and independence. This stood in opposition to the Kei Island teachers, who according to a 1956 government report were more inclined to sympathise with Indonesia. The report points out, however, that this likely had to do with the fact that they had been all but cut off from their relatives in the Kei islands by the political separation of West New Guinea from Indonesia (Lagerberg 1956:76). By this time, a clear pattern was becoming noticeable with regards to Kamoro political and economic allegiances. In previous chapters I described how the Kamoro forged political and economic allegiances with the Moluccan Kingdoms, the *Tena-we* (the Chinese traders), the *Turabaya* (the initial Dutch administration), and even initially with the Japanese. Based on their active

meaning “our parents” but perhaps it was meant in a more figurative way. Drabbe’s dictionary contains a similar definition (1937:85). The word is not in Pouwer’s glossary.

assistance in tracking down and capturing Indonesian infiltrators in the post-war Dutch era, it appears that during that time they were decidedly supportive of the Dutch administration. Within the next two years, however, due to intense international pressure, West New Guinea was handed over to the United Nations, effectively granting immediate political authority over the region to the Republic of Indonesia.⁴¹

Though it is difficult for me to comment on the interim rule under the auspices of the United Nations between 1963 and 1969 due to lack of information, I'd like to briefly comment on Kamoro participation in the determination of the future of West New Guinea. During the July and August 1969 *Pepera* (the acronym for *Penentuan Pendapat Rakyat*, commonly translated as the Act of Free Choice), four Kamoro men chose in favour of becoming part of

⁴¹ By 1962 the Dutch were prepared to protect the new state with three frigates, an anti-submarine boat, a squadron of Neptune aircraft, Hawker Hunter fighter aircraft, light artillery and 4800 troops positioned in and around New Guinea (Rijs 1999:1). Unknown to even the Dutch officers stationed in New Guinea however (van der Schoot interviewed by author, 23 February 1999; Pouwer interviewed by author, 12 February 1999). Soviet support for Indonesia had grown. By the end of 1961, six submarines, a hospital-ship, and a supply ship set to sea from Vladivostok. According to one of the Russian Officers, he thought that they would be simply delivering the vessels to Indonesia. Only after arrival in Surabaya was he presented with an Indonesian Uniform and Indonesian credentials which outlined that he and his fellow Soviets had *chosen* to fight for Indonesia (Rijs 1999:5). In addition to the submarines and the economic aid, Moscow also sent over between two and three thousand troops and thirty Tupolev bombers, placed on stand-by in Sulawesi (Rijs 1999:1). At the height of the Cold War, these events pushed the New Guinea question into the limelight. Khrushchev knew that the only possible way for the Netherlands to challenge a combined Soviet and Indonesian force was with the support of the United States. Further, what were the chances that the United States would risk a Third World War on the western half of New Guinea?

The US envoy in Jakarta reported on July 26 the following to President Kennedy:

“I recognize that the Indonesian position is unreasonable...since Indonesia's own miscalculations and Sukarno's bluster have put them into a position where they cannot readily back down short of full victory. It is not my purpose to rationalize or defend, but only to call attention to the alternatives which now exist and the very short time span remaining to the Dutch for a choice best supporting their national interest. Where our own interest lies seems now hardly open to debate” (McMullen 1981:61).

President Kennedy quickly expressed the position of the United States in a secret letter to Dutch Premier De Quay stating that although the Dutch and the West could realistically win the battle, only the communists could profit from such a conflict (Rijs 1999:5). On August 15, with Soviet submarines poised to attack, waiting until the prescribed time to open their envelopes with their orders, a deal was struck in New York ending the standoff. According to the Soviet marines, which by then had taken positions near the coast of Manokwari, the news came within hours of their expected attack on New Guinea—abort the mission (Rijs 1999:5).

Indonesia (YBKKB 1995:292).⁴² Taking into account the reports that have claimed that the Act of Free Choice was a farce and that Papuans were coerced into selecting Indonesia, at risk of being politically incorrect, historical evidence may suggest that the Kamoro men may well have selected Indonesia without coercion. In the absence of the Dutch Administration it is plausible that the Kamoro men who chose to become part of Indonesia did so out of an indigenous strategy to ally themselves with whomever was most politically/economically/militarily powerful.

Consistent with the information presented in previous chapters, the Kamoro appear to have formulated understandings of the Dutch administration and mission as outgrowths of *amoko-kwere*. At the same time, the Dutch made a concerted effort to increase their investment and dedication to the decolonisation of West New Guinea. Under the circumstances the Kamoro appear to have formulated the Dutch activities as a confirmation of their *amoko-kwere*, that the foreigners and their *kata* had indeed derived from Mimika. This understanding seemed to underlie a general Kamoro attitude that the foreigners had previously stolen the *kata*. In this sense, the foreigners owed *naware*, retaliatory or economic compensation to the Kamoro. Perhaps Natalis Nokoryao's *imakatiri* was a reflection of indigenous expectations of the realisation of that compensation. The next chapter looks at how this perceived "compensation" may have played out in the field with the arrival of Freeport and ultimately fuelled a series of activities that allowed lived experience and *amoko-kwere* to mirror one another just as the underworld is a mirror reflection of the upperworld.

⁴² For a fairly balanced account of the Act of Free Choice written soon after the event see Chapter Six in Hastings (1973[1969]).

Chapter Six

Timika: The Emergence of a Mining Community

INTRODUCTION

This chapter marks a change in the political, geographic and temporal focus of the thesis. Previous chapters dealt with Kamoro interactions with foreigners, which began in far West Mimika and gradually moved eastward. I have described how since the middle of the nineteenth century, the Mimika Coast came increasingly under Dutch influence, with direct administration from 1926 to 1961 interrupted only by a brief Japanese occupation. This chapter and the following deal almost exclusively with East Mimika after the departure of the Dutch administration in 1962.¹ Almost synonymous with the arrival of the Indonesian administration in what they initially called West Irian is the arrival of the PT Freeport Indonesia Mining Company. This chapter situates Freeport's arrival in the context of Kamoro socio-political circumstances of the 1960s and 1970s. In contrast to the last chapter, which addressed the most well documented period in Mimika history, this chapter covers what is perhaps the least-well-documented period of Mimika history in the twentieth century. As a result, my own

¹ East Mimika consisted of all villages between Keakwa in the West and Inauga on the Otokwa River in the East.

informants' recollections of the time of Freeport's arrival and that of the Indonesian administration supplement the scant source materials.

In particular, this chapter outlines the emergence of the contemporary lowland "town" of Timika as a direct result of activities related to Freeport's operations. Timika has become well known as the lowland town associated with Freeport and perhaps more specifically military, political and human rights battles between the highland Amungme and the Indonesian State and Freeport. Lesser known are Kamoro perspectives on the foundations of Timika, an area which now attracts around half of the 15,000 strong Kamoro community. It highlights the potential role of *amoko-kwere* within Kamoro communities' decisions to participate in the Freeport project and migrate to the Freeport Project Area. It explains how Freeport's interactions with these "foreign" Kamoro (and Amungme) communities (e.g. those from outside of the Freeport Project of Area) triggered a series of "development" activities that would, with some consistency, undermine the rights and resources of Kamoro (and Amungme) communities indigenous to the Freeport Project Area. The misconceptions, deceptions and reciprocal inequities that built upon one another in the development of the Freeport Project and the establishment of Timika are remarkably parallel to the kinds of violations of *aopao* that drive the *amoko-kwere*. I begin with an investigation of the derivation and meaning of the name Timika, before I position this chain of events with a brief revisit of Mimika in 1960, the year of Natalis Nokoryao's *imakatiri*, his solemn prediction discussed in the last chapter (pp.180-187).

TIMAKOWA, TIMIKA, TUMUKA

In contemporary discussions, the name Timika has become an icon of inequity, human rights abuses, and environmental destruction and is inextricably linked to Freeport and the Amungme. There has been strikingly little attention given to the fact that the word itself is neither fabricated nor from the Amungme language. It seems ironic that one of the key words linked to Amungme struggles is indeed a

Kamoro word. This section investigates the source of the word and the community from which it originated, the Nimy people of the coastal village of Timika, presently known as Timika Pantai, literally beach or coastal Timika.

Although the British Ornithological Union expedition documented contacts with Nimy people in 1910, the word describing the region more generally, Timakowa dates to at least the nineteenth century. In these accounts, the region of Timakowa was described by local informants as the territory to the east of the Kipia (also known as Kapia) and Mimika regions on the south-west coast of New Guinea (see Chapter Three). The region appears to have been centred on the coastal village that Wollaston called Nimé and, based on his observations, the settlement seems to have been the central location of a specific sphere of trade and cultural influence incorporating what is presently the central Mimika area. An Allied Intelligence Report for the south-west coast of New Guinea dated 16 April 1943, clarified that although the name of the village and the river along which the settlement is situated are shown on the maps as Timoeka (Timuka), the locally preferred geographic name was Timika (AGS 1943:12).

The informant for the intelligence report, Father Tillemans, indicated that the Kamoro have multiple ways of attaching names to places. Generally, there appear to be at least three different ways the Kamoro do this; all are equally common so that in one conversation the same place may be referred to with three different names. One way that the Kamoro name a place is by a specific geographic place name. Sometimes these place names are linked to ancestral “owners” of that area, though I have often found that there is either no native exegesis for the place names or they have been forgotten. This appears to be the most fixed and enduring variety of toponym as it seems to remain attached to a location regardless of who lives there. Another common naming practice is to call a location by the name of the people who are living there or in that region. For instance, Ipayá refers to a place where the people of Amar, Ipiri, and Yaraya people live. A related naming practice is attaching a group’s “tribal” name to a location. For example, the Timika people are known collectively as Nimy, the name that Wollaston recorded for their settlement. Other places are labeled by

their physical characteristics. For instance, Koperapoka is derived from the words *kopera*, meaning nipah palm and *apoka*, which most generally translates as existing. Thus, *koperapoka* means “place where there are nipah palms.” One such name can refer to different locations depending on the speaker’s origin and the place where he is speaking.

Ironically, although the words Timakowa, Timuka, and Timika sound quite similar, they have distinct and unrelated origins. When I asked Kamoro informants from Timika (Pantai) about the word Timakowa, they responded that it generally referred to a large region of eastern Mimika. I briefly discussed the word with Sabinus and Piet, both from Timika (Pantai) who were at the time living in the Timika Township. As we looked at a photocopy of a Dutch map together they explained:

- S: In actuality, the word *Timakowa* is two words: (K) *Timako arowa*.
- TH: Meaning “there are crocodiles”?²
- S: Yes. Nimy people, the people of Timika Pantai, are *Timako-we*, crocodile people.
- TH: So Timakowa means the place where there are people from Timika Pantai.
- S: More correctly the territory of Timika Pantai people.
- PN: There was a relationship with the kingdoms (*kerajaan*) [e.g. Moluccan trading networks, TH]. Before the *kompenni* [e.g. Dutch administration, TH] *Major Nimy* was boss of Timakowa.³
- S: You’ve seen *Karapaos* and other *adat* situations. They usually begin with an (K) *mbake pukaro* or *adat* leader welcoming visiting communities. He will sing the names of each of the tribes [e.g. other Kamoro villages, TH] present. He’ll say “*Timako-a, Wania-we-a, Aika-we-a*” and so forth [these are the “tribal

² *Timako*, or crocodile, is an explicit reference to a particular *otepe*, powers over natural and supernatural phenomena See Chapter Two for a discussion of *otepe*.

³ Although none of my Kamoro informants spoke English, they frequently borrowed English words related to Freeport’s operations. Some of the English words and phrases I frequently heard included: “boss,” “boss *besar* (big boss),” “community” (e.g. Freeport’s Community Affairs Department), and “borrow pit” as well as a host of place names such as “Portsite” and various places along the Freeport access road according to their Mile marker (Indonesia uses the metric system, but Freeport and their contractors, both American-based, used miles during the construction phases).

names” of Timika Pantai, Keakwa and Tipuka, which Sabinus chanted as an *mbake pukaro* would, TH].

Thus, the “-a” suffix shortened from “*arowa*” which indicates physical presence, combined with these words meant those representatives from these various communities were in attendance. It follows that Timakowa or Timako-a indicated the presence and/or influence of the Nimy/Timika people within a certain region. I then asked about Timuka and Timika. According to Piet and Sabinus, there has been some confusion, at least on the part of European cartographers, due to the fact that a man named Timukaru moved from an interior *dusun* called Kawao to the coast where he became the (I) *kepala dusun* of the new location (e.g. He was the community leader over a specific resource area).⁴ Common to Kamoro naming practice, a shortened version of his name Timuka (spelled Timoeka by the Dutch with the same pronunciation) was used locally to describe the area. In turn, the shortened version of his name was inscribed on maps during the Dutch colonial era as the name of this settlement.

My informants from this settlement further explained that the geographic name Timika has yet a separate unrelated explanation from Timuka. It is derived from the Kamoro words *Tirimiria imikamo*, literally meaning “the place where we collect the water made milky by the residue of sago working.”⁵ According to them, the two-word expression *Tirimiria imikamo*, or Timika, is the appropriate name describing the physical characteristics of the geographic region. The similarity of the name of the early inhabitant, Timuka and Timika is according to them, coincidental. The contemporary “town” of Timika, developed along completely different lines which did not take into account any of the indigenous naming strategies as I shall outline later in this chapter.

⁴ *Dusun* is an Indonesian word that literally means “grove or orchard.” In Papua it is frequently used to describe a semi-nomadic group’s sago areas. *Kepala Dusun* is an Indonesian government administrative title. Both words and their relationship to indigenous Kamoro social organisation will be discussed in Chapter Seven.

⁵ Indonesian: *Tempat dimana kami mencari air kabur yang mengandung sahat sago*. Two years later, the same informant provided the following etymological breakdown of Timika. “*Tim*” means hazy, blurred, clouded (I: *kabur*) and “*-ika*” means always (I: *selalu*).

NATALIS NOKORYAO'S *IMAKATIRI*

The Herald

On May twenty-second 1960, the same year that Natalis Nokoryao had predicted that a large boat carrying influential goods would arrive in Timika, an aircraft flew low over a Kamoro settlement along the right bank of the Minajerwi River. My informants refer to this village as Koperapoka Lama (Old Koperapoka), Nawaripi Lama (Old Nawaripi) or Tirimami.⁶ The former name describes the physical characteristics of the location, and literally means, “place where there are nipah palms.” Nawaripi is an acronym referring to the two complementary kampongs/hamlets, who resided at that location, Neikeripi and Waoneripi. And Tirimami is the name of the location itself.

At least a dozen Nawaripi men from the settlement watched the plane from their canoes, while other villagers scrambled about in the settlement. Some ran to the edge of the river to get a better look while others fled toward the jungle out of fear. Disappearing from sight, the plane landed on the Inabuka River, just to the East. From there the plane's passengers travelled by diesel launch to Omauga, a village on the banks of the Mawati River. Following negotiations with Yeremias Yoka, the *Kepala Kampong* of Omauga, the Omaugans agreed to construct a twenty feet by fifty feet structure in exchange for a 100-pound bag of rice. This building served as the base camp for the joint Freeport Sulphur-East Borneo Company (OBM) expedition to the Carstensz Mountains (Wilson 1981:210).

The expedition planned to follow a track used by the Omaugans before the Second World War to collect damar resin (and prior to that in 1912 by the second Wollaston expedition), to reach the Ertsberg deposit recorded by J.J. Dozy in 1936. In an effort to facilitate access to the well-populated (and recently contacted) Amungme settlements in the Tsinga Valley, the Catholic Mission had

⁶ In the dialect of the Nawaripi people, the “k” sound is replaced with a glottal stop. Thus, Koperapoka is pronounced “*Operapo'a*”.

recently re-opened this track which reached the interior via Tematama, an Omaugan damar-collection location (Coenen 1956b; Mampioper 1961). The expedition enlisted the assistance of Moses Kilangin, an Indonesian-speaking Amungme Catholic teacher, to mediate relationships between the expedition and the indigenous populations they would encounter (Wilson 1981:31-32).⁷

On the morning of May 30, 1960, the Omauga community loaded a fleet of fifty-foot dugout canoes and a diesel launch with the expedition's supplies. By just after eight in the morning the team of forty-four rowers in fourteen canoes set out on the arduous task of transporting the expedition and their supplies upstream (ibid: 37-38). On the third day the group had finally reached a point where canoe travel was no longer possible; here they unloaded the canoes and began the difficult overland hike to the lowland Amungme settlement of Belakmakema.⁸ Here Moses had little difficulty recruiting willing porters from among the Amungme.⁹ Eventually, with the assistance of Amungme porters and guides, the

⁷ In exchange for the six-month "loan" of Moses, the expedition paid the mission US\$300 and agreed to donate all surplus supplies to the Catholic Mission at Kokonao (Wilson 1981:32). With the exception of "an expensive watch" purchased in Biak by Forbes Wilson, the Freeport leader of the expedition, Moses was not compensated directly for his services at that time (ibid). Later (in the late 1990s) in recognition of his services to PT Freeport Indonesia over the years, Moses Kilangin was given a house in Timika Indah.

⁸ According to Cook, Wa Valley Amungme who had migrated to Belakmakama in 1960 did not remain in the location long. Frustrated by heat and disease, they returned to their highland homes (Cook 1988:25). Along with Paulus Salingki Solme, Moses also played a central role in leading the Amungme communities of the Noemba and Tsinga Valleys to resettle to the lowlands for purposes of establishing a rubber plantation. By 1959, the Dutch Administration had brokered a deal between the Nafaripi (Eastern Sempan lowlanders) and the Amungme (represented by Moses and Paulus) that purchased Nafaripi land with axes, knives, tobacco, spades, clothing and soap for the Amungme resettlement and plantation project (Cook 1988:28). By 1960, about half of the Amungme population of the Noemba and Tsinga Valleys had chosen to relocate to the lowland settlement and on the eve of the Freeport-OBM expedition were preparing to begin their move.

⁹ Moses chose no lowland Omaugans as porters for the journey to the interior. Perhaps he was privileging his Amungme kinsmen, while at the same time levying symbolic capital and prestige as a leader and by his ability to bring income to the community (see Cook 1988:47 for Amungme perceptions of Moses). Notably, as a child Kilangin had followed an Amungme trading expedition to the Nawaripi settlements where he was adopted by Cornelis Leftew, a Kei Islander teaching at Waoneripi (UABS 1998a:24). He also lived among Kamoro communities for quite some time during his training in Kokonao, and perhaps he knew that the lowlanders were of little assistance as porters beyond the areas where canoe travel was practicable; this had been the experience of every explorer to the region. Whatever the case, and I suspect each of the possibilities may have played into his reasoning, Jan Ruygrok, the representative of the East Borneo Company seemed to pick up on Moses' recruitment biases; he personally enlisted ten of the Omaugan rowers. As it

Freeport-OBM reached the Ertsberg.¹⁰ Their geological assessment of the Ertsberg outcrop reconfirmed their intention to progress further with the development of the mine. Though political circumstances prevented Freeport's immediate return to the area, the relationships that they established with the Amungme and the Omaugans would definitely influence future engagements with their host communities. At the same time, by preparing the way for an eventual return, the expedition symbolically heralded the realisation of Nokoryao's *imakatiri*, even if the Timikans had yet to realise it.

The Realisation

The overthrow of President Sukarno and Suharto's rise to the presidency in the aftermath of the 1965 coup paved the way for foreign investment in Indonesia.¹¹ Just two months after Suharto was sworn in as President of the Republic of Indonesia in March 1967, a sixty-foot boat arrived at the coastal village of Timika, just as Nokoryao had explained. Over the next three months, the boat returned three times. Its cargo, including diesel generators, a bulldozer, a truck, a host of unassembled materials, among them a port-a-camp and helicopters, would prove incredibly influential for the future of the region; Natalis Nokoryao's *imakatiri* was beginning to be realised (Wilson 1981:164-165; Mealey 1996:86-

turned out, Moses' decisions, for whatever reasons, proved correct. Before the end of the second day of overland hiking, all of the Omawkans had deserted the expedition and returned to the coast (Wilson 1981:52).

¹⁰ In an account written in 1992, Beanal remarks that there was a disagreement between the Freeport-OBM survey group and the Amungme community over lack of payment to the porters (1992:4).

¹¹ In an article that examines the role of the United States in the coup which brought Suharto to power, Scott (1985) provides the following insight: "The actions of some U.S. corporations, moreover, made it clear that by early 1965 they expected a significant boost to the U.S. standing in Indonesia. For example, a recently declassified [CIA] cable reveals that Freeport Sulphur had by April 1965 reached a preliminary "arrangement" with Indonesian officials for what would become a \$500 million investment in West Papua copper. This gives the lie to the public claim that the company did not initiate negotiations with Indonesians (the inevitable Ibnu Sutowo) until February 1966" (1985:257). This is particularly significant because the coup that brought Suharto to power and opened up Indonesia to foreign investment took place on October 1, 1965.

87).¹² Considering that the 1961 population figures for East Mimika reported only one European out of a population of 5724, the arrival of twenty Europeans on board the boat was likely a significant and unprecedented event for the villagers of Timika and Keakwa.

Upon arrival, the newcomers immediately bulldozed the heavy vegetation along the shore to make a place for their pre-fabricated base-camp buildings and began grading the disputed airfield linking Timika with neighbouring Keakwa (Wilson 1981:166; Mealey 1996:87). Crowds of villagers looked on as the foreigners assembled the portable camp buildings, heavy equipment and helicopters from the boxes carried by the boat.¹³ The speed with which all of these items were landed, unloaded, and assembled must have been an impressive sight. Even during the post-War Dutch period, physical development of this level and at this pace was unheard of, underscoring just how influential the appearance of Freeport and their contractors and their ability to rapidly “create” these large things may have been.

Over the next two years, the Timika and Keakwa villagers witnessed the arrival of a steady stream of Western foreigners. Unlike those who had arrived initially, the newcomers were spending less time in Timika; using its airfield and port as a point of entry before heading off by boat toward the East. In addition to being accompanied and sometimes followed by Timika and Keakwa villagers, while in transit, the foreigners also passed several coastal settlements, attracting a

¹² The vessel was a decommissioned Allied “Landing Craft Tank” or LTC, named *Turtle*, owned and operated by Ted Fitzgerald, a freelance contractor. He shuttled equipment to Timika from Darwin (Wilson 1981:165; Mealey 1996:86).

¹³ A former expatriate Freeport employee recollected the final assembly of the first helicopter at Timika. According to him: “The first PHI [Petroleum Helicopter, Inc., TH] helicopter was put together on the beach somewhere between Camp One and Kokonau [i.e. Timika, TH]. The whole village gathered around when it came time to crank the engine the first time. When the engine caught, the noise was tremendous and the locals scattered like crazy. There was a woman there who was nursing a small pig and a baby. She dropped the baby and took off with the pig. The only local person left in the space of seconds was the baby (interviewed by author March 1998). It is difficult to gauge the accuracy of the account, but certainly the event would have been startling for at least some of the community. Strangely, I did not record any Kamoro perspectives on the event.



Image 20: Final assembly of helicopter at Timika (Pantai) in 1967 before a group of Kamoro on-lookers (Photo by Del Flint, published in Mealey 1996:80).

following of curious Kamoro. They were travelling toward a place called Aika, a former settlement location for the Tipuka people and the site of a former NNGPM exploration base camp.¹⁴

Eventually, the foreigners' activities had shifted almost completely to Aika in support of the construction of Freeport's nearby port facility at Amamapare and the Timika airfield had fallen almost completely into disuse. Soon after, in 1971, several villagers from Keakwa and Timika followed one of the Westerners to the new location which had been unceremoniously dubbed Camp One or *Kamp Satu*, a name which seems to have supplanted the indigenous name, Aika, in local discourse.¹⁵ That westerner was John Currie who, in addition to being among the first expatriates to arrive at Timika, was also one of the few Westerners who could speak Indonesian.¹⁶

NAO NOKORO AND NAWAPINARO: STRATEGIC INVOCATION OF AMOKO-KWERE

By the time that Freeport and their contractor Bechtel Santa Fe-Pomeroy (hereafter referred to as Bechtel) had ceased using Timika as a base camp, *Kamp*

¹⁴ Though I have seen photographs of the NNGPM basecamp at Aika (published in Colijn 1937) and of people at a Aika (in the collection of the Tropenmuseum in Amsterdam), I am uncertain if a settlement existed at Aika prior to the arrival of the NNGPM or if there was one, whether or not it was semi-permanent or just a fishing location. It appears that at least by the 1940s, Aika was used as a settlement location.

¹⁵ Several Kamoro informants named John Currie as an early "boss" at the Portsite area. None, however, were able to describe his position within the company. Although I was unable to find Mr. Currie, one of his contemporary expatriate Freeport employees offered the following: "John Currie came here in about 1970 or earlier. He was Scottish and had fought with the British Army in Malaysia in the 1950 [campaign] against the communists. He then worked for lumber companies in Kalimantan and came here with FI [Freeport Indonesia] as Administrative Manager. He spoke fluent Indonesian and was married to a Malaysian lady. John was very good with the local people. He handled all local affairs in those days. I think he stayed until sometime in 1973" (Former Freeport employee interviewed by author, 10 February 1998).

¹⁶ The only other Western employee who worked in the area in the early 1970s that contemporary informants could name was George Stock. According to my Kamoro informants he was a Eurasian, born of a Dutch father and Javanese mother (fieldnotes, 28 February 1998). A former Freeport Employee who worked at Amamapare/Portsite in the early 1970s adds that Stock was the first Freeport Accounting Manager (Personal correspondence, March 1998). Kamoro informants also named other initial Freeport employees including the Javanese Camp Services Manager

Satu and Amamapare had already become the hubs of lowland construction activity. While my informants who were involved in the early years of construction at these locations unanimously admitted that the land surrounding Amamapare and *Kamp Satu* was and remains the property of Tipuka, they nonetheless saw no problem with either their or Freeport's usage of it. None of these initial (or present) workers were from Tipuka, and apparently there were few, if any, Tipukans involved in the project at all at that stage. The core of the early 1970s Kamoro workforce appears to have consisted of five men from two sets of allied settlements. They were from Atuka and Aika-Wapuka on the one hand (hereafter referred to as the Atuka group), and Timika on the other (hereafter referred to as the Timika group).¹⁷

The Atuka group had the most substantial semi-permanent settlements on the coast in the area between Timika and *Kamp Satu*, while the latter of course had watched and participated in activities surrounding the landing strip that linked their villages that initially attracted the foreigners. Liber Kapeyau from Atuka was among this initial cadre of Kamoro workers at Amamapare (also known as Portsite). According to his reckonings, the remainder of the core group of initial Kamoro workers included Herman Ukapoka (from Aika-Wapuka), Hilaris Natikatereyau and Urbanus Emeyau (from Timika), and Silvester Mopereyau (from Keakwa). The Atuka group moved in the early 1970s to an "island" popularly known as Karaka Island, to work for Freeport at the Portsite and *Kamp Satu* projects. At high tide, the "island" disappears, leaving only stilted houses standing above the water. The people from the Timika group on the other hand, initially chose to live at a place called Nawapinaro. For both groups, *amoko-kwere* played a role in their selection of a place to live outside of their territory.

Suwardi, his Ambonese superintendent Robbie and a Japanese worker by the name of Kato (fieldnotes February-March 1998).

¹⁷ Although I separate them here, the groups are not mutually exclusive. Timika and Aika-Wapuka in particular have a history of marriages between them. This is evidenced by the fact that during a certain period, Timika (Pantai) was called Tiwaka, a conjugation of Timika and Aika-Wapuka.

When I was consulting to Freeport in 1998, Liber Kapeyau was living on Karaka Island adjacent, to Amamapare.¹⁸ Having moved there from Atuka in 1972, he was part of the initial Kamoro workforce to relocate to Karaka. When I asked Kapeyau who owned Karaka Island, he clearly and quickly responded “Tipuka.” However, when I asked him if he or the others were compensating Tipuka for the usage of the island, as may have been customary in other situations of resource usage, he commented:

The Tipukans call this place *Nao Nokoro*. They never come out here to challenge us because they are afraid of a giant whale that according to their stories [*amoko-kwere*] lives just on the other side of this island (Liber Kapeyau interviewed by author, 9 February 1998).

Although I am uncertain of the specifics of the “whale story” to which Kapeyau was referring, I have come across the words *nao* and *nokoro*.¹⁹ *Nao* is used to describe a cemetery, a gravesite, or in the context of having to do with wrongful death; it often carries the more specific connotation of being a place where murdered people are buried. For example, the name Kokonao is more properly *Kaoka-nao*, which means “the place where women were murdered/buried.” Drabbe’s dictionary defines *nao* as “under, in the shadow, or invisible” (1937:86), perhaps this implies that something of the murdered persons still remains, but is out of sight.

Although Coenen (1963:69) remarks that Nokoro is the name of an *amoko-we* associated with *Kaware*, neither he, Pouwer, nor Zegwaard present any *amoko-kwere* that explicitly mention him. During my fieldwork I observed a dance called *Nokoro* performed by Hiripao village in East Mimika. When I asked the *Kepala Suku Adat* (the “customary tribal chief”) of Hiripao about the story behind the dance he explained:

This dance is about the unfair/improper behaviour (*perlakuan tidak adil*) of two young girls toward their birth father, *Tuan Nokoro*. As a result, Nokoro left the two young girls. He used

¹⁸ More accurately, Karaka is adjacent to an area presently known as “Cargo Dock” which is part of the Portsite complex. Freeport’s facility for drying concentrate and loading it onto ships separates Cargo Dock from Amamapare.

¹⁹ In the Asmat narrative that corresponds to the Kamoro Mirokoteyao *amoko-kwere*, the hero constructs the feast buildings from the skin and the spine of a whale (see Biakai 1982).

a special short canoe and went from kampong to kampong asking the people to kill him, but the people responded to his requests instead by making a feast for him (Simon Natipia, 22 April 1998).

The use of the Indonesian word *Tuan* in here is significant. The only occasions when the word is regularly used by the Kamoro are when speaking to or about a respected Westerner or in the phrase *Tuan Tanah*. Although *Tuan Tanah* literally means “landlord,” for the Kamoro it is used as a translation for the Kamoro *Taparamako*, which refers to the ever-present “original owner” of an area, an *amoko-we*. This is certainly the context that Simon Natipia was invoking.²⁰

Widjojo recorded a similar brief version of the same narrative from Timika (Pantai) that his informants called Nokorota (1996:33-34). Both Widjojo and Natipia’s “Nokoro” narratives are strikingly similar to one that Pouwer relayed to me which explained that the father, in the version he heard called Kinako, is a widower whose two daughters continually offered him only inferior food, while they saved the better foods for themselves. When Kinako found out, he made a canoe out of ironwood, a kind of wood that doesn’t float. In this “heavy canoe,” Kinako travelled under the water to the underworld from where he tormented his daughters for shaming him (Pouwer interviewed by author 25 February 1999).

I have also heard *nokoro* used in association with ritual items and dances related to *Kaware*, the feast associated with men’s secrets.²¹ In Hiripao, a specific ceremonial canoe was associated with a *nokoro* dance. I was told that this canoe was called a *nokoro-ku* (literally a *nokoro* canoe) or a *nokoro-kao* (literally shell, covering or rind of *nokoro*). As the story suggests, the canoe was usually short; it was made of four flat sides lashed together; as was the case with the ironwood canoe in Pouwer’s account, it quite obviously could not float. A different style of

²⁰ From her recent fieldwork, Diana Glazebrook informed me that the Muyu, other lowland Papuans indigenous to West New Guinea, use the term *tuan tanah* in a similar manner (personal communication). Ballard adds that the neighbouring highland Amungme also similarly use the term (personal communication).

²¹ The leaking of *Kaware* secrets to women during a *Kaware* Feast at Tipuka around 1900 caused a major war, which radically altered power relationships in East Mimika (see Chapter Three).

nokoro-kaio is also commonly documented as an attribute of the *Kaware* feast. The examples that I saw in museum collections were flat boards with relief carvings of various animals. I saw similar reproductions in the field, though their contemporary function (if any) is unclear. Kooijman's extensive research on Kamoro material culture led him to believe that there was an explicit relationship between *nokorokao* and *amoko-kwere* (Kooijman 1984:77).

The precise connection between *Nao Nokoro* the place and the reference to the whale in the *amoko-kwere* remains unclear to me. I discussed Kapeyau's explanation with Jan Pouwer. The only explanation that he could offer was that in the areas on either side of Mimika (e.g. west of Etna Bay and in the north-western Asmat area) some versions of the Mirokoteyao narrative (see Chapter One) hold that the monster is actually a sperm whale (Pouwer in press). Although I am unable to delineate a precise connection between *Nao Nokoro* and the particular narrative, the fact remains that Kapeyau and the other Kamoro who formed the core of that initial workforce exploited a Tipukan weakness grounded in an *amoko-kwere*. This is perhaps an indication of how Kamoro may in fact employ *amoko-kwere* as a socio-political device to manipulate and reformulate relationships not only with outsiders but also with other Kamoro communities as a means to legitimate activities that might otherwise be deemed improper.

While the Atuka group was living at *Nao Nokoro*/Karaka Island, the Timika group appears to have invoked an *amoko-kwere* to rationalise their initial choice of encampment location elsewhere within the Freeport Project Area. When I asked a thirty-five year old informant about his village's relationship to the Amamapare area, he responded with an *amoko-kwere*:

Long ago the ancestors of Nimy-Timuka initially lived on the Aikwa Otomona River at Mile Two [the Freeport access road is marked in terms of miles from the where the road begins at Portsite, TH], a place called Nawapinaro. However, there were two young leaders [who had arrived from the East, TH] who wore "container" masks²², *mamokoro* that scared the [Nimy-Timuka, TH] people so that they moved their settlement outside of the Aikwa River area to the coast. The place that they moved to was called *Ndautiri*, which means the place

²² Using the words *sarung topeng*, he implied that the mask "contained" spirits.

where the Asmat murdered a boy [presumably a Kamoro, TH] on the beach.²³ As a result, the place was called *Ndautiri*. In actuality, these people were descendants of Nimy-Nawaripi when they all lived at Mile Two, [and later at] Camp Two on the Timika Road [and] at Pad Eleven where they lived alongside the river.²⁴ However, they [the Nimy] left the Nawaripi people...After the incident involving the two young leaders [e.g. the attack], they [the Nimy, TH] were uncertain as to whether or not they would depart from the Nimy Kampong at Nawapinaro...However, after the murder of two people²⁵, the Nawaripi forced the Nimy to settle elsewhere. Thus, the Nimy people moved to the place first called Timuka and subsequently called Nimy or Timika...(Fieldnotes 22 March 1996).

The location, known both as Nawapinaro and Mile Two, is said to have been where the ancestors of Timika had lived prior to the invasion of the Nawaripi communities from the East during the Utakae War (See Chapter One). When I asked the informant if this meant that Timika could rightfully use the area, he claimed that because his ancestors had planted sago and coconut trees at Nawapinaro, Timikans had rights of access to what they had planted. He went on to say that they could take their time harvesting the trees, implying that indeed the Timikans could live at Nawapinaro.²⁶ Apparently, however, Nawapinaro

²³ *Ndautiri* is literally the words *Ndau*, the Timika dialect version of *Nao* and *tiri*, which usually refers to sand or beach. Thus, the word *Ndautiri* likely referred to a beach location where someone was murdered. Nothing in the word inherently links the name to the Asmat.

²⁴ Here the informant described his ancestors as Nimy-Nawaripi, making an explicit connection between his ancestors and those of the Nawaripi who were the attacking party arriving from the east. Pad Eleven has consistently been acknowledged to be within the territory of the Tipuka communities, not Nawaripi. This claim did not appear to be contested by the Nawaripi Communities during my research.

²⁵ Presumably here he means the murder of two Nimy people as part of a revenge attack on all of the Utakae people. However, all of these movements were set into motion when the Utakae people murdered the mother's brother of the two young Nawaripi warriors who led the attack. He was murdered as revenge (*aopao*) for thefts from Utakae gardens perpetrated by the two Nawaripi warriors. The two young warriors had deceived their home community (Nawaripi) by not telling them the reason behind their uncle's murder, which triggered an errant counter attack, which caused the Utakae War.

²⁶ While coconut trees are commonly planted by individuals and usually remain the planter's property, I never encountered Kamoro actually planting sago. Clearing weeds and other plants from around the base of the tree marked ownership of individual sago trees. In Pouwer's thesis, he notes explicitly that his informants felt that their connection with Naowapinare via the *amoko-kwere* was not grounds for rights to the land (1955:94-95). Perhaps because there was no immediate political or economic value associated with the location, his informants had no reason to rationalise access. With regards to coconut trees, Nawaripi informants explained to me that as the result of intermarriage between a Nawaripi woman and a man from Omauga, the Nawaripi own coconut trees along a part of the coast that belongs to the Omauga people. According to

proved unsuitable as it was infested with mosquitos, forcing the Timika group to join the workers from the Atuka gorup on Karaka Island/*Nao Nokoro*.

While the workers from the Atuka and Timika groups used *amoko-kwere* to legitimate their squatting on Tipuka land, according to Kapeyau Freeport Management was more pro-active in its concern with land ownership. After asking his Kamoro labourers who had traditional rights to the area, John Currie requested permission from Pelipus Ateriapoka from Tipuka, to open up camps at Amamapare and *Kamp Satu*. According to Kapeyau, permission was granted. Currie also compensated several “Tipukans” for coconut trees felled by the company at *Kamp Satu*.²⁷

INVESTIGATING THE FIRST FORMAL KAMORO COMPENSATION CLAIM

Despite John Currie’s sincere attempt to make reparations with the impacted Tipukans, some Kamoro lodged an official compensation claim. Already by late December 1970, Kamoro representatives had presented Freeport management at Amamapare and Jayapura and the Provincial Government in Jayapura with a compensation claim on behalf of the Tipuka community for damages caused by camp and road clearings and construction.

While Tipukans themselves may have initiated some form of protest, the investigative report suggests that the compensation letter itself was actually penned by Kamoro from outside of Freeport’s Project Area. Although some of the claims demonstrated a complete lack of familiarity with the areas in question, others seemed particularly relevant. Based on his report, the representative of the Indonesian Provincial Government investigating the claim on behalf of the Directorate of West Irian Agrarian Affairs, Muljono, appears to have conducted a

them, both sides acknowledge that the tree and its fruits belong to the Nawaripi, but the land remains the property of Omauga (fieldnotes, March 1997).

²⁷ Of the men known to have received compensation, a government report listed four names: Iventius Natipea, Otto Barapun, Robus Tepaja, and Kojus Simons. Only the first of these names strikes me as obviously Kamoro. It is unclear whether the others were in fact Kamoro or people from other areas such as the Kei Islands or Ambon. This likely was the beginning of one of Freeport’s ongoing problems of determining the “correct” people to compensate.

fairly comprehensive review of the case. As an indication of Freeport's commitment, the Vice President of PT Freeport Indonesia, Ali Budiardjo, made a special trip to the project area, which by then was known internally to Freeport employees as "Jobsite," to assist in the investigation and resolution of the problem. Muljono also indicated that from the contents of a letter from Freeport to the Chairman of the Department of Mines in Jakarta and Budiardjo's presence, he believed that "Freeport was seriously ready to settle the case" (ibid:3).

Muljono investigated the environment independently and he discussed the issue with Kamoro at *Kamp Satu*, Tipuka village, and in the sub-district seat at Kokonao where he tried to gather the original signatories to the letter. He noted those claims that appeared to have been true, which centred mostly around Bechtel/Freeport's felling of hardwoods between Camp Eleven and Camp Twenty-two that were used for temporary bridge construction and the clearing of sago trees for road construction. At Tipuka, Muljono managed to interview several of the 169 villagers, including the "village chief" Alo Nataiku, regarding the claims.²⁸ Alo described his displeasure with the Freeport Project to Muljono, citing the loss of sago trees for road construction as Tipuka's principal (financial) grievance (Muljono 1971:5). Another grievance documented by Muljono was that Freeport had covered up a (former) cemetery at *Kamp Satu* with felled trees (ibid). As compensation for both, the Tipukans sought one "landing ship" [diesel launch?] and one "sawing machine" [chainsaw or sawmill?]. Ultimately, Muljono resolved that appropriate "recognition" for the claim was two outboard motors and one "sawing machine," nearly what the community had requested. What his letter does not mention, however, is whether or not the government agreed with his assessment and whether Freeport eventually did pay the compensation.

Beyond the land and resource compensation claims, the letter also included questions about access to medical support and day-labour wages. While a doctor's records at Portside demonstrated that indeed indigenous people were being treated, the issue of wages and employment did arise in Muljono's

²⁸ This is the same Alo Nataiku (Wania) discussed in Chapter Two who continued to challenge Freeport for compensation until his death in 1998.

meetings in Kokonao where a man described as the “promoter” for East Mimika, A. Mamejao, complained about Freeport’s hiring practices (for regular employees, not casual labourers):

Freeport...hired Irianese labours [sic (labourers)] and drivers from the north coast while Freeport’s location is in the Kokonao district. (North Coast Irianese = ones who originates [sic] from Biak and Djajapura [sic]) [rather than hiring local people, TH] (A. Mamejao in Muljono 1971:8).²⁹

Even after the compensation investigation, there were still no indications that Tipukans were actually working for the project. Other Kamoro served as labourers unloading and transporting equipment and supplies between *Kamp Satu* and Amamapare and they assisted in the construction of the port facility. Asked by Bechtel to gather more labourers, Kapeyau and his colleagues initiated an indigenous hiring scheme that sowed the seeds for increasingly complex internal Kamoro socio-political problems. For these men, kin and allied relations took precedence for their recruitment practices over appeasing the contemporary inhabitants of the area. As a result, Kamoro from outside of the area increasingly gained employment and other opportunities within the Freeport Project Area. None of the approximately seventy men that the Timika and Atuka groups had recruited were from the settlements acknowledged as having direct rights of access and ownership over the land and resources within the Freeport Project Area.

BEYOND THE KAMORO...

In addition to the coastal infrastructure projects, one of the other major lowland activities within Freeport’s Project Area centred on the construction of an access road from Amamapare toward the highland mine area and the clearing of a new

²⁹ The reason for this was likely not conscious prejudice on the part of Freeport and/or Bechtel against Kamoro employees, but that all regular employees needed to be hired through a manpower company. The closest manpower company, PT Buma Kumawa, was based in Biak; therefore all workers had to go through testing and registration in Biak, regardless of point of origin. This set a

airfield. While the people from the coastal settlements were eager to work with Freeport and Bechtel on the coast, they proved less willing to work deeper into Tipuka's territory. As a result, Freeport and Bechtel recruited highland Amungme from the resettlement project at Akimuga (who had originated from the Noemba Valley) with whom the preliminary Freeport-OBM expedition had previously worked, to assist with the heavy labour.³⁰

During the initial years of the arduous task of carving a road out of the swampy lowlands, Amungme labourers who were predominantly from the Noemba Valley had already migrated to the project (Cook 1988:28). According to Moses Kilangin, already by 1970, 250 Amungme were employed working either at "Camp Two" or at "Mile 50" in the foothills (in Mealey 1996:322). Following the arrival of another wave of Noemba Valley/Akimuga Amungme migrants, the Amungme established a more permanent settlement in the lowlands adjacent to the airfield that they had recently carved out of the jungle (*ibid*). Freeport contribution of an access road seemed to make the Amungme settlement official.

Constructed to accommodate larger, conventional aircraft, this strip was completed in 1971 after which the Timika-Keakwa airfield was completely

pattern for Papuans from the Biak and Sentani areas to obtain work with Freeport and their contractors.

³⁰ Planned and begun in the 1950s under the Dutch administration, the resettlement project was continued under the Indonesian administration. At the time of the 1960 Freeport-OBM expedition, Amungme had already been preparing to migrate to the Akimuga resettlement project (UABS 1998a:28). Between 1960 and 1964 Amungme moved to Akimuga by way of Belakmakema and Putsinara at the base of the mountains. At its height, as many as 3000 Amungme lived in the Akimuga project. About two-thirds of them had originated from the Noemba Valley and the other third from the Tsinga Valley. It is also quite possible that Amungme cosmology and expectations linked to millennial *Hai* movements may have played a role in their willingness to live and accept work in the lowlands. Ballard et al. note that Amungme of the Tsinga and Noema areas grew impatient during the planning stages of the Akimuga resettlement. As a result, they began to migrate to the lowlands by themselves (UABS 1998a:26). They also document that the Amungme and the Damal received Christianity framed by their understandings of *hai* (*ibid*). Cosmologically, the Amungme interpret the entire landscape from their highland valleys to the coast as anthropomorphically overlaid with representations of an ancestral female spirit (Hafild in Beanal 1997:xx-xxi). The same report also documents *Hai* movements around the same time period in 1956 (Maingun *Hai*) and 1966-67 (Ndapu Ndiame *Hai*) and 1969 (UABS 1998a:20, 113).

abandoned by Freeport.³¹ By the end of 1972, the entire access road was finished, as was all of the major construction necessary for the mine to begin production. In December, the first 10,000 tons of concentrate were shipped from Amamapare to a Japanese smelter (Mealey 1996:322).

Meanwhile, the permanent Amungme settlement marked a new period of “foreigners” living in the lowlands. It is difficult to pinpoint precisely which Kamoro communities considered the area around the newly constructed airport to fall within their territories. Its location just west of the Aikwa River and near the headwaters of the Wania and Kauga Rivers places it potentially within the access rights areas of the Nawaripi, Tipuka, Hiripao, and Kaugapu communities. None of these communities appear to have been involved in the foundational stages of the port and road-building projects. According to Cook, the Amungme, in particular those from the Tsinga and Wa Valleys, already believed that this area was their land, which would ultimately lead to internal Amungme conflict between the Tsinga and Wa Amungme on the one hand and the Noemba Amungme on the other (Cook 1988:42).

To commemorate the beginning of production at the Freeport facility, President Suharto arrived in early 1973. During his visit to the recently completed highland town site area near the mine, he christened the highland town site “Tembagapura,” Indonesian for Copper City. On that same occasion, he also re-named the province from West Irian to Irian Jaya, Victorious Irian. Freeport, Tembagapura, and Irian Jaya were from that point forward united as direct outcomes of the Suharto regime and more broadly as solidly part of the Indonesian Nation.

That same year also saw the establishment of a formal government presence inside of the Freeport Project Area and the arrival of some of the first non-Papuan

³¹ Bomb-craters in the Timika-Keakwa airfield filled with water at high tide were a daily testament to the heavy bombing the airfield had suffered from allied aircraft during World War II (Wilson 1981:166). The airfield was so prone to flooding that usage was restricted to aquatic aircraft. Thus, Freeport specially purchased an aquatic PBV airplane formerly owned by Howard Hughes to shuttle supplies from Darwin to the coastal Timika airstrip (ibid:166-167).

Indonesians to spontaneously migrate to the Freeport project.³² Planning a sub-district (*kecamatan*) base along the Wania River approximately seventeen kilometres south of the new airport, it appears that the new local officials, inspired by President Suharto, began their responsibilities by inscribing the landscape with “appropriate” names. The Amungme settlement adjacent to the “Timika” airfield, which had locally become known as *Kwamki*, an *Amungkal* (the Amungme language) word meaning “bird of paradise,” was officially rechristened *Harapan*, Indonesian for “Hope.” For the newly established regional governmental office location along the Wania River, the government opted for a local flare with the Indonesianisation of the Wania cultural hero Mapurpiu; naming the new sub-district capital Mapuru-Jaya, victorious Mapuru.

Despite numerous potential social and political implications of these new names, arguably no name would have more symbolic significance to the social and political future than the one used for the new airfield. Unknown to the Timika villagers, Freeport and Bechtel named the airport after the only other landing strip in the region; they called this new airfield “Timika.”

In 1960, Natalis Nokoryao had announced his *imakatiri* that a boat would arrive at Timika with important goods. He also said that Nateimi, a Timika ancestor, would quickly spread the goods throughout Mimika, and ultimately be very influential. Within the course of five years, the bulldozers, men and equipment that arrived via boat in Timika starting in 1967 had indeed been influential. By 1972 a road linked the newly-constructed port facility at Amamapare with the interior mine-site above 4000 metres, symbolically opening up a link between the region and the larger outside world. The conduit of

³² According to Cook, the initial non-Papuan migrants were from the Kei Islands and from Sulawesi (1988:87). The nature of her information suggests a perspective gleaned almost entirely from Amungme informants. Given the intensive interactions between the Kamoro and outsiders and the involvement the Dutch administration and the Catholic Church in the region, Kei Islanders certainly pre-dated the arrival of Freeport in what later became their Project Area. Also, mentioned previously in this chapter, hundreds of “Indonesians” already lived in Mimika in 1961. The final government report notes the presence of Chinese Merchants in various settlements, including ones well inside of the Freeport Project Area at Waoneripi where Gan Hen Jan had a house and a store and in Tipuka where Tan Goan Tjoan was in the process of constructing a store (Mampioer 1961:19).

information and access to the region was Timika. Under the circumstances, it appears that Natalis Nokoryao's *imakatiri* had indeed been realised, though for whose benefit remained unclear.

The January 1974 Agreement

Notwithstanding the activities of Kamoro communities on the coast, and their potential rights of access to the areas within the Freeport Project Area, the factors most influential in the development of the area surrounding the "Timika" airfield are most closely related to the activities of the Amungme and the Free Papua separatist movement, the *Organisasi Papua Merdeka* (or OPM). As these activities ultimately impacted relationships between Freeport, the Government and all of the local communities and shaped the modern "Timika" town, they are worth reviewing. Since 1967, Freeport had met with opposition from those Amungme communities living in the Wa Valley beneath the Ertsberg deposit (Wilson 1981:168-169).³³ Though initial protests were quelled thanks to the assistance of Moses Kilangin (*ibid*), Amungme resentment of the mining operations continued (see Pogolamun 1984). On the eve of the mine's opening in 1972, Amungme and other highlands employees working at the Ertsberg camp had their employment terminated and their housing destroyed (UABS 1998a:113). As Amungme protests continued, the military increasingly stepped in to put them down (*ibid*). By 1973, Freeport had sought the assistance of a John Ellenberger, a missionary among the Damal who was fluent in the Amungkal/Damal language (Wilson 1981:217), to help quell Amungme protests at a Tsinga Valley exploration camp.

In 1974 Freeport, the Indonesian government, and Amungme community representatives moved to settle the disputes through negotiation. These

³³ According to Ballard, Amungme reactions to the mine and its Indonesian employees resulted in the deaths of up to a total of eight people during two separate incidents in 1968 and 1973. It is unclear if the deaths were Amungme or other non-Papuan Indonesian employees or both, but the incidents highlight a tension between the Amungme (and more generally Papuan workers) and the non-Papuan Indonesian employees of Freeport (UABS 1998a:29).

negotiations culminated in the now infamous “January 1974 Agreement,” signed by representatives of all three parties. In it the company agreed to build a limited number of schools, clinics, houses, and market facilities in the Wa Valley and Tsinga Valleys as well as at Kwamki. They also agreed to provide employment opportunities for the local population, and government facilities at these locations. In exchange, the Amungme recognised/agreed to: (a) allow mining at Ertsberg, Tenggogoma (in Tsinga), and other locations including Tembapapura in accordance with the earlier agreement between the Indonesian Government and Freeport and that (b) local people would not enter the work and accommodation areas at Tembapapura. It was also stipulated that the security of the project would be upheld in accordance with a provincial law established on 1 April 1973 and carried out by the “Special Police Post at the Freeport Indonesia Project.”

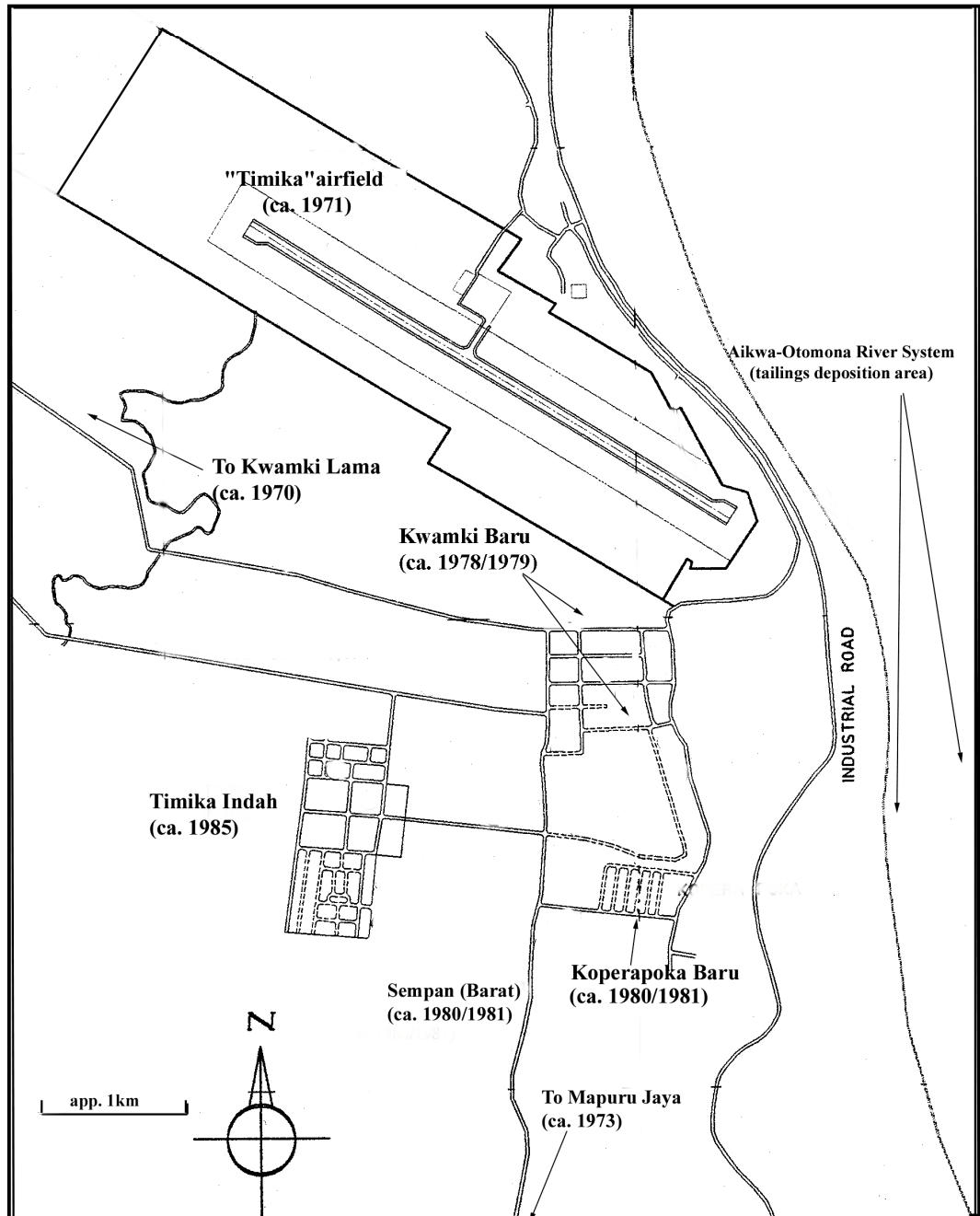
Attachments to the agreement clarified the boundaries of the Freeport Project Area. In addition to the Ertsberg and Tenggogoma sites, the agreement outlined the inclusion of the area around the mill (*pabrik penggilingan*) and Tembapapura town, including the upstream portion of the valley, all areas cleared for the length of the road, the area around the Timika airfield, and the areas surrounding the facilities of Pad Eleven and Portsite (Amamapare). The agreement and all attachments were signed with fingerprints on behalf of the Amungme by Tuarek Narkime (Wa), Naimun Narkime (Wa), Arek Beanal (Tsinga), Pitarogome Beanal (Tsinga), and Paulas Magal (Wa).³⁴ Tom Beanal, an Amungme representative of the Indonesian government during the agreement later wrote of how he had also spoken persuasively to the community about the benefits of the company working in the area (Beanal 1992:7). Ironically, Beanal, who subsequently served as head of the Tembapapura government post for eight months after the signing of the document, received no copy of the January Agreement and was unaware of its formal contents (*ibid*).

³⁴ A sixth Amungme signatory’s name, Kawal Beanal, appeared on the documents despite the fact that he was not listed as a constituent of the Amungme representative party set out on the first page of the agreement. Amungme informants consistently point out that although they signed the 1974 Agreement, they did so under duress due to military and government pressure.

One of the most significant aspects of this agreement, from the perspective of the Kamoro, is that not one Kamoro representative was included in any part of it. Freeport was granted access rights to the entire Project Area, from the coast to the mountains, by Amungme representatives. While I will not debate the issue of whether the Amungme had been fairly compensated or apprised of the legal details of their “agreement,” one fact remains glaringly important for the Kamoro: they were not even mentioned in the agreement. This agreement appears to be indicative of future interactions between Freeport and their “host” communities that would consistently favour engagement with the more politically active and aggressive Amungme over the Kamoro. This of course does not mean that the Amungme felt satisfied with their relationships to both the Indonesian government and to Freeport. Indeed, their displeasure with events following the 1974 agreement highlighted and exacerbated relationships among all of the groups interacting on the ground. These post 1974 actions are what ultimately gave shape to the resettlement projects that became “Timika.”

THE AFTERMATH OF THE AGREEMENT: THE VILLAGES OF TIMIKA

Although Freeport appears to have honoured the material aspects of its agreement with the Amungme by constructing schools, clinics, churches and government offices in Wa and Tsinga in the highlands, and Kwamki in the lowlands, the Amungme continued to feel radically disadvantaged by the presence of the company. Their formal complaints to Freeport and the government regarding land encroachment, hiring biases, radically differing treatment of other-island Indonesians among other issues, received no suitable responses (Berita Oikoumene May 1981 as cited in Budiardjo and Liong 1988:35). While the Freeport project at the time may have been relatively small in terms of economic value, compared to for example the Bougainville copper mine at the time, it was certainly perceived as a symbol of the inequities that existed between the Indonesian State and the Papuan people. Amungme displeasure with the inequities coincided with the activities of the Free Papua Movement (the



Map 8: Sketch of initial core Timika settlements.

Organisasi Papua Merdeka, or OPM). As a result, in June 1977, the OPM organised a series of attacks, which originated in the Amungme lowland resettlement project at Akimuga. Initially the separatists attacked the Akimuga police post; elsewhere, in Ilaga, they blocked the airfield with wooden stakes. Military retaliation for these acts forced the OPM to flee into the jungle, only to re-emerge for a more symbolic act of sabotage. In July, the OPM saboteurs severed the Freeport Pipeline that transports copper and gold slurry down to Amamapare. They also attacked other parts of Freeport's infrastructure, destroying bridges and setting fire to oil storage facilities. A schoolteacher from Akimuga estimated that twenty-five percent of the entire Amungme ethnic group participated in the two attacks. Attitudes of the few Amungme with whom I interacted in Timika suggest that his estimate was conservative.

Army reprisals for the sabotage of Freeport property were severe. Two OV-10 Bronco bombers based at the Timika airfield strafed Akimuga and Ilaga; Wa, the Amungme settlement closest to Tembagapura was mortared, and much of Kwamki was leveled (Tapol 1983:40). Buildings constructed by Freeport as part of their compliance with the 1974 Agreement were either leveled or occupied by the Indonesian military (Budiardjo and Liong 1988:35). In the aftermath of the attacks, many Amungme and members of the OPM fled to the interior jungles to avoid further retribution by the Indonesian military.

Planning for the three villages that make up the contemporary "town" of Timika was an immediate outgrowth of the 1977 attacks. Beginning in 1978 Freeport and the provincial government began to plan the resettlement of 350 families from the Wa Valley (and others who had fled from Kwamki) to a lowland area south of the airfield (Budiardjo and Liong 1988:35, Wilson 1981:221). By late 1979, the plan had resulted in the resettlement of fifty Amungme families from Akimuga to a newly opened lowland settlement known as *Kwamki Baru* (New Kwamki).³⁵ Though many Amungme were reluctant to

³⁵ The first Kwamki, which later became known as Kwamki Lama, had apparently been razed by the Indonesian military in the aftermath of the events of 1977.

relocate due to the warmer climate and less fertile soil of Kwamki Baru, relocations continued.³⁶

The other two villages that form the core of the contemporary Timika “town” were also formed in direct response to OPM activity. An OPM track linked Akimuga to the lowland parts of the Freeport Project Area via the Sempan villages of Inauga, Omauga, and Otakwa and via the Kamoro settlements at Koperapoka. Cook (1988:29) reports that the lowlanders in these communities “had no choice in the matter [of their resettlement]” and that they were moved for security reasons because the government suspected that OPM activities centred in these villages. This is by no means an indication that the lowlanders were part of or sympathetic with the OPM. My informants from these locations described to me less than cordial relationships with the mostly highlander-OPM people with whom they came into contact (theft of resources and threats of violence for failure to join were the main complaints). As a result, representatives from the Sempan settlements of Omauga, Inauga, and Otakwa and from the Kamoro village at Koperapoka ultimately requested relocation.³⁷

During 1977, the Nawaripi Kamoro living at Koperapoka (also known as Tirimami) were initially bothered by OPM activists enroute from Akimuga to the Freeport Project. Showing no desire to cooperate with the OPM, and thus draw military reprisals, the Nawaripi fled to Uamiua, a coastal fishing location better known by its Indonesian name *Pasir Hitam* (literally Black Sand). The Nawaripi remained at *Pasir Hitam* until 1981 when, according to my informants, their village head made a formal request to the local government for resettlement to a location where his community could access social and economic development

³⁶ The ultimate forces that played into Amungme relocation are more complex. According to Cook, Freeport officials made clear in 1980 that they were opposed to any forced relocation of the Amungme in the Wa Valley and they felt that the best possibilities for the Amungme in the future would be gained through education. Indonesian government officials agreed, but they refused to provide schooling in the Wa Valley. Thus, if they wanted an education, the Amungme had to relocate either to the lowland resettlements near the Timika airfield or other villages with schools (Cook 1988:85).

³⁷ Elsewhere in the same thesis, Cook describes that villagers in both lowland locations had in fact requested relocation because they did not want any association with the OPM (1988:29, 86).

opportunities (e.g. schooling and access to the emerging Freeport-related market). Under a cooperative program with the Indonesian military called ABRI *Masuk Desa* (often abbreviated AMD, the phrase literally means the Indonesian Armed Forces enter the village) a new settlement was established south of Kwamki Baru and with the name Koperapoka Baru, New Koperapoka.³⁸

For the Nawaripi, this was the first of many ill-conceived resettlement schemes. First of all, it appears that only the Waoneripi kampong was relocated (e.g. the Neyeripi kampong was not included). Second, with no training the Waoneripi were not capable of obtaining work at the new site. To feed themselves, and to gather sago and fish to sell at the market, they left Koperapoka Baru for extended periods of time. Ultimately their extended absences cost them most of the village when in 1984 or 1985 their village head, Leo Mamiri, sold the majority of their houses to spontaneous migrants primarily from outside of Irian Jaya.³⁹ In response, some of the Nawaripi set up temporary buildings adjacent to Koperapoka Baru while the majority returned to *Pasir Hitam* (for a similar account of these events see Rahangiar 1993:28-29).

The story from the perspective of the Western Sempan is similar. Their stay in the area close to the airfield was even more short-lived than that of the Nawaripi, as explained by the “chief” of Otakwa Nikolaus Irahewa:

They [the Otakwa people] went to Timika in 1980 with the Inawkans [sic Inaugans] and the Omawkans [sic Omaugans] and settled in a village called Sempan [Barat]. The three groups experienced many difficulties. They had to walk a long way in order to go to Mapero [sic Mapuru] Jaya, a small town, paddling their canoes to Pad Eleven. Many starved in Timika because they could not find sago or fish. Their sago lands and rivers were too far away. To gather sago from another tribe’s land is not part of their [our] custom. And the other tribe[s] would be furious with them. In 1982, they were moved back to their original homeland by the local commander of the army when starvation resulted. They were moved because of concern from Father Kees van Dijk, who lived in the area at the time (Nikolaus Irahewa as cited in Manembu 1991:16-17).

Rahangiar also confirms that the village head of Koperapoka requested government assistance to relocate (1993:23).

³⁸ This is a reflection of the official social/political role of the Indonesian armed forces to assist in the social and physical development of the country. In Indonesian, this is commonly known as “*dwifungsi*” or dual function.

³⁹ According to Cook, the outsiders were primarily from Sulawesi (1988:xvi).

Thus, although one could argue any number of historical moments for the founding of “Timika town,” the most immediate impetus for its establishment was a response to the activities of the OPM in 1977. By 1982, the three villages that form the core of what is now referred to as the “Timika town” were established as resettlement locations for Kamoro and Amungme communities. With assistance from Freeport, the government established two schools, two churches, a public meeting building, a clinic, test farms and model homes (Cook 1988:86). Eventually Dani and Damal migrants, Freeport and the Indonesian government assisted in the resettlement of the first Kwamki, now known as Kwamki Lama (Old Kwamki).

With all of the resettlements, land ownership issues remained unclear. The only reference to a land release for the immediate areas was in a 1984 Indonesian government planning report in which the *Camat*, the sub-district head, wrote:

All of the area planned for the city [Timika] is national land that has been released by the Amung-me and Mapuru tribes (Kadarisman 1984 in Cook 1988:88).

Strikingly, the *Camat* seemed to be engaging *amoko-kwere* when he referred to the “Mapuru tribes”. Presumably he meant communities primarily along the Wania River for whom Mapuru is the central *amoko-we* and *taparamako*. Cook then reports that the *Kapao-we*, the people from the Kamoro village of Kaugapu, were acknowledged by the government as having ownership over the “Timika” area and the rights to accept compensation on behalf of the “Mapuru tribes”. She explains however the “leader” of the *Kapao-we* was only involved in releasing the land in 1985, a year after the *Camat* claimed the land release had already been effected:

In 1985...Johannes Java [sic, Jawa or Yawa], leader of the Kapawei [sic, *Kapao-we*] was for the first time being flown to Jakarta to sign the papers and see the big city. The Amung-me, having caught word of this, were very angry at having been ignored in the process. Deikme [an Amungme] and his followers swore that they would meet the returning flight and shoot Johannes Java [sic] with bows and arrows when he stepped off the plane (Cook 1988:88).

Though this confrontation never occurred, it was evident that land around the Timika airfield was contested. Having arrived from the East with raiding

Nawaripi communities, then having walked overland to the Kauga River (hence the tribal name “*Kapao-we*” which literally means people from the interior), widely known migration histories held that the *Kapao-we* were among the latest of the Kamoro groups to arrive along the Wania River. The communities of Hiripao, Tipuka, and Nawaripi appear to have had equally valid claims to the area near the airfield. Having arrived in an area that appeared to be unimproved and uninhabited, either as part of the initial labour-force for Freeport and Bechtel or as the result of Freeport and government relocations, the Amungme clearly felt that they too had a legitimate claim to the land near the airfield.

...and then came the trans(local)migrants

With the assistance of multi-lateral international funding, the Indonesian government began sending transmigrants from overpopulated regions in western Indonesia to the Timika area during the mid-1980s. They opened the first transmigration settlement, *Satuan Pemukiman Satu*, more commonly referred to by its acronym SP1, in 1985 (see Rahangiar 1993). Numerous reports have highlighted the broad social, political, environmental and economic impacts, and implications, of the Indonesian Government’s multi-laterally funded transmigration program. Socio-politically, the most common focus is on the so-called *Javanisasi* or Javanisation of the region. While I do not contest these broader socio-political impacts, I point out briefly that they tend to obscure the more localised impacts. For Kamoro indigenous to the Freeport Project Area, one of the most significant impacts is not the arrival of western Indonesian transmigrants, but the participation in transmigration projects by Kamoro from outside of Freeport’s Project Area as local transmigrants or *translocals*. It also appears that spontaneous migrants to the Freeport Project Area, both from within and from outside of Papua, have had a far more significant impact on the daily lives of the Kamoro than have the transmigrants. Around the same time that SP1 was being opened up, another wave of Kamoro spontaneous migrants from Timika Pantai and Kokonao settled on Karaka Island.

While detailed information regarding *translocal* Kamoro migrants has yet to be comprehensively compiled the available information points to the expansion of Kamoro from the two “allied groups” from Timika and Keakwa discussed earlier in this chapter. By the late 1980s, with Freeport’s announcement of the Grasberg deposit, which contains the largest gold reserve and third-largest copper reserve of any mine in the world (Mealey 1996:136), the Indonesian government stepped up its transmigration program and the volume of spontaneous migrants increased dramatically. Though a thorough settlement history has yet to be compiled and is beyond the scope of this thesis, I do discuss some of the Kamoro communities in the next chapter.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In 1960, Natalis Nokoryao’s *imakatiri* anticipated Freeport’s arrival at the coastal Timika airfield. Whether or not the community viewed their appearance in 1967 as a realisation of that *imakatiri*, it is not surprising that villagers from Timika followed the project when it shifted its focus to the *Port Site* and *Kamp Satu* areas. The fact that the company had entered the region through their village may have been significant enough to provide a rationale for the move of a number of workers into other territories; or at least it made the risk of confrontation with the other villages one worth taking. In either case, the movement of the Timika and Atuka groups to the Portsite area set a precedent for Kamoro communities to migrate to the Freeport Project Area. Both the Timika and Atuka groups used *amoko-kwere* to legitimate their presence inside the Freeport Project Area. They initiated processes that would ultimately serve to undermine the rights and resources of the two Kamoro communities most directly impacted by Freeport, the Tipuka and the Nawaripi. While the process started out gradually, the actions of the Timika and Atuka groups snowballed. Eventually, as I will address in the next chapter, these groups also participated in transmigration projects as *translocals*, strengthening their position in the greater “Timika” area. Though it is difficult to say with certainty, we can speculate that the Timika (Pantai)

community may have considered the spread of wealth in the region to be a direct result of Nokoryao's *imakatiri*, which may have served as a charter for their rights to benefits from the Freeport Project. The renaming of the airfield Timika may in fact have served as a symbolic validation of that community's expansion.

The arrival of Amungme communities both as spontaneous migrants and as labourers for the Freeport-Bechtel road and airfield project adds another level of complexity to the situation. With Freeport assistance, Amungme communities from Akimuga, who had originated from the Noemba and Tsinga Valleys, established permanent settlements near the airstrip. For them, this legitimated their right of access to the area. While Amungme informants insist that there were no Kamoro living near the airfield area in the early 1970s, my Kamoro informants state that this was certainly not an indication of a lack of usage or ownership of the area. Kamoro have described the arrival of the Amungme in the lowlands surrounding the airfield as a blatant and careless encroachment on their land and resources.

From the Amungme perspective on their migrations to the lowlands and on land issues there I find conflicting arguments. For some Amungme, migrations to the lowlands may have been interpreted as having to do with millennial *hai* movements. For others, the entire area from the mountains to the coast was viewed symbolically as an ancestral mother, which again would suggest their rights of access to the land. Internal political engagement between Amungme from the Noemba Valley Amungme and those from the Wa Valley also appears to have figured into moves to the lowlands. Cook suggests Wa and Tsinga Valley Amungme viewed the migration of Noemba Valley Amungme to the "Timika" area as a direct confrontation and violation of their land.

Finally, the resettlements in the aftermath of 1977 Amungme activities added another political overtone to the establishment of Timika. From the perspective of Kamoro (and Sempan) communities, resettlement was viewed both as a development activity and as a way to protect their communities from the OPM. For Amungme communities, resettlement in Kwamki Baru seems to have resulted in at least the perception of being placed under the constant surveillance

of the Indonesian Government and the military. In the aftermath of the relocation to Kwamki Baru, with the assistance of Freeport, the Government transformed Kwamki Lama into a new resettlement project primarily for Dani people with whom the Amungme have an antagonistic, if not adversarial, relationship.

From the start of the development of the Freeport Project, both the mining company and the Indonesian Government inadvertently assisted some communities in violating the territorial boundaries of other communities. For the Kamoro the process began from the East and the West. In the East, Freeport employed Western Sempan communities for assistance on their initial expedition. I view it as incredibly symbolic that in Freeport's account of the expedition (Wilson 1981), the author explicitly describes flying over the Nawaripi communities on the way. Indeed, the Nawaripi would be "flown over" by numerous communities seeking access to the Freeport Project Area in the coming years. From the West, perhaps bolstered by Nokoryao's *imakatiri*, communities from Keakwa, Timika, Aika-Wapuka, and Atuka rationalised their own impositions on Tipuka's territory via *amoko-kwere*. Beyond these communities, first Amungme, then Dani, then transmigrants and local migrants began arriving in the region, each making claims to the greater Timika area. Most generally then, Timika was founded upon various Papuan communities rationalising access to benefits from Freeport in any way possible. These migrations however, proved only the small-scale beginning of much larger socio-political developments in "Timika." As Freeport gradually increased its production, it attracted an increasingly steady stream of spontaneous migrants, Papuan and non-Papuan, to the area. At the same time, the government began to implement its scheme of transmigration projects in the greater Timika area. As the next chapter addresses, Freeport's increased production and the arrival of spontaneous and official transmigrants multiplied the social, political, and economic complexities upon which the Timika town was formed.

Chapter Seven

Engaging the Contemporary

INTRODUCTION

Over the course of this thesis I have demonstrated how the Kamoro have engaged the world around them through *amoko-kwere*. Clear patterns have emerged from this material, such as the explicit incorporation of the foreign and the protection of *kata* from theft. As this chapter reveals however, not all “foreign” events, ideas, people and things are incorporated in *amoko-kwere*; or at least their interpretation may in actuality be the first part of a more generalised mode of engagement which may then turn to a different kind of localised understanding. Contemporary evidence suggests that while Freeport and the Indonesian State have been explicitly incorporated via *amoko-kwere* among some communities, among others they have been reformulated in a different manner. Incorporation and transformation seem to relate to perceptions of actual and imagined relationships with the State and the Company. This chapter examines some aspects of the complex interface between the Indonesian State and individual Kamoro communities as a means to better understand this differential interpretation. It begins with an examination of the varied Kamoro usage of the Indonesian term *suku* in the contemporary context. Then I examine the interface between indigenous social organisation and the Indonesian system of village

administration. The chapter closes with considerations of how different Kamoro communities perceive Freeport. Ultimately it suggests why and how certain communities incorporate the company into *amoko-kwere* while others do not.

INSCRIBING THE TRIBE

In Chapters Two through Four I outlined the arrival of merchants, missionaries and explorers to the “Mimika Coast”. Driven by commercial, religious, and political interests, these visitors progressively inscribed names on maps representing the region and its people. As these outsiders gradually advanced from the west, they began to use names such as Kowiai, Kapia, Oetanata, Mimika, and Timakowa either in reference to the totality of, or a part of the current Mimika region and its population at various moments prior to colonisation. Based solely on indirect or sporadic contact, Europeans also classified the indigenous populations of these areas according to perceived racial and linguistic similarities, the underlying ideas that inform the construction of the tribe.

Since entering academic and popular discourse, the tribe has emerged as a concept whose meaning appears deceptively simple, though it becomes problematic and unreliable as a static marker for a population under closer scrutiny. Lewis points out the fluidity of the concept of tribe and other monikers describing groups of people:

Cultures, societies, communities, ethnic groups, tribes, and nations are coming to be viewed as contingent or even arbitrary creations rather than essential givens of human experience (Lewis 1991:605).

Fried’s argument describing the tribe as a “secondary sociopolitical phenomenon brought about by the intercession of more complexly ordered societies” seems to be a logical precursor of the kind of contingency of social group definition outlined by Lewis (Fried 1975:114). Though Fried focuses on “complex sociopolitical order” his statement suggests the importance of differentials in cross-cultural relationships generally, and more specifically in the

mutual construction of identities. I see a correlation between Fried's "intercession," and Sahlins' notion of the "conjuncture" (Fried 1975; Sahlins 1981). Both of these concepts describe the processes of mutual reformulations that occur during cross-cultural engagement. Although Fried discusses the emergence of "secondary tribes" out of the initial classificatory "tribes" defined by outsiders he offers little elaboration on indigenous participation in its formulation. At the same time, he certainly recognised the contested and malleable nature of the tribe. According to him, "Tribe is a word that may be said to live in multiplex and changing real environments and its use is under constant adaptive pressure" (Fried 1975:9). To this I would add that multiple interpretations of tribe could be invoked with varying degrees of intended inclusivity and exclusivity in response to specific socio-political circumstances.¹ For the Kamoro, multiple invocations of the rough Indonesian equivalent of the tribe, the *suku*, signify complexly entwined indigenous and foreign ideas of relatedness.

The Ethnic Community as *Suku* (tribe)

In the contemporary context, my informants frequently used the Indonesian phrase *Suku*² *Kamoro* (literally, Kamoro Tribe) to describe the entire indigenous population residing on the 300-kilometre stretch of the south-west coast of New

¹ Defining and naming "tribes" appears to have been integral to the colonial process. At the same time, various authors have demonstrated that identities promoted during the colonial process were very much a construction of the coloniser. Hanson's (1989, 1991) argument that contemporary Maori identity is in part based on colonial constructions created a backlash among Maori authors and academics. They felt that Hanson's academic argument questioned the authenticity of contemporary "Maori-ness" (*Maoritanga*), which was not Hanson's intent. He was simply illustrating the process whereby culture is continually reformulated. Briggs (1996) however demonstrates that contemporary "academic" arguments surrounding the topic of indigenous authenticity may in fact have negative impacts on indigenous political struggles.

² According to the Indonesian-English Dictionary, the direct translation of *suku* is in relation to social groupings as "extended family, ethnic group" (Echols and Shadily 1994:531). Often remote populations of Irian Jaya (Papua), Sumatra and Sulawesi are defined by Western Indonesians as *suku-suku terasing*, literally "unacculturated tribal groups".

Guinea from Etna Bay to the Otakwa River.³ This usage often signifies politically and economically motivated statements of relatedness to validate Kamoro-wide compensation from the impacts of the Freeport Mine. At the same time, it is invoked to describe cultural similarities within the region presently administered as the Mimika District or Regency (*Kabupaten Mimika*), which is divided into three sub-districts (*kecamatan*): New Mimika (*Mimika Baru*), East Mimika (*Mimika Timur*), and West Mimika (*Mimika Barat*).⁴

Significantly, Kamoro from outside of the areas most dramatically impacted by Freeport's operations are the ones who have, in my experience, most frequently invoked the notion of a collective Kamoro *suku*. These Kamoro, many of whom were now resident in the Freeport Project Area, had migrated (either officially or spontaneously) to the Timika area largely over the decade prior to my arrival in the field.⁵ They use their broad identity as Kamoro as a tool to access Freeport development funding, work, or educational opportunities.⁶

Interestingly, there was also a radical contrast between the way the migrant Kamoro and those Kamoro indigenous to Freeport's Project Area perceived their relationship with Freeport, which relates to perceptions of the *suku*. Informants from outside of the immediate Freeport Project Area were more likely to incorporate Freeport via *amoko-kwere* than those communities most directly impacted by the mine. I shall return to this matter later in this chapter.

³ This usage of "tribe" incorporates the earlier division discerned by Drabbe which juxtaposed *kamoro* as the word for living people of the region against spirit people and other Papuans.

⁴ Prior to the Dutch creation of the Mimika subdivision (*onderafdeling*), the Kamoro seemed to consider communities throughout much of Etna Bay (beyond the boundaries of the contemporary district) as Kamoro.

⁵ As a result of this influx of non-local Kamoro into the Freeport Project Area, at any given time roughly half of the 15,000 total Kamoro population resides near Timika.

⁶ During the time of my fieldwork Freeport and the Indonesian Government had begun a push to favour the hiring and training of the "Seven Tribes" deemed "indigenous" to the project area. In addition to the Kamoro and the Amungme, the other "tribes" included the Dani, Me, Moni, Nduga, and the Lani. Of these only the Kamoro and the Amungme are documented as permanently residing in the region prior to Freeport's arrival. I also note that compared to other ethnic communities, Papuan and non-Papuan, the Kamoro as ranked among the lowest social, economic, and education levels in the Timika area. The point here is that those who benefited most from the Freeport Mine until quite recently were not those impacted by its operations.

The *Desa* as *Suku*

During my fieldwork, many Kamoro also used the word *suku* to describe the collective inhabitants of their individual *desa*, which translates generally as a village and is an Indonesian administrative unit. The contemporary usage of the *desa* as a *suku* appears to be based upon pre-and early-colonial settlement arrangements. According to Pouwer, multiple long-house communities sharing a common river formed larger, loosely knit social units. He defined these socio-political units as using the Dutch word *stammen*, or tribes, consisting of:

... a separate group of semi-permanent settlements, having its own name, its own territory, and marked by a certain *esprit de corps*. Each tribe used to have an entire river, or part of one, at its disposal. (Pouwer 1955:272, from the English summary translated by Dr. P.E. Josselin de Jong)

Since the arrival of Chinese merchants and the initial colonial presence, these “tribes” began to be resettled (or resettle) into villages (D: *dorpen*) either alone or with other so-called tribes (Pouwer 1955:9, 282-287). Many of these villages formed the actual and metaphorical foundations of the contemporary Indonesian villages. There is no indigenous word that the Kamoro use to describe these sorts of communities outside of something that translates as “people of a particular river” or people from a particular direction.

The *desa* is also the most direct interface (structurally) between Kamoro communities and the Indonesian administration. Sometimes there are smooth linkages meeting between indigenous and state organisational structures at the *desa* level. At other times, however, it proves incompatible and underlies inter-village animosity.

According to Indonesian Law No. 5/1979, the primary government representative in every Indonesian village is the *Kepala Desa*, the village head. Prior to 1979, this position was “elected” for life, though since Law No. 5/1979, the position has been limited to an eight-year term. Despite the fact that they are elected by a popular village vote, candidates for the position of *Kepala Desa* are subject to a “political clearance test” by a committee of *kecamatan* (sub-district

or sub-regency) officials which is chaired by the head of the sub-regency, the *Camat* (Achmad 1999:26). Essentially, this places tighter central government control over the selection of *Kepala Desa*.

I see a striking resemblance between the Indonesian system of village administration and the Dutch system of administration, which established administration-chosen village heads as its local representatives. A considerable number of contemporary Kamoro *desa* are directly founded upon former Dutch *dorpen* (villages).⁷ In turn, one could further suggest the linkages between the Dutch colonial system and the nineteenth century “paternal despotism” outlined in Chapter Three whereby the Dutch established direct relationships with the representatives of the Sultan of Tidore. At least anecdotal evidence that I collected during my fieldwork suggests that some Kamoro continue to rationalise their position (or rights to position) in village administration by their relationship to Moluccan kingdoms.⁸

Officially, the *Kepala Desa*’s roles include proposing and supervising development projects, maintaining stability and security in the village, sustaining regular contacts with higher levels of government and implementing central and regional government policies and programs (Achmad 1999:27). Everyday administrative duties in the village are carried out by the *Kepala Desa*’s staff whom he selects, though the *Camat* appoints them with confirmation from the *kabupaten* (regency or district) office, again allowing tight central control over the selection of village administration.

Villages are further divided into *dusun*. Literally translated, a *dusun* is an orchard, but its closest administrative equivalent would perhaps be labelled a hamlet. Each *dusun* has a *Kepala Dusun*, or hamlet head, chosen by the hamlet residents with the approval of the *Kepala Desa*. *Dusun* are further divided into *rukun tetangga* (abbreviated RT), neighbourhoods, with a head-person chosen by

⁷ In Kokonao this metaphor also takes on a literal sense in that many buildings are literally built upon cement pilings set up by the Dutch.

⁸ One informant from Timika Pantai went so far as to point out that his birthmark indicated both his relatedness to the *kerajaan*, the Moluccan “kingdom” and to his family’s rights both to hold position in village administration and to be compensated by Freeport.

the people in the neighbourhood. The *Ketua* or *Kepala rukun tetangga* position is only an honorary administrative position.

In circumstances where a single more-or-less autonomous “tribe,” using Pouwer’s definition, in its entirety is administered within its own territory as a *desa*, the government organisational scheme is strikingly parallel to that of the Kamoro (except for the absence in the Kamoro unit of a singular leader). *Dusun* (hamlets) correspond to *taparu* pairs, or kampongs and RTs correspond loosely to individual *taparu* and/or *peraeke* divisions.⁹ However, this situation, where tribe corresponds closely with *desa* is the exception to the rule. Instead, the majority of contemporary Kamoro villages in the greater Timika region display one or more of the following anomalies: the village is situated outside of all or part of the social group’s territory, the village consists of just one kampong, or the village consists of two or more separate tribes.

INDONESIAN	<i>DESA</i> (VILLAGE)	<i>DUSUN</i> (HAMLET)	<i>RUKUN TETANGGA</i> (NEIGHBOURHOOD)
KAMORO	RIVER SYSTEM (TRIBE)	TAPARU PAIRS (KAMPONG)	PERAEKO/TAPARU

Figure 1: Comparison between Kamoro social organisation and local level State Administration.

For the Kamoro, each of these circumstances is interpreted as disruptive to the equilibrium of daily life. More explicitly they characterise the circumstances of unequal village representation as lacking *aopao*; they are foreign-derived ruptures in social reciprocity. In the first case, living outside of one’s territory necessitates returning to a home area to secure and/or protect resources (e.g. food, hunting grounds, and wood). This often leads to a *defacto* forfeiture of a house or position in the *desa* through absence (as the case in the Koperapoka Baru settlement described in Chapter Seven). Alternatively, a group living outside of its territory could acquire resources either through theft or purchase from the

⁹ The concepts of *taparu*, *peraeke*, and general village organisation were introduced in Chapter One and Chapter Five.

“host community” (as in the case of Nawaripi Baru). When the village contains just one kampong, relationships with the other (un-resettled) *kampong* tend to be stressed by unequal access to either traditional or “modern” resources such as Freeport and government funding and schooling on the one hand and locally owned sago on the other. Finally, when two tribes occupy the same village, difficulties seem to revolve around ownership and usage of local resources, with longer distances involved for one of the communities to access their resources.

Even in villages consisting of a single tribe, again following Pouver’s definition, government administration through one *Kepala Desa*, from one of the tribe’s kampongs usually leads to either weak representation in government matters or worse, no representation at all for the other kampong. In these circumstances, unequal government participation and representation leads to what the Kamoro term kampong-ism (*kampungisme*) and *taparu*-ism (*taparuisme*). These are code words for indigenous systems of cronyism, which usually result in unequal gains of one *taparu* or kampong at the expense of another. Again this sort of a violation of *aopao* often leads to tribal splintering, a few examples of which I discuss below.

Beyond the structural difficulties in reckoning indigenous social organisation with village administration, another problem is the Indonesian system’s marked gender inequality.¹⁰ In my experience, women did not tend to occupy official government positions in village administration. Instead, women with “titles” in the village had acquired them as a result of their husband’s position. For instance, the *Kepala Desa*’s wife is commonly known as *Ibu Kepala Desa* (Mrs. Village Head), or *Ibu Desa* for short.

However, among Kamoro, for whom matrilineal tendencies underlie social organisation, I discovered a definite contradiction to this pattern. In every

¹⁰ No Kamoro man would outwardly say that women were in charge or ought to be. However, observed social relationships in village settings demonstrate the strong role women play in issues of land and resource use. An Indonesian reporter picked up on this when he wrote that by controlling the usage of canoes Kamoro women essentially control all of the resources; a canoe is needed to access the upstream hunting grounds, the sago stands, and of course the coast for fishing (Tebay 1987). Though I have not explicitly analysed it, I would suspect that some of the

Kamoro village surveyed, when asked about their title (*status*) or their work (*pekerjaan*) many women described themselves as *Ibu Rukun Tetangga*, or Mrs. Neighbourhood Association (henceforth referred to as IRT). The title in itself is not so extraordinary considering the nature of women's titles in other settings that reflect their husbands' position. What is striking however is that neither in my own field documentation (or that conducted by my Freeport staff) nor that conducted by the UABS team, was there any documentation of a *Kepala* or *Ketua Rukun Tetangga* (Head or Coordinator of the Neighbourhood Association). The implication is that there were no (male) *Bapak Rukun Tetangga* or "Mr. Neighbourhood Association".¹¹

I was initially alerted to this trend while working with a small community living at the north end of the East Levee.¹² Known locally as *Nayaro* or *Kali Kopi Atas* (KKA), this settlement was one of three primary camps situated between the East Levee and the Kopi River immediately to the East.¹³ The inhabitants of the KKA settlement all had access to housing in a joint Freeport-Indonesian Government resettlement project called Nawaripi Baru (New Nawaripi), but left the resettlement because it lacked access to their own resources. The other two

men who play central roles in at least the lower levels of village administration do so in some way as a proxy for their sisters or mothers.

¹¹ This is based on combined surveys that I conducted or participated in both prior to and during the UABS project covering some 4500 individuals. Strangely on official land-releases for the communities directly impacted by the Freeport Mine, a few men are listed as *Kepala* or *Ketua RT* (head or leader) despite not having claimed such a position during genealogical surveys.

¹² The East Levee forms part of a catchment that keeps the tailings from the mine within the Aikwa-Otomona River system. The entire area is known as the Aikwa Deposition Area or ADA. It is comprised of two roughly parallel levees of continually growing height that are meant to prevent the tailings, the ground-up by product of the mining process, from entering into either Timika in the West or into the Lorentz National Park in the East. There is a cross-levee near the southern end of the levee system that essentially slows (but does not prevent) the flow of tailings south of the ADA toward the coast. When I was last in the area Freeport was processing approximately 240,000 tonnes of ore per day. The majority of this (over ninety-five percent) is waste rock that becomes tailings.

¹³ *Kali Kopi Atas* means "Top of the Kopi River" named for the location of the settlement as the most northerly or most interior—in Kamoro terminology highest or top—settlement along the Kopi river that runs parallel and to the East of the Freeport East Levee. Though referred to by the indigenous inhabitants colloquially as the Kopi (literally coffee) River, the indigenous name for the river is Uamiua. There were at least two other settlements emerging on the East Levee during my fieldwork related to arrivals of people from the West Sempan Communities of Omauga, Inauga and Otokwa, some of whom were related by marriage to the Nawaripi communities.

locations consisted primarily of people from the Waoneripi settlements who retained a connection with Koperapoka Baru in the Timika town, but lived on the levee either for access to resources or because their houses at Koperapoka Baru had been sold in their absence. These are both good examples of the kinds of splintering of Kamoro communities caused either by relocations or by incompatibilities with Indonesian village administration.¹⁴

The KKA settlement grew opportunistically out of an access road created for a “borrow pit” and a Freeport contractor workshop, and only people from the Neyeripi Kampong, composed of the Neyeripi and Amayeripi *taparu(s)* resided there.¹⁵ A settlement of just under sixty individuals, this community had particularly strong connections not only to the land, but to an outspoken older woman named Augustina Operawiri, locally known simply as *Ibu* (Mrs. or Mother) Augustina.¹⁶ She frequently led protests against Freeport activities, disrupted Freeport vehicles travelling on the East Levee and lodged complaints with the provincial government in Jayapura.

While consulting to Freeport, I frequently visited this settlement. Sometimes I would go just to chat and other times to document community grievances as well as to better understand their reluctance to abandon the temporary settlement in lieu of moving to one of the newer permanent villages. On one particular occasion, during genealogical interviews *Ibu* Augustina explained that she is the “elder” IRT of the settlement.¹⁷ I recall jokingly asking her who the “Mr. RT” is and she replied that there wasn’t one. Demurring, I provoked her, looking at her husband and saying that surely her husband was the real head of the RT. This brought laughter to the small crowd that had gathered to assist in the genealogical

¹⁴ The combined Neyeripi and Waoneripi kampongs form the Nawaripi “tribe.” Their relocations were discussed briefly in Chapter Six.

¹⁵ A “borrow pit” is an area where the company acquires materials to maintain and increase the height of the levee. Most commonly “borrowed” materials were rocks taken from the Kali Kopi. The opening up of borrow pits without formal community consent was an issue of repeated confrontation between the communities living on the levee and Freeport.

¹⁶ *Ibu* is a common Indonesian term of address for all women of childbearing age or older.

¹⁷ She described this to me as “*Tetua* IRT.” *Tetua* is the local pronunciation of the Indonesian word *tertua*, meaning “oldest.”

work. Augustina responded by slapping her husband who was sitting beside her, exclaiming with a laugh that he could not possibly be the head of the RT because he is incapable of *doing* anything.¹⁸

Eventually *Ibu* Augustina explained that as the elder IRT she coordinated activities among her “neighbourhood” for utilisation of the region’s resources. During these interviews, her specific role and degree of relatedness to others at the settlement remained unclear to me. At the same time, various other women in the settlement also identified themselves as IRTs. All of this seemed a bit strange considering that in what effectively was a local squatter settlement on their own land, the women still used terminology attached to official Indonesian village administration to describe their positions. Genealogical mapping provided insight into how *Ibu* Augustina and the other IRTs were positioned relative to one another and ultimately opened an interesting window onto a Kamoro adaptation of an Indonesian organisational scheme.

Within the KKA settlement, most of the IRTs were descendants of *Ibu* Augustina or her sisters. The genealogical structure relating them centres around two or three generations of women descended from a common woman or women (a woman and her sister(s)). In this case, after mapping the settlement genealogically, it became clear that the IRTs formed the central components in an organisational structure that placed Augustina at the top (as the senior member) and the younger IRTs, their female descendants, within what Augustina described as her “*kelompok*” beneath her. *Kelompok* is an Indonesian word meaning grouping or gathering (see Figure 2).

Though centred on women, the groupings were not sex-specific: IRTs assured me that male partners and children also fell into the system. In a system of symmetrical exchange marriage, *Ibu* Augustina’s *kelompok* tended to overlap significantly within the two *taparus* of the greater Neyeripi-Amayeripi Kampong, and to a lesser degree outside of it but remaining within the larger Nawaripi village/tribe. This is difficult to see in Figure 2 given that only a fragment of the

¹⁸ This was Augustina’s second husband (her first husband passed away) and he was from outside of the community.

greater Neyeripi Kampong resided at KKA. However, as the diagram below indicates, over half of the residents of KKA fall directly into Ibu Augustina's *kelompok*.

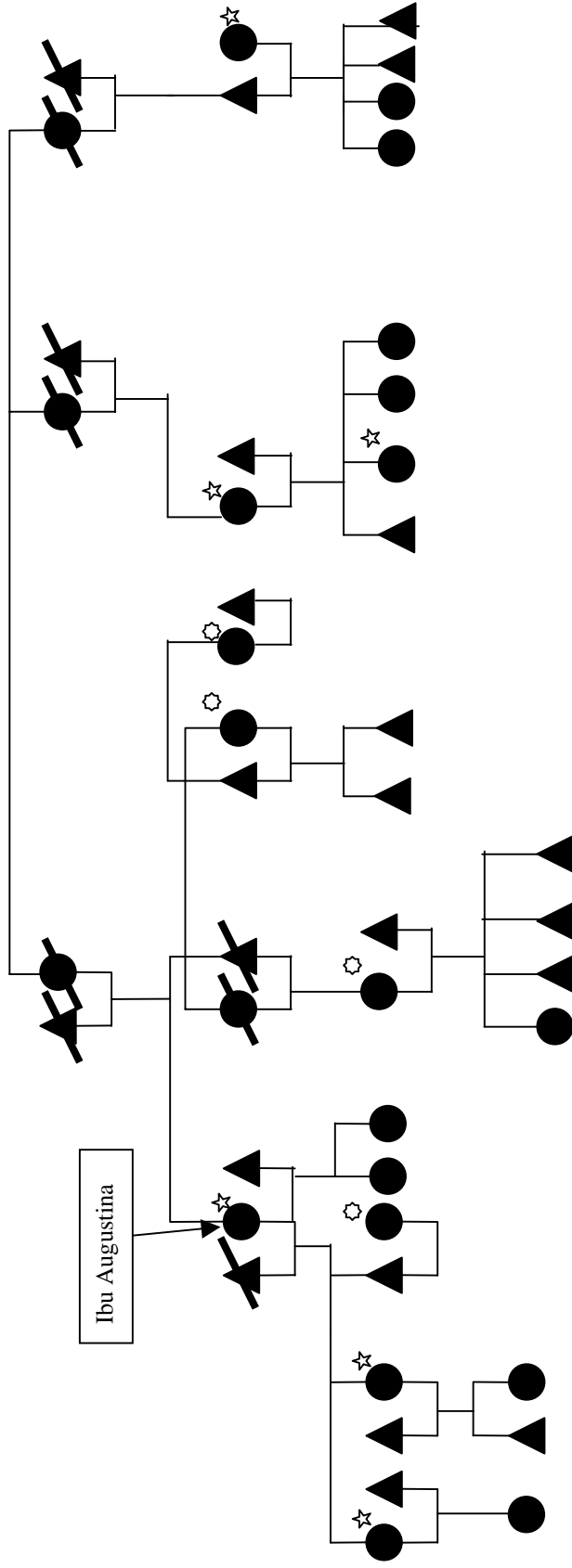
Pouwer identified similar generational groupings during his fieldwork in the 1950s. These were known as a *peraeke*. He described these groups as central to rights of collective possession within the *taparu* (Pouwer 1970:29, 1955:79-80). According to Pouwer, the matrilineal offspring of the central woman (or women) down to her grandchildren form a "stem group", which is commonly named after the grandmother (Pouwer 1970:25). In the case of KKA, the grouping was named after Ibu Augustina. As in the examples outlined by Pouwer, the women from whom the entire group claim shared lineage were often deceased.¹⁹ During my fieldwork, the word *peraeke* rarely entered into conversation spontaneously. It arose only after I brought it up. Instead, people would describe their group as a certain older woman's *kelompok* (lit. group in Indonesian).²⁰ The fact that the majority of the inhabitants of the KKA settlement often referred to themselves as *Kelompok Augustina* and given the nature of their genealogical ties to her via the IRTs at the settlement provides a convincing argument that *kelompok* groupings correlate to the stem groups/*peraeke* described by Pouwer.

Pouwer elaborates that the notion of attachment to a senior female or mother figure was particularly strong during his fieldwork. He documented the way in which specific individuals are situated in the community through their biological mothers.²¹ There is a striking parallel between this and the notion of the

¹⁹ Within this system, Pouwer outlines that elder sons are often the representatives of *peraeke* rights of disposal over local resources including sago (Pouwer 1955:145-146).

²⁰ It should be noted here that among the Nawayipi populations, including the Neyeripi settlement on the East Levee, the 'k' sound is replaced with a glottal stop. Thus, when I asked about the concept at this settlement, the population corrected Pouwer's documentation of *peraeke* collected in a central Mimika dialect to *perae'o*.

²¹ Although there are occasions where relationships are drawn with reference to one's father, even one's everyday identity appears to be directly determined by one's mother's name. One is referred to as the son (*ao*) or the daughter (*pa*) of a specific woman. For a few examples, the current regent of Mimika, a Kamoro, is named Potoreyao (e.g. son of Potore); an *amoko-we* is Aoweyao, that is the son of Aoweya (see accounts of the Utakae War in Chapter Two and Chapter Six). Kamoro family names (formed during the Dutch period by children taking on their father's first name as a family name) also reflect this pattern.



☆ *Kelompok* Augustina IRTs

⊗ Non-*Kelompok* Augustina IRTs

Figure 2: *Kelompok* Augustina: This figure demonstrates the links between all of the IRT's of KKA. All individuals marked with a ☆ are IRT's within Augustina's group which includes their spouses and children. All descend from three sisters. Augustina is the eldest of the descendants.

inhabitants of the settlement defining themselves in terms of relatedness to *Ibu Augustina*. In the same discussion, Pouwer describes an important philosophical and cosmological concept related to the matriline: the mother's navel (*mopere or mapare*) as symbolic of the role of the mother as life-giver. The philosophical meaning of the *mopere* as the innermost, the deepest, or the essential is especially important (ibid:56-57). I frequently heard descriptions of the *mopere* of an *amoko-kwere* or a ritual. The *mopare* is also the dominant motif in woodcarvings from the earliest nineteenth century collections through contemporary examples.

During a joint project between the Australian National University, Universitas Cenderawasih (Cenderawasih University or UnCen) and Freeport (hereafter referred to as UABS, short for UnCen-ANU Baseline Studies) I had another opportunity to look more closely at local level social organisation. Our team set out to map (both physically and socially) the Kamoro populations in the Timika region. In our documentation of eight villages, our study generated well over 100 individual *taparu* names. Comparing the list with one compiled by Pouwer revealed some overlap, but the majority of the contemporary names were not in Pouwer's list. When we asked our Kamoro team member to review the list, he verified that all of the names were to the best of his knowledge *taparu* names.²²

Given that prior to the joint project I had recorded names of *taparu* in these same villages which were nearly identical with Pouwer's list collected over forty years earlier, the new list confused me. On my own I visited with *Kepala Suku(s)* and elder *taparu* members (*tokoh taparu*) in each settlement.²³ Sitting with them, we outlined and documented the *taparu(s)* in the villages. The combination of a different survey methodology and the interviewers' lack of familiarity with Kamoro social organisation seem to be the source of the discrepancy. During the UABS project team members, most of whom were inexperienced in Kamoro research, visited each house individually. In retrospect, it appears that there may

²² Here I note that during my fieldwork, *taparu* could also be variously invoked to mean the equivalent of *kampung* or *desa*, but most often this was only the case when the Kamoro were speaking (or thought they were speaking) with someone unfamiliar with their social organisation.

have been some confusion among the Kamoro as to what information the survey sought. Only after discussing the list during a visit with Jan Pouwer in Holland did I gain a new perspective on what appeared to be “erroneous” data. Discussing the UABS reports, Pouwer mentioned to me that he found the *taparu* list remarkable in its sheer size. However, after I had explained to him how we had asked our Kamoro team member to validate all of the names, he stated something that in retrospect appears obvious: many of the names on the list were likely *peraeko* names.

Combining Pouwer’s input with my own discovery of the IRT yields considerable insight into contemporary Kamoro social organisation and how it is manifest both within and beyond official village administration. Within the village setting, these social units centred on the IRT can be mapped both genealogically as I did at KKA as well as geographically.²⁴ It appears that the IRT comprise the core members of contemporary kin-groups that form both the foundation of *taparu* as well as an underlying structure which links *taparu* of a common kampong together. Ultimately, this relates to on-going difficulties in village administration that I will briefly describe before showing a concrete example of the interface between IRT networks and village administration.

Village absenteeism is a constant frustration for the Indonesian Government (and the Dutch Government before them). Portions of the village are abandoned for extended periods, complicating administration, health, and education concerns. Most often, the reasons why the Kamoro leave their villages are to gather sago, go fishing, to attempt to secure Freeport funds or to seek medical attention from Freeport facilities; administration, health, and education officials are also guilty of abandoning their village posts for the latter reasons. Obviously, absenteeism results in significant setbacks for primary school education, which

²³ *Tokoh* is an Indonesian word referring to a prominent figure, in this case *taparu* elders.

²⁴ The settlement at the north end of the East Levee was not an official village (*desa*) but perhaps better described as a squatter settlement. This and the other settlements on the levee served as economically strategic locations allowing the Nawaripi population to access Timika via the Freeport Levee and use their resources which lay along the rivers and tributaries within and to the east of the levee system.

limits the ability of Kamoro children to progress academically, which ultimately precludes Kamoro from entering certain sectors of the workforce. When I questioned village teachers and government administrators about who leaves the village and when, the responses were often that there is no pattern, it's just *kehidupan Kamoro*, Kamoro lifestyle. At the same time derogatory comments regarding the backwardness of hunter-gatherer communities (*peramu*) were customarily added to undermine any notion of logic to the practice.²⁵ Village absenteeism however also holds an interesting insight into contemporary Kamoro social organisation, in particular the relationship between the Kamoro village and other notions of community, including the *suku* or tribe. The composition of the absentee groups tends to incorporate those people caught up in the networks of IRT. As an example I shall briefly consider the village of Iwaka, which lies just west of Kuala Kencana, the newly constructed town built primarily to house Freeport employees.

Located near the confluence of the Kamora and Iwaka Rivers, Iwaka village consists of neat rows of houses arranged along either side of a straight two-kilometre road. It is composed of two former settlements that consider themselves to be separate, but related tribes: Iwaka and Temare. During his fieldwork Pouwer documented a total of three *taparu* in each of the settlements arranged in both cases into complimentary sets at each location—two *taparu* in one, with its counterpart containing just one *taparu*. Development of Iwaka in its contemporary form was initiated as part of an *ABRI Masuk Desa* (AMD) resettlement project aiming to settle the smaller communities in a larger

²⁵ Usually the use of the Indonesian word *peramu* (lit. one who gathers, but used in discussion to mean “hunter-gatherer” or semi-nomadic) is employed colloquially in eastern Indonesia with derogatory connotations. *Peramu* are considered to be at the lowest rung of a linear social-evolutionary scale that works through small-scale farming/horticulture on the way to a pinnacle of large-scale farming. This seems to be incorporated in Indonesian State ideology and appears to be based in nineteenth century Dutch constructions of *adat* law which used Javanese wet-rice farming to develop land management laws favourable to the colonial administration. Accordingly, the Kamoro never list their subsistence style or occupation as *peramu*, but as *petani*, literally farmer despite the fact that few Kamoro do more than small garden horticulture and the majority of their food is derived from their semi-nomadic “gathering” lifestyle. For example, at Iwaka, of 114 respondents who listed their work, over half responded that they were *petani* though no appreciable gardens exist in or near the village.

permanent village in 1984. In 1995 after the government had determined that the Kuala Kencana townsite fell within the property rights of Iwaka, physical development was taken over by Freeport as part of a compensation package.²⁶

During the course of the UABS project in 1998, we enumerated fourteen different *taparus* and nineteen women listed themselves as IRTs at Iwaka. As in the Kali Kopi settlement, no males identified themselves as leaders of the RT. Of the women declaring themselves as IRT, three originated from outside of Iwaka village, and another three failed to list their *taparu* affiliation.²⁷ In either case, these women as well as the three women for whom we recorded no *taparu* affiliation were nonetheless caught within the genealogical web created around the other IRTs. Among the other thirteen women, seven can be easily reconciled with my earlier *taparu* list, with some naming what I have termed a kampong as their *taparu*, others listing the “tribal name” of their respective previous settlements. Six of them listed *taparu* affiliations did not seem to be conventional *taparu* names, something Pouwer noticed during my conversations with him. These women listed Mamiria or Mambuaya as their *taparu* affiliation. I shall return to our analysis of these women shortly.

As discussed above, the position of Neighbourhood Head (*Kepala RT*) is an honorary administrative position linked to representing a specific (geographic) part of a village. According to Indonesian Law, within each *rukun tetangga* (neighbourhood) there are ten to twenty families with a leader chosen by the people of that neighbourhood. This position is considered to be almost purely honorary and holds no political power. As an example of the types of duties carried out by an RT head-person, Anwar mentions that the formal process needed to acquire a new identity card begins with a letter of recommendation from the RT head-person where one’s household is located (Achmad 1999:27).

²⁶ The government seems to have decided which community should be compensated based upon proximity “as the crow flies” of the nearest settlement to the proposed town area. Other Kamoro communities raised doubts that it belonged to Iwaka because of its great distance from any navigable river owned by the Iwaka people.

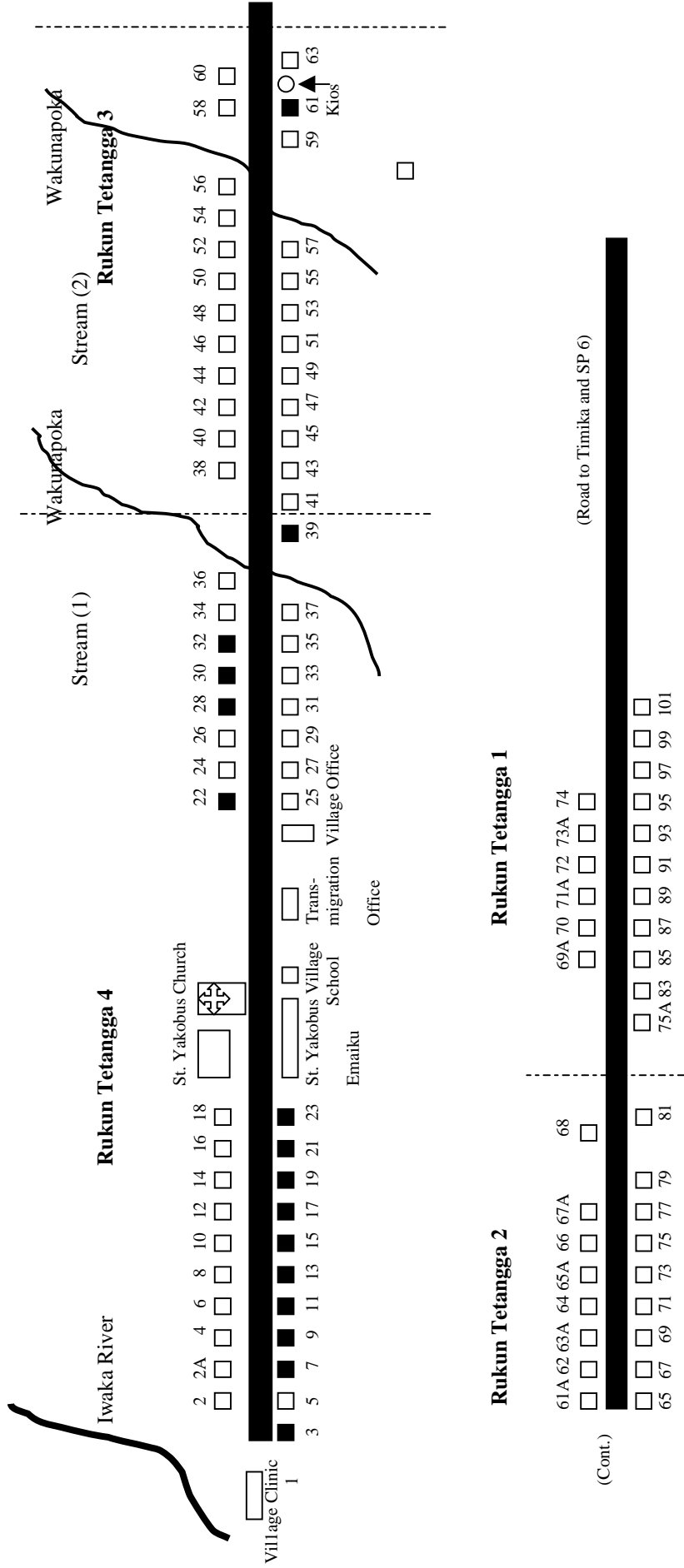
²⁷ Quite possibly the women from outside of the village holding the IRT title may have some level of access or inclusion in a social group in their home village as they listed their *taparu* affiliations from their home settlements, though this needs to be further investigated.

Perhaps the most important aspect of the official and common-sense connection here exists between neighbourhood (*rukun tetangga*) as a location and its head as a prominent resident.

The village of Iwaka is divided into four geographic divisions or neighbourhoods numbered one through four (abbreviated RT 1 through RT 4). When I mapped out the residence of the IRTs at Iwaka, I discovered that all but one of the IRTs lived in RT 1. Fourteen of them lived in eleven neighbouring houses on the same side of the road. Of course this is a most striking contradiction of the title and the supposed function of the neighbourhood head according to the Indonesian administration—the neighbourhood heads reside predominantly in the same neighbourhood (see Map 9). This is an indication that at least for the Kamoro of Iwaka, the IRT may not correspond directly to the function set out by Indonesian administrative practice.

Closer inspection of those IRTs listed as belonging to the two anomalous *taparu*, Mambuaya and Mamiri, reveals that between the two of them they incorporate over twenty-four households in a village of just 100 households. A genealogical map, which includes members not only of both of the suspect *taparu*, but also other *taparu* revealed a number of significant factors underlying village-level social organisation.

Consistent with the importance of senior maternal figure(s) at the KKA settlement, the same lines of relatedness were evident in Iwaka. In addition to a three-generation structure like that uncovered at KKA, genealogical mapping built out from core Mambuaya and Mamiri IRTs revealed a complex web of marriage relations. On the surface, the relations appear somewhat confusing; it looks as if IRT titles can be transferred genealogically following either a



Map 9: Iwaka Village Map showing residential locations of IRTs (■). Map based on UABS village map.

matrilineal pattern like that at KKA or perhaps a patrilineal one. Even more confusing, it appears that their *taparu* affiliations all tend to overlap. However, more critical inspection and assistance from an Kamoro-authored analysis pertaining to the relationship between marriage and *aopao*, reveals a striking pattern of symmetrical alliance exchange marriages.

The complex pattern of marriage exchanges was clarified when Dr. Chris Ballard, the ANU lead representative for the UABS project, and I asked Methodius Mamapuku, the Kamoro representative on the UABS team, if he might be able to compose a short paper for a contribution to a potential project publication. The result was the essay *Ndaitita: Prinsip Aupao dan Keterkaitannya dengan PT.FIC* (*Ndaitita: The Principle of Aupao [sic] and its Relationship to the PT Freeport Indonesia Company*).²⁸ It outlines interpretations and applications of *aopao* from an indigenous perspective. Aspects of *aopao* outlined by Mamapuku that are the most salient to this discussion are those surrounding marriage.

Mamapuku outlines three distinct styles of exchange marriage which occur among the Kamoro and are classified as kinds of “*aopao* marriage.” The ideal marriage pattern is symmetrical exchange between brother/sister sibling pairs. The underlying factor in these exchanges is that each family is both wife giver and wife receiver—literally a balanced (*aopao*) exchange.²⁹ An “*aopao* marriage” is deemed superior to a non-*aopao* marriage not only because it maintains balance, but because of the socio-economic impacts of strengthening ties between families while distributing resources.³⁰ Although these marriages are preferred and sought among the Kamoro they appear slightly less common than other types of exchange marriages.³¹ Another style of “*aopao* marriage”

²⁸ *Ndaitita* is a Kamoro word that literally means lifeways.

²⁹ “Sister exchange” is commonplace in Melanesia. See M. Strathern (1984) for general overview of marriage exchange in Melanesia.

³⁰ See van Baal (1975) for examples of reciprocal marriage conceived of in terms of balance.

³¹ As M. Strathern points out, this type of marriage in which the subject matter of exchange (e.g. *aopao*) is both included in the mechanism and characterises a type of relationship (e.g. an “*aopao*”

Mamapuku outlines is one formed when one family has a brother/sister sibling pair while the other family has only one marriageable candidate. In these circumstances, the family with just one marriage candidate “adopts” (using Mamapuku’s word) an eligible candidate from a third family to complete the exchange, again with the underlying importance of maintaining *aopao*.

The third style of “*aopao* marriage” outlined by Mamapuku explains the complex situation that arose from my genealogical mapping of Iwaka village IRTs. Mamapuku outlines an exchange marriage in which three or four families—in the form of two alliances, contribute candidates to an exchange (1998a:5). Using an example from Timika Pantai, he explains how this often occurs when families have siblings differing greatly in age. At the same time, his example explicitly outlines this style of exchange occurring across *peraeko* lines, but within the kampong—precisely the situation that I mapped at Iwaka. Cross-*peraeko* exchange forms the underlying fabric of the larger social unit, the *taparu*.

With respect to *aopao* marriages, close analysis of the illustration below reveals that in the generation of the parents of several of our IRT informants, balance was achieved through the cooperation of three different nuclear families: Kaware, Kanareyau and Arakopeyauta. Despite the fact that age differences prohibited direct exchange between two of the families, they form an alliance through which each of the three families were able to be both wife-givers and wife-receivers, achieving *aopao* (see Figures 4 and 5). The relationship between a wife-giver and a wife-receiver is characterised by life-long services rendered by a man to his in-laws under a relationship known as *kaokapaiti*. *Kaokapaiti* is composed of two Kamoro words, *kaoka* and *paiti*. Literally translated, the words mean woman and shame respectively and refer to feelings of obligation toward the woman’s family as wife-giver. The Kamoro conceive of *kaokapaiti* as an aspect of *aopao* fundamental to the maintenance of social cohesion.

A brief example of *kaokapaiti* obligations: on a trip to the village of Inauga

marriage”), the “ ‘actors’ interests as transactors are presumed. Thus we hold that they will be bound to seek some kind of ‘balance’ in their transactions” (Strathern 1984:42).

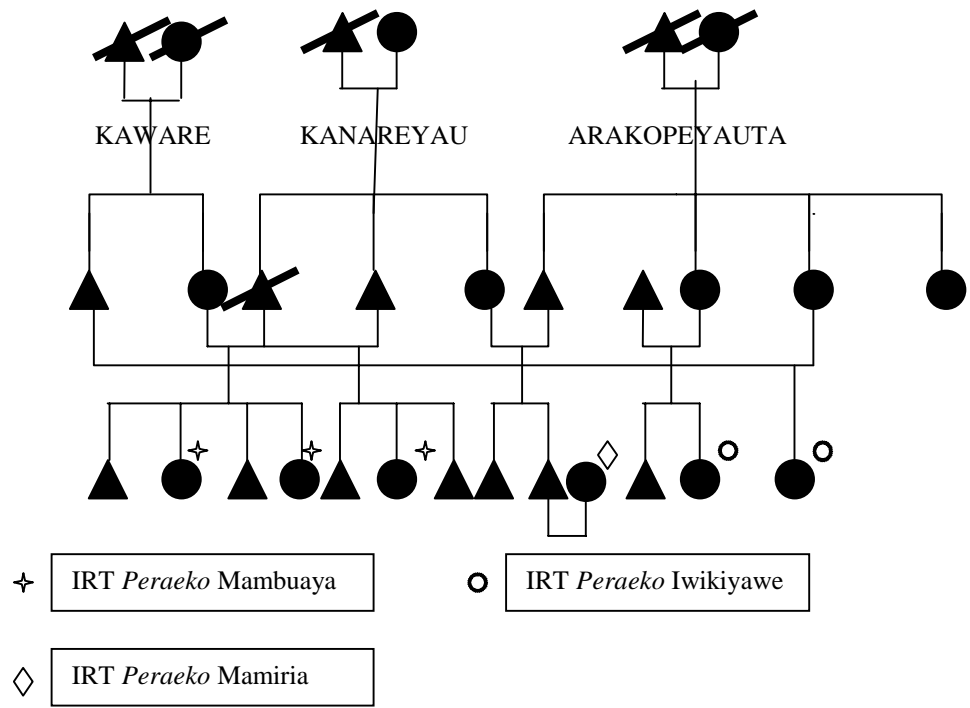


Figure 4: *Aopao* marriages at Iwaka. With alliances between three families, each family is both wife-giver and wife-receiver.

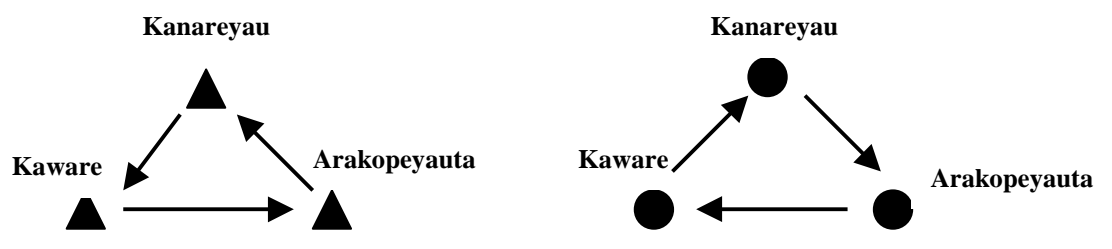


Figure 5: Flow of men and women in *aopao* marriages at Iwaka.

in 1997 I observed a man in the middle of the labour-intensive task of making a new dugout canoe. I asked him if his old canoe was worn out and he replied “No, my wife is pregnant.” The implication was that the canoe would be a “payment” as part of *kaokapaiti* obligations to his wife’s parents for the child that their daughter would give to him. This sort of payment of valuables (and work) from a man to his wife’s family punctuates the life cycle of the marital union, particularly in its reproductive aspects. Payments like this among the Kamoro are common, and highlight the fact that *kaokapaiti* obligations are a tangible and ongoing part of a reciprocal relationship binding a man to his wife’s family. This notion of ongoing payment is contrary to the notion of exchange as a one-off economic transaction, which characterises corporate, developmental, and state relationships with the Kamoro, which I shall return to below.

ENGAGING FREEPORT:

Perspectives From the Perimeter

As this thesis has demonstrated, *amoko-kwere* and migration histories validate various Kamoro communities’ rights to the land in the lowlands of the Freeport Project Area by virtue of past migrations *through* the regions presently impacted by the mine (as outlined in Chapter Six). More recently I have also recorded explicit examples of *amoko-kwere* which describe Kamoro ownership, partial ownership, or rights to the highland mine area and its contents in the homeland of the Amungme. All of the examples that I have heard which incorporate Freeport and their activities via *amoko-kwere* are from communities residing on the edge of or outside the area of direct impact of the mine’s activities. A perspective from a directly-impacted community will be addressed at the end of this chapter. The first example that I present seems to exhibit a peculiar blend of highland Amungme cosmology with a Kamoro *amoko-kwere*; as far as I am aware, such a

blend of Kamoro and Amungme cosmological ideas is unprecedented in the extensive written record regarding both groups.

This *amoko-kwere* was collected from three older men from Timika (Pantai) who were at the time living in the urban Timika area.³² The account is a succinct explanation of Kamoro tribal rights to the highland mine:

The rocks that are currently being mined up there are the property of the Kamoro tribe. According to myth, the owner of the mine or the “*Ibu Tambang*” [Indonesian language, literally Mrs. or Mother Mine] is a Kamoro woman named Aoepa. The mine was born of Aoepa, who was captured in an abduction-marriage by a *kapauku* [Kamoro language, interior dweller, mountain person, in earlier times spirits were said to have lived in the interior] named Takomumameyau who was half human, half spirit. He abducted her while in the form of a *timako* [Kamoro, crocodile] and ran to the mountain where the mine now is. The two of them are the owners of the mine and the mountain being mined. From this myth it is clear that the mine is principally the property of the Amungme and the Kamoro tribes (in Mamapuku 1998a:15).³³

While *amoko-kwere* abound with examples of men, women, and spirits changing into plants, animals, and features of the landscape, I have found no other examples of an *amoko-we* “giving birth” to part of the landscape. Further, while examples of highland physical features such as rock formations have sometimes been interpreted as *amoko-we*, the only Kamoro examples I know of are limited to West Mimika where the mountain range extends closer to the coast. Unfortunately on the occasion when I collected a version of this story I was unable to probe into a number of relevant questions. Perhaps the most important thematic connection between this story and other *amoko-kwere* is the underlying notion that outsiders are conceived of as thieves, *otomo-we*. In this case, non-

³² Methodius Mamapuku and I independently documented nearly identical versions of this *amoko-kwere*. In keeping with understandings of “rightful ownership” of *amoko-kwere*, I defer to Methodius’ version because it originated from his home village of Timika (Pantai).

³³ The text with the original story as recorded in Indonesian: *Batuan yang sedang ditambang adalah milik Kamoro. Karna sesuai mite bahwa pemilik atau Ibu Tambang itu adalah seorang naita Kamoro yang bernama Aoepa. Tambang itu dilahirkan oleh wanita bernama Aoepa, yang dibawa lari (kawin lari) oleh seorang kapauku bernama Takomumameyau (setengah manusia, setengah jin/roh halus yang menjelma dalam bentuk timako dan kemudian menyambar Aoepa dan membawa lari kearah gunung yang ditambang sekarang ini. Mereka dua inilah sebagai pemilik tambang dan gunung yang ditambang. Dengan demikian tambang itu milik utama dari suku Amungme dan suku Kamoro (dalam mite Takomumameyau dari Timika Pantai).* In a footnote to the story, Mamapuku further clarifies that Aoepa was originally from Timika Pantai.

Kamoro are doubly implicated, with the Amungme abducting a Kamoro woman and then Freeport “stealing” her “offspring”.

In the vast body of documented Kamoro oral tradition, only one story that I know of addresses the intermarriage between the Kamoro and the *kapauku*, the highlanders. Unlike the present story, the *amoko-kwere* regarding intermarriage with highlanders clearly hinges on an exchange (*aopao*) marriage (rather than an abduction marriage) between the Kamoro, Korane Ipukare and his sister, and *kapauku* (highlander) counterparts. In personal communications, I asked Pouwer about the Korane Ipukare *amoko-kwere*. He explained to me that the narrative:

... seems to be a rationalization of a failure to exchange, to communicate with the *Kapaoko* [sic] socially apart from the usual barter: Korane exchanged his sister with a *Kapaoko* man. However the *Kapaoko* woman [whom he received in exchange] did not beget children. The Kamoro woman on the other hand begot many children; so the exchange turned out to be a failure in terms of offspring (for the Kamoro that is!). Also, the *Kapaoko* man beat up his Kamoro wife when her children kept asking for *keladi*-food [taro]. The angry father threw them in the river. The Kamoro mother put them in her canoe and made for their relatives downstream. The Kamoro retaliated by attacking the *Kapaoko* settlement and killing the angry father and his mother and pillaging the garden produce. So the exchange misfired on two counts. Korane and his men then left for *imuu*, the coast, and west where they found a colony of women...fought off their (absent and foreign) husband-sailors settled there and multiplied. In other words the communication and the search for wealth *imuu* [toward the west and the coast] succeeded while the communication and search for wealth *kapao* [toward the interior] with the *Kapaoko*, failed (Pouwer personal correspondence with author, 16 July 1999).

Although differences between the two stories are striking, given the complete absence of any other Kamoro story regarding marriage with highlanders, the structural similarities of the two stories leads me to suspect that the *mopere* of our present version is the same as that of Korane Ipukaro. Most basically, it involves a conjugal relationship between a highlander and a Kamoro. In both stories, a Kamoro woman proves fertile, producing offspring with her highland partner. At the same time, in the former version, wealth (in terms of women and offspring) is denied to the Kamoro in the interior and only discovered through the agency of the *amoko-we* who travel to the west. In both cases, a figurative failure to comply with *kaokapaiti* obligations is implicit, relegating the Kamoro to a socially and economically inferior position.

For the Amungme, explicit references to the personification of land in the form of a matriarchal figure are commonplace, and underlie some of the most emotional protests to mining activities. According to Tom Beanal, a key Amungme community leader:

The Amungme perceived their living habitat through an analogy to a female which they believed to be their Mother. The vertical zone of their habitat reflects the erect body of a female creature. The part at the highest elevation is associated with the head of the Mother ('Ninggok'). This area is comprised of the tops of the highest mountains in their territory such as the Cartenz [Carstensz] Top, Ertsberg ('yel Segel Onggop Segel')[the initial Freeport Mine site], Grasberg [the present Freeport Mine Site] and many others. (Beanal 1997:xxx)

Here there is a striking overlap between the two otherwise differing cosmologies: the mountain from which Freeport obtains its wealth is personified as a maternal figure.

I documented another *amoko-kwere* that legitimates Kamoro ownership of the mine and its contents from informants from the villages of Mware and Pigapu on the Wania River. As contacts between outsiders and the Kamoro of the Wania River became more intense, *amoko-kwere* regarding the exploits of Mapurupiu have become increasingly common. In Chapter Five I described how Mapurupiu was interpreted as "the God that was over the people before Adam and Eve" and about how he was rumoured to have surfaced to give access to western wealth, *kata* during the post-war Dutch administration. In Chapter Six, Mapurupiu appears again when the "Mapuru tribes" are noted as the local landowners of the Timika area and the Indonesian government was named "Mapuru Jaya," victorious Mapuru, after him.

Egenius Atame from Pigapu and Thomas Iwitiu from Mware gave me a detailed contemporary account of Mapurupiu's adventures.³⁴ Their telling begins with a *Karapao* (a boy's initiation ceremony) on the coast near the mouth of the

³⁴ Egenius Atame is from the Kopoko *taparu* and Thomas Iwitiu is from the Makamaurupi *taparu*.

Wania River.³⁵ While Mapurupiu is with the men inside the Karapao building drumming and singing, his wife Maimero is trying to find food for their son. By four in the afternoon, she still had no luck:

Maimero looked inside at the contents of her *etahe* [K: carrying bag]. She inspected the bag and found nothing...There was no food in the *etahe*. “*Ama apakona*.” “*Ama Apakona*” [K: literally, “There is no sago, There is no Sago”]. She was upset because one of her children was crying because he was hungry.

When word finally reached Mapurupiu that his children were crying with hunger, he resolved that at high tide that night, he and Maimero would travel towards the interior to get some food. By one in the morning, the couple departed. Before too long they reached a juncture in the river. Mapurupiu’s sago area was more distant up the one branch of the river while Maimero knew of sago that was along the other branch of the river and much closer:

Maimero she said to Mapurupiu “Don’t worry about going to your stream, it’s too far from here. Let’s just row to my stream, it’s much closer.”...Maimero explained that there were large stands of sago right at the edge of the stream...She went on: “So it’s decided. We’ll just go to [your] *kaukapaiti*’s river...to the place where my father made a *para*.”³⁶...They went to the tree...Mapurupiu cut into it. It was right at the edge of the river...The tree was felled...[and they worked the tree] until around three or four in the morning. Finally they were finished...They filled several *tumangs* of sago.³⁷ The two of them overnighted on the river waiting for tide to rise again.

With the high tide, Mapurupiu and Maimero set out toward the coast again. Their journey was interrupted when at the place where the salt water meets the fresh water there were so many fish that the river was literally blocked. As it

³⁵ My informants listed the location explicitly as Karauwa, near Marauka. Recall in Chapter Six the discussion of the ritual and political significance of Marauka as a place where a door to the underworld was said to exist.

³⁶ A *para* is a sign, usually a clearing around the base of a sago tree, to tell others that the tree belongs to someone and is soon to be cut. This is particularly common when a sago stand is close to the edge of a river.

³⁷ *Tumang* is an Indonesian word for a leaf container for sago. Generally they contain about ten to fifteen kilograms of processed sago. One *tumang* of sago lasts for approximately two weeks among a family of four or five people, even longer when the diet is substantially supplemented with fish, molluscs, pork or cassowary. The fact that they were able to get several *tumangs* out of one tree emphasises how rich of a tree it was. Generally one tree produces about two *tumangs*.



Image 21: *Karapao Kame* (boy's initiation building), Mioko (along the Kamora River, just outside of Freeport's Project Area), April 1997 (photo by author).



Image 22: Detail of upper left side of the front of the above building showing conspicuous representation/incorporation of the foreign. Positioned above the *oto* (the strips of bark and leaves) representing *otepe* held by the various *taparu* in Mioko, are the words “*Untukmu Indonesiaku*,” “For you my Indonesia” (photo by author).



Image 23: Two initiates are painted with *taparu*-specific designs as part of *Taori / Karapao* (boy's initiation) . The imported red-cloth sarong has replaced the sago-leaf fibre skirt in the ceremony. Both of these are decorated with indigenous designs, most prominently the *mopere* motif, the lozenge-shaped image (Photo by Gretchen Black Harple, Timika Pantai 1996).



Image 24: Detail of initiate from same feast. Note the very conspicuous incorporation of “foreign” elements with his *taparu*-specific body paint. In particular the Islamic “*kopiah*” with Arabic script that reads “Mohammed” combined with the crucifix and the *taparu* paint. Photo by Gretchen Black Harple, Timika Pantai 1996. Translation of Arabic by Father Philipus Tule, SVD.

turned out, the fish were easy to catch, and Mapurupiu speared one after the other, filling his canoe with a bounty of any kind of fish that he wanted.

Arriving back at the village, they went straight to their house, taking only a small portion of the sago and fish with them. After putting some of the sago and fish in the family's house, Mapurupiu took some sago and an *ehako* fish³⁸ to the feast house where the men were still drumming and singing. At the feast house, something happened:

Mapurupiu cooked some sago and fish. He ate and ate and ate. When he finished, he asked his son to put the leftovers beside the hearth. He left them there. Mapurupiu ate again that night...he ate the fish and the sago. He ate it until there was no more left. He cooked sago balls. After he finished all of the food, he had a drink then a smoke. After he finished his cigarette, he felt drowsy...he just slept in the middle of everything—while men were singing and playing the drums...But this sleep wasn't sleep at all. He was dead! He was dead! He had already died.³⁹

In the midst of the drumming and singing, the men around him failed to realise that he was dead until the next morning when the celebration ended when everyone except for Mapurupiu rose to leave the festival building. When Miamero found out she and the other villagers cried, mourning Mapurupiu's death.

But, unknown to the people in the village, when Mapurupiu died during the night, his soul had already begun to ascend the Wania River.⁴⁰ For three days Mapurupiu's soul travelled along the Wania River, looking for other souls of dead people. He found nothing until eventually he met Ekoworupi and Enamakorupi, a frog and a small lizard, who were in the process of making a *karapao* at a place called Kahawatia, near Mapuru Jaya. Mapurupiu approached the sounds:

³⁸ In Indonesian this fish is described as *ikan sembilang*, a kind of catfish.

³⁹ Though not explicitly stated, there was an implication that his death was either the result of eating sago that was already marked as "owned" amounting to theft from his *kaokapaiti*, a serious infringement or that his death was somehow related to the fish that he had consumed. Also, there are similarities with an account collected by Zegwaard during the Dutch era. In his account, Mapurupiu dies because he consumed a fish that was taboo during a particular ritual (1952:75)

⁴⁰ The narrators initially used the Indonesian word *nyawa*, which literally means "soul" (Echols and Shadily 1994:392). The implication is that his soul (*ipu*) or its converted form (*mbii*) was travelling around outside of the body.

He could hear that something was going on, so he moved closer to hear. He thought to himself “Who could this be?” Whose kampong is here? Then he pulled his canoe to the edge of the river and climbed the bank...He asked the frog man and the lizard man “Who are you?”⁴¹

Then Mapurupiu, asked them if they could make him a “Johnson-canoe” for him the next day.⁴² Ekoworupi and Enamakorupi, the frog and the lizard, responded that they could do this for him.⁴³ After telling them that he would return the following day to pick up the “Johnson-canoe,” Mapurupiu again set out again going upstream looking for other spirits:

In his canoe he had already prepared a lime-stick. Inside of it he mixed fish-bones from his last meal in with the lime. Upstream he made the mountains emerge by throwing lime. Near where Tembapura is, he planted the fish bones in the ground. Then he shook the lime-stick again and a shower of blue-colour mixed with white came out [lime is generally white, TH]. That’s how Mapurupiu put the gold in the mountain and made it so that his grandchildren could see it.

The story concludes with Mapurupiu returning to the frog and the lizard where he collects his “Johnson-canoe” which he uses to travel downstream in search of his wife. Eventually he discovers that she is collecting materials to make a mourning bonnet, but when he goes to find her, he finds his children waiting at the edge of the forest in their canoe. Maimero had already gone to collect the materials *with* Mapurupiu’s younger brother. The insinuation here is that with the full knowledge of her children, Maimero has engaged in a sexual relationship, effectively remarrying, with Mapurupiu’s younger brother too soon after his death. He scolds his younger brother for marrying his wife, before asking Maimero why she did not wait for him to come back.

When Mapurupiu started his engine to leave, Maimero and her children reached for their paddles, they wanted to follow him. He grabbed his daughter

⁴¹ Here I asked the men “Was it people with animal names or animals?” In Indonesian they had said “*Orang kodok dan orang cicak*,” literally a frog-person and a small lizard-person. They responded “They were animals, but with human voices!”

⁴² Johnson is the generic name for an outboard motor.

⁴³ There is a strong implication of the frog and the lizard’s connection to the spiritual world not only because they were talking reptiles, but also because they were able to carve a canoe and an

and shouted at them “You stay, I’m going to the interior.”⁴⁴ Following the Mioko River⁴⁵ Mapurupiu and his daughter went to the interior where. He left his daughter (a person) stay there while his spirit went up the mountain. When I asked if Mapurupiu and his daughter were responsible for the mine, I received a matter-of-fact answer “Yes, of course.” Thus, the gold in the mountain was a direct result of Kamoro agency. There was also a conversation that followed their telling of the story during which they implied that taking (mining) the gold amounts to theft from the descendants of Mapurupiu. Freeport, were *otomo-we*, thieves.

The Bad Son-in-Law

As the examples above from Mware-Pigapu and Timika Pantai suggest, Kamoro informants from the periphery or outside of Freeport’s Project Area appear to use *amoko-kwere* to formulate understandings of the Mine. In contrast, the communities most directly impacted by Freeport seem to have a far more complex engagement with the company for which a more detailed study is certainly necessary to better understand. From my experiences with the Nawaripi and Tipuka communities, I can offer at least some rudimentary comments regarding the engagement of these communities with Freeport.

While I think *amoko-kwere* certainly are brought to bear on all kinds of Kamoro engagements with the world around them, the contemporary relationship between Freeport and the communities directly impacted by their operations is most directly conceived of by the Kamoro in terms of social and economic reciprocity. When I asked Leo Urumami, a community leader from the Neyripi-Ameyeripi kampong if the relationship between his community and Freeport had

outboard motor in just one day. The narrators explained to me that if real men tried to make a canoe alone it would take at least two or three days.

⁴⁴ Here the narrator explicitly said “*Kamu tinggal, saya naik*,” “You stay, I’m going up.” Up could mean upstream, but could also mean to the mountains.

⁴⁵ Presumably the narrators meant either the Kamora River or one of its tributaries.

something to do with *aopao*, the Kamoro term, which most broadly defines social reciprocity, he seemed, a bit surprised by my question. Then he responded:

Aopao? You mean like repayment or revenge? Of course there's a connection [between their situation and *aopao*, TH]. However, if there is no relationship at all [between them and Freeport, TH] how can one effect balance? There has to be a relationship first, right? Along with the government [Freeport, TH] always takes and takes without paying.⁴⁶

While Leo was being a bit facetious to make his point (in the sense that there *was* regular contact between certain Freeport workers and his community), he was alluding to the fact that the Company, and by this he meant top management, the decision-makers in Jakarta and New Orleans, never responded directly to the community's concerns. According to him, it was impossible to effect *aopao* because at its most basic level *aopao* requires a relationship. On several occasions I sat in on meetings with Freeport Management in Kuala Kencana, listening to Leo and others from his community and from Tipuka, the other directly impacted community. During these meetings, the messages were consistent: We are happy to work with people from Freeport's Community Affairs Department, but we know that they do not make the decisions. They would even take things a step farther, by saying that they did not have problems with the Vice-Presidents of Community Affairs who attended the meetings either. I remember them explicitly saying that they realised that they (the Vice Presidents) were powerless and only the "dogs" of Jakarta and New Orleans, Freeport's corporate offices.

Indeed, when Freeport helped to bring in a Non-Governmental Organisation from Jakarta to help "facilitate" a recognition package with the community, the Nawaripi's first reaction was to protest. They perceived that the Non-Governmental Organisation was a way for Freeport to further distance themselves from the Community (driving away any hope for a proper relationship) and that the NGO was going to "eat" the community's funds (which Freeport owed them).

⁴⁶ The original Indonesian text: *Aopao? Maksudnya balas-membalas dan balas dendam? Memang ada hubungan. Tapi, kalau tidak ada hubungan sama-sekali bagaimana bisa dapat balas? Harus ada hubungan dulu, ka? Terus dengan pemerintah, mereka selalu ambil, ambil terus tanpa pembayaran.*

Freeport's gestures of re-assigning employees who were working with the Nawaripi and the Tipuka symbolically supported their fears of a Freeport withdrawal from the relationship. Eventually, the community did accept assistance from the NGO, but only with the urging of Freeport Management and with the proviso that they would be welcome to continue to talk directly with Freeport.⁴⁷

As a researcher and a consultant to Freeport, I was placed in a precarious position when I was asked to attend a meeting at the *Bupati*'s office on behalf of Freeport's Vice President for Community Affairs. After chatting briefly with friends from the Nawaripi community prior to the meeting while we waited outside, we filed into the somewhat cramped meeting room. Upon entering the room, I immediately moved for a chair to the right of the entrance, where I sat beside Leo, one of the Nawaripi leaders. We were soon joined by the Village head from Tipuka, another village directly impacted by Freeport's operations.

On numerous occasions I had sat in this area of the meeting room which was set up as an audience area opposite a U-shaped "speakers" area on the other side. The *Bupati* and his staff, and sometimes military leaders, sat at the apex of the U, facing toward us. To his right, there was an empty space, to his left, government officials. I informed the *Bupati* that I had been asked to attend this meeting on behalf of the Freeport Vice President. Unfortunately my misunderstanding of an Indonesian word turned out to totally change my perspective on the meeting.

⁴⁷ In practice however, this direct communication with Freeport was not welcomed. It aggravated both the NGO and Freeport management. The NGO felt betrayed that the community brought problems directly to Freeport rather than working through them. This also brought on complaints by the NGO that Freeport employees (in particular my entire research office) were undermining their efforts and threatening their ability to work independently, which ultimately would damage both the "recognition" process that they were facilitating and at the same time damage their reputation. Continued close relationships between members of the Nawaripi community and one of my staff in particular brought about allegations of spying against him from the NGO. This staff member's entanglement with the community was based on a number of issues, including that fact that he had been born and raised in Mimika and had forged a relationship with this community over a period of at least five years by the time the NGO had arrived. His undergraduate thesis analysed Nawaripi resettlements at Koperapoka Baru. The combination of reports from my staff and Nawaripi community leader visits to my office prompted my conveyance of their concerns to Freeport management directly. Ultimately, I believe that this played a role in the termination of my contract. Achieving a "recognition" and land-release "facilitated" by a third party was absolutely critical to Freeport obtaining permission to increase their production capacity.

Earlier that morning, the Vice President had asked me to “*mewakili*” him at this meeting. I interpreted his instruction, in particular the way he contextualised it by telling me to take notes and to report back, to mean that I should sit in as his observer to take minutes of the meeting. This was not the *Bupati*’s understanding.

To my horror the *Bupati* asked me to occupy a seat to his right, placing me alone opposite the other government representatives and distanced from the communities. After my change in position, the *Bupati* opened the meeting, which was to discuss the implementation of a land rights recognition package for the Nawaripi. Until that date, the dispersal of the benefits of this package had been dismally slow for a number of reasons, both pragmatic and political. For most of the meeting, I responded without much difficulty to questions; I had heard the same questions fielded by Freeport Management on a number of occasions and I knew the company’s official position.

Eventually an older Nawaripi man for whom I have great respect as an informant and story-teller rose. Almost in tears he began to cry “*Tapare apokona, Ameta apokona*” in the Nawaripi dialect of the Kamoro language.⁴⁸ With some knowledge of Kamoro, I knew exactly what this meant: “[Our] Land is gone, [our] food is gone.” Through a translator he went on to describe that any hope for his generation and that of his children for a better future is gone. He then questioned if it would be possible for Freeport to help to make the situation better for his grandchildren. He ended his plea with the words “*Aopao apokona.*” This last statement hit home. Literally it translates as “There is no reciprocity,” but its meaning is far more multivalent as I shall discuss.

I fought back my emotions as I listened. It seemed like I was the only non-Nawaripi in the room who understood the man (and perhaps I was). I could do no more than respond that I would pass the information on to Freeport management, as I was not empowered to respond to his concerns on their behalf. Resentful of the position that I had been placed in, I seriously considered resigning my consultancy right then.

⁴⁸ In his dialect “*Tapare amuna, Ama amuna.*”

I couldn't help but notice what I perceived as a look of satisfaction on the faces of the NGO representatives. If I had read about this on the Internet a year earlier, I too would have been pleased that the Kamoro had fought back, expressing their opinion eloquently. I imagined them writing up the whole experience for an Internet news group or a press release. The headline would mirror the mission statements of a host of NGOs involved in environmental and human rights campaigning. It would read "Kamoro elder says 'We have no land, we have no food, and no reciprocity.'" In this case, such a report would have been entirely accurate. What's more, fit perfectly with my own analysis, but I had never been on this side of such a statement.

Outside the meeting I approached the man who had made the passionate statements. Much to my surprise, he turned to me and apologised! He said, "I'm not mad at you, I'm mad at Freeport" before inviting me to lunch with him and the rest of the Nawaripi representatives. Clearly this was another example of where the Kamoro differentiated between individual personalities and the reified company.

During interviews both in Timika (town) and at the settlements on the East Levee prior to the arrival of the NGO, several older Nawaripi people explained their "relationship" with Freeport to me. Reviewing my notes, I realised that while all of the explanations shared notions of conceptualising the relationship in terms of *aopao*, several of them also offered insight into their expectations grounded in indigenous social obligations. David, an older man whom I met initially at the KKA settlement explained it best to me one day in Timika (town):

Child [addressing me, TH], it's like this. We gave that land [that is being used for tailings disposal, TH] to Freeport and the government long ago. For them, there is always a "yield." There are products from the mine, there is the "product" of the destruction of our sago. Via our land, Freeport is like our *kaokapaiti*, but not a good one. For decades they have obtained⁴⁹ from us, but they still have not payed us. How long must we wait?⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Here I translated the verb *dapat* as obtained rather than taken. This seems to alter the moral intent of the relationship. Had the author wished to say "taken" he would likely have used the verb *ambil*, which means to take rather than *dapat*, which in this case means to obtain. "Obtaining" from them insinuates a moral obligation to engage in communications, to compensate. There is no inherent moral obligation for a thief toward his victims.

I think David's analogy sums up well the general feeling of the Nawaripi and Tipuka people with regards to Freeport. Both groups feel that they have given land and resources (even if they were not freely "given") to Freeport and the government. Of course this "gift" has certain moral obligations attached to it, as made explicit by the *kaokapaiti* analogy.⁵¹ The implication is that Freeport, as the receiver of a "wife" in the *kaokapaiti* relationship is morally obliged to life-long services to their "in-laws" (the Nawaripi and Tipuka).⁵² Indeed, as Pouwer notes, among the Kamoro, social and economic status is intimately bound into the *kaokapaiti* relationship. As Pouwer aptly notes, a man without a *kaokapaiti* (either a daughter's husband or a sister's husband) "is a social nobody, lacking security when growing old" (Pouwer 1987:20). With David's reference to his children and grandchildren, he implied that Freeport, in their failure to fulfil the *kaokapaiti* role has taken away his own future.

Kaokapaiti then is perceived as an aspect of *aopao* that is fundamental to the maintenance of social cohesion and social welfare. For the Nawaripi and Tipuka, one-time payments from the company and the government (e.g. "recognition" payments) seem to be perceived as something that Freeport and the government owed to the communities *in addition to* their *kaokapaiti* obligations.

⁵⁰ *Anak begini. Tanah itu kami sudah lamah kasih kepada Freeport dan Pemerintah. Untuk mereka selalu ada hasil. Ada hasil tambang ada hasil merusak tanah kami, dan merusakkan sagu kami. Lewat tanah, Freeport sebagai kaokapaiti kami, tetapi kaokapaiti yang jelek. Mereka selama puluhan tahun dapat dari kami, tapi masih belum bayar. Berapa lama kami harus tunggu mereka?*

⁵¹ Ironically, Freeport has published material demonstrating that they knew that the highland Amungme perceived their relationship to the company along similar lines. Accordingly "The Amungme had shared their land, and this gesture was not reciprocated" (Mealey 1996:299).

⁵² To the best of my knowledge, there is no other reference among the Kamoro to a company or any other non-person being interpreted, even allegorically, as a wife. When I discussed this with Jan Pouwer, he said that during his fieldwork this never occurred. I suspect this is related to the comparatively limited engagements that Kamoro communities had had with outside companies before Freeport. During Pouwer's field research only a limited number of Kamoro worked for the NNGPM, and most often this was outside of Mimika.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The contemporary articulation between Kamoro social organisation and the Indonesian State takes a number of different forms. On a regional/ethnic level, State-level decisions regarding the sharing of proceeds from Freeport artificially unites disparate communities for access to funding and other opportunities. Most often, this occurs under the banner of a single Kamoro tribe, though there is evidence that there could be a growing notion of a closer connection between two “tribes” who formerly had little contact, as I discuss briefly in the next chapter. On the local village level, unique patterns emerge through structural similarities that show the potential for smooth incorporation of indigenous Kamoro social structure within the Indonesian system of village administration. Unfortunately, smooth incorporation rarely happens. Instead the relationship is marred by cronyism manifest in unbalanced access to State and private resources—*aopao apokona*.

At the same time, there appears to be a fundamental contrast between the way that Kamoro who are not directly impacted by Freeport’s operations formulate their understandings of the company and the way that at least some of the communities who are directly impacted perceive the relationship. For the former, *amoko-kwere* served to reformulate the company, the mine, and its contents as products of Kamoro agency, which have been stolen (metaphorically or actually) from them. For the communities most directly impacted by the mine, Freeport is perceived in terms of having an actual social relationship—through their use of land—with the communities. For some members of the impacted communities the company’s ongoing usage of the land is perceived as analogous to the communities being wife-givers, expecting the company to live up to their moral obligations of an ongoing relationship with the “parents” of the land. In both of these styles of engagement with Freeport, the underlying similarity is that the Kamoro are on the unrequited end of supposed reciprocal relationships, perceiving that their contribution to the relationships has ultimately been “stolen” by the State and by Freeport.

Conclusion: Eternally *Amoko*

In the Introduction to this thesis, I outlined several factors contributing to contemporary misapprehension, misinterpretation, and misrepresentation of the Kamoro and their history by outsiders. As I outlined then and throughout the thesis, the three most prominent obstacles in this regard are underlying differences in concepts of historical consciousness, wide gaps in knowledge of the well-documented Kamoro past, and the inaccessibility of the languages of its documentation (e.g. Dutch and Indonesian). I hope that the cultural and historical information that I have provided in this thesis will help bridge these gaps and that it will encourage a more informed and productive engagement with the Kamoro. The underlying goal of course is to help to restore to the Kamoro agency in their own terms.

I have maintained throughout this thesis that it is not sufficient to examine only Kamoro history and ethnography, but that one must also understand the historical forces and agencies with whom the Kamoro interact(ed). I tentatively labelled this approach *multi-sighted* ethnography. It incorporates ideas of multi-sited ethnography (cf. Marcus) by tracing the interactions that impact Kamoro communities across geographic spaces. To this, my approach adds another dimension by extending the multi-sited metaphor across time to include historical moments and communities that have figured in Kamoro engagement with the wider world. In this way, multi-sited becomes *multi-sighted*. Of course there are trade-offs in the kinds of knowledge one can gain from any particular style of inquiry, and I do not propose that my style of inquiry should supplant more “traditional” forms of ethnographic inquiry. In this idea I see a parallel with Marcus’ conception of multi-sited ethnographic inquiry as a “second project” predicated upon an initial more “traditional” ethnographic project (1998:240). One specific example he gives is that typically the first book (or thesis) of a younger anthropologist is a work which “provides magisterial discussions of very

old tropes and discourse” while at the same time allowing for at least some influences of contemporary cultural critique (ibid:236). While I don’t fully subscribe to Marcus’ idea that contemporary cultural critique represents only stylistic fashion rather than truly meaningful and more permanent contributions to ethnographic inquiry, I do agree with his general notion that a multi-sited project is predicated upon earlier work, in his terms a “first project”. While Marcus generally conceives of the two “projects” as authored by the same person, I believe that one can utilize someone else’s ethnographic thesis as a foundation or first project. While contemporary socio-political circumstances precluded me from conducting “traditional” village-based ethnographic research, I was quite fortunate to have had a “first project” in the form of Jan Pouwer’s thesis, even if it was written over forty years prior to my own fieldwork. His work formed the backbone of a considerable body of literature that enabled my project. Because of their work, I was able to meaningfully juxtapose Kamoro ethnohistory against the broader social, political, and historical environments within which they were relayed. This juxtaposition revealed consistencies in Kamoro practice that would have been overlooked in an a-historical ethnographic project.

Throughout this thesis, I have demonstrated that *amoko-kwere* play a significant role in Kamoro interpretation of lived experience. Viewing them synchronically, many observers, in particular contemporary ones, have consistently trivialised the incorporation of foreign themes in *amoko-kwere*. Some interpretations along these lines tend to down-play the significance of *amoko-kwere* as mere “myths” or “folk-tales” which intimate naive indigenous cargo-istic style explanations of the economic disparity between the Kamoro and foreigners.¹ Other observers, grounded in foreign notions of historical consciousness and representational schemes, interpret *amoko-kwere* as ancestral

¹ Here I point explicitly toward various government documents, beginning with those mentioned in Chapter Five, which investigated indigenous formulations of the foreign and ultimately denounced their validity. Freeport explicitly downplays indigenous perceptions along these lines by relegating them to irrational “cargo cult” behaviour. Amungme perceptions of the company are, according to the company, “complicated” by “the phenomenon of ‘cargo cults’ widespread in Melanesia. In these ‘cults,’ traditional cultures, unable to comprehend the source of the very desirable material goods brought by outsiders, ascribe spiritual intervention to the production and distribution of these items” (Mealey 1996:299).

stories, relegating their utility to the “appreciation” and maintenance of western conceptions of “cultural heritage,” implying that they are like unchanging documents stored in museums and archives. In both cases “modernisms,” inclusions of elements from contemporary environments, have been viewed as inauthentic additions to “original” narratives; they fall outside of *popular* understandings of culture and tradition.² However, as this thesis demonstrates, viewed over the course of the entire twentieth century, inclusions in *amoko-kwere* offer unique insights into a more complex and consistent system of understanding.

Employing a *multi-sighted* approach, I have endeavoured to present a richer understanding of the history of Mimika and more importantly of Kamoro engagements and with it. By presenting *amoko-kwere* within contemporary social, political, and economic environments, this thesis has explicitly demonstrated the consistencies of *amoko-kwere* both in general narrative format and as indigenous reflections and reformulations of socio-political circumstances. Here I briefly reflect on *amoko-kwere* and Kamoro sociality in light of indigenous schemes of conceptualisation which hold that all things “living” including *amoko-kwere*, ritual, people, ideas, and objects are composed of a visible outer part (e.g. *kao* or *epere*) and an invisible inner part (e.g. *ipu*, *mbii*, *mopere*). As I understand it, these parts may also be classified as things that are revealed and hidden strategically, a point to which I return later in this chapter.

DISSECTING AN AMOKO-KWERE: THE SUBSTANCE OF THE MATTER

My Kamoro informants consistently explained that, like most living things (e.g. plants, animals, and people), rituals and narratives are most generally composed of two parts: *mopere* and *epere*. The *mopere* of a narrative, that is the essential part, the underlying theme, the names of cultural heroes themselves and their

² Here I emphasise *popular* understandings for two reasons. First, anthropologists since Wagner’s *Invention of Culture* 1981 [1975] have engaged the notion that “tradition” and “culture” are constantly reformulated. For the Kamoro, non-anthropological (*popular*) understandings that

general activities, remains consistent throughout all of the *amoko-kwere*. In the narratives, the single most prominent unifying theme is *aopao* (cf. Weiner 1995). It is the driving force behind all *amoko-kwere* and forms the most essential, the innermost part, of the *mopere*. This does not preclude transformation of the “outer parts” the *epere*, in light of contemporary sociopolitical circumstances (e.g. the example of Mapurupiu becoming God and Miamero becoming the Virgin Mary in Chapter Five or Mapurupiu “planting” the gold in the mountain in Chapter Seven). Conspicuous incorporation of “foreign” elements then can be conceived of as *epere*, outer parts, which usually help to relate the *mopere* at particular moments in time. *Epere* function as contemporaneous *representations* of the *mopere* which they contain or conceal, in the same fashion that an *mbii-kao*, a spirit mask, *represents* its contents, a spirit or spiritual energy, in the context of a dance or ritual. Similarly, foreign elements incorporated into *amoko-kwere* not only represent and adorn the *mopere* of the narrative, but also contain and conceal them.

Hidden things and ideas represent a focal point and indeed a preoccupation of all aspects of Kamoro culture. I see this reflected not only in *amoko-kwere*, but also in Kamoro conceptions of everyday life. For instance, Natalis Nokoryao’s *imakatiri* (Chapters Five and Six) explained that the people and goods of “influence” were already present, but not yet visible or revealed. The historical circumstances addressed in Chapters Three through Six suggest that clothing, papers, and other things conspicuously foreign appear to have been integral in allowing the Kamoro access to items of foreign wealth. Seen another way, these items are not only representations of an invisible power, but serve to harness that power in the same fashion that a possessor of a particular *otepe* harnesses invisible spiritual power (See Chapter One). A contemporary example can be found in Kamoro understandings of the *yayasan*, the Indonesian equivalent of a foundation, which in some cases can also be interpreted as a Non-Governmental

define traditions and culture as relatively static or backward play a stronger role in the representation of the Kamoro by Freeport and the Indonesian Government.

Organisation.³ When Freeport announced that it was going to give a portion of its proceeds directly to local community through the so-called “One Percent Fund,” along with the government stipulated the mechanism that the money could only be accessed through a foundation. To establish a foundation required funds, know-how, and a trip to Jayapura for official registration. For the Kamoro, these organisations were interpreted much like *otepe* in that they hold the key to revealing (accessing) the funds. Initial “Kamoro” foundations were established not by Kamoro, but by outsiders who already had this ability. This of course plays into a complex socio-political scene in which outsiders, including other island Indonesians, police, military, and private contractors, have developed relationships with Kamoro based on their ability to access the wealth. When the amount of money feeding these foundations is literally millions of US dollars, it is not hard to imagine exploitative intentions. Accordingly the initial foundations established to “represent” the Kamoro were run by Kei Islanders and other outsiders. This is not to say that the Kamoro naively stood by or were unaware of this exploitation, nor is it to say that “outsiders” were completely removed from the mechanism altogether. Instead, individual Kamoro communities strategically allied with particular outsiders formed their own foundations to access the funds. The Nawaripi communities explicitly voiced their understanding of foundations as the key to accessing the funds when they argued against third party NGO facilitation and implementation of their land-rights agreement. They explicitly stated that they had their own foundation and did not want another foundation accessing their money.

Each of these understandings is grounded in the notion that everything consists of both visible and invisible parts. Frequently, the visible is temporary and disposable; it conceals, and contains, more important, essential and eternal inner parts. The life forces, contained in each of the body’s organs, as outlined in Chapter One, are perfect examples of this. These forces animate the organs, and the body, but are transformed and depart at death, leaving the unessential

³ The more direct equivalent of a Non Governmental Organisation is a *Lembaga Swadaya Masyarakat*, which translates as “Institution supporting Community Self-sufficiency.” It is often abbreviated as LSM.

corporeal body behind. Aspects of everyday and ritual life among the Kamoro seem to be quests to access the innermost parts, to reveal the concealed and to harness its power. Their attempts to do so, however, are constantly foiled.

In ritual, explicit attempts to control or isolate these hidden forces take a number of different forms. A spirit mask, a *mbii-kao*, literally described in Indonesian as a *sarung topeng*, literally a “container mask” is used to harnesses the converted *ipu*, if momentarily, for a dance.⁴ The literal translation of *mbii-kao* marks the distinction between the two parts: it is the container, shell or skin (*kao*) which conceals, harnesses and represents the power of a spirit (*mbii*). Before the end of each dance, the dancer usually appears to cast off the mask. My informants explained to me that, more correctly, the *mbii*, too powerful for the dancer, pulls the mask off and escapes. In narratives of the Utakae War, to overcome the Utakae tribes the raiding party uses an *mbii-kao*. In the ritual raising of a *mbitoro*, a spirit (*mbii*) is called to enter into the pole. When it enters, the pole jumps up and down violently; again, my informants explain that *mbitoro* moves independently of its carriers because of the power of the invisible *mbii*, which it harnesses. The most prominent motif in all Kamoro carvings, the *mopere*, is found at all moving joints and represents loci of hidden invisible spiritual power (see Chapter One). Indeed, even the artists who make these objects are the possessors of unseen secrets, (K) *kata*, that allow them to fabricate objects suitable for at least temporarily harnessing these spiritual energies. Further, as I have outlined elsewhere in the thesis, *kata* are not only ritual secrets, intangible possessions, but also tangible objects. Invoking both meanings, theft of *kata* emerges as a prominent theme in *amoko-kwere*.

Descriptions of experiences in this thesis suggest that the Kamoro interpret foreigners’ knowledge (of languages and indeed of how to create particular trade goods) through *amoko-kwere* and in daily life as *kata*. The understanding that spirit masks and spirit poles function as containers for invisible spiritual power that can be at least temporally harnessed, poses some particularly intriguing ideas

⁴ The choice of the Indonesian word *sarung* was certainly interpreted by my Kamoro as the equivalent for the Kamoro *kao* as evidenced by its definition as a case, container, sheath, or wrapper (Echols and Shadily 1994:483)

about the functions of language, clothing and paper, discussed in earlier chapters, and parallels to Kamoro interpretations of foundations described above. Similar to the mask and the spirit pole, the importance of language, clothing, and paper lay not in the objects themselves, but in what they concealed (or contained). I note here that in each interaction, the Kamoro were observed to have used these objects—language, paper, and clothing—only sparingly, and only to effect contact with foreigners. Both accounts make explicit that clothing was removed after contact was made, much as a spirit mask is cast away after contact with the spirit is effected. Language was only of use to others who understood it (e.g. the foreigners), and therefore was only used on the “ritual” occasion of interaction with outsiders; the language in which the *amoko-kwere* are told among Kamoro themselves has been described to me in Indonesian as “*bahasa sejarah*” or language for history or stories. My younger informants say that the language of the *amoko-kwere* is difficult for them to understand (recall missionaries identifying the special language of *amoko-kwere* in Chapter Five). Indeed, the storytellers quite probably use this language to conceal even more potent inner meanings.

On many occasions I have watched the Kamoro perform “ritual” acts (dances, aspects of initiation feasts, etc.) which involve the explicit incorporation of symbols of the Indonesian State and other things non-Kamoro. The explicit incorporation of foreign items, I would argue, are not properly conspicuous signs of wealth but traces (*kao*) of the invisible powers they are presumed to harness. They allude to the wearer’s or creator’s understanding of the *kata* involved in the creation of the objects and in the temporal harnessing of the underlying invisible powers. Through their incorporation in *amoko-kwere*, the foreigners and their *kata* are transformed into Kamoro and Kamoro *kata*. Even more specifically, foreigners and their *kata* are transformed into regionally-owned *amoko-kwere*. As a result, the Kamoro who “own” the *amoko-kwere* then lay claim to the incorporated *kata* (e.g. In Chapter Four Tamatu from Porauka becomes the owner of iron; In Chapters Five and Six, people of the Wania river incorporate the Dutch administration and the Catholic Church via the activities of Mupurupiu).

In my discussion of contemporary engagements with Freeport in Chapter Seven, I exposed differences in the manner in which some Kamoro communities formulated their relationships to the company. Kamoro who originate from areas peripheral to the Freeport Project Area or from outside of it tended to formulate the company in terms of *amoko-kwere*; for them *amoko-kwere* cast the mine and its products as results of Kamoro agency. The *amoko-kwere* imply that the company has stolen something (e.g. *kata*) from its rightful Kamoro owners.

The contrasting example from the Kamoro community directly impacted by Freeport's mining operations suggests that for them, the relationship is one analogous to kinship obligations and direct exchange. The contrast in the two formulations of the company suggest that *amoko-kwere* are perhaps an initial stage of Kamoro engagement with foreigners and are used to account for things, ideas, and persons which are relatively unknown. The Nawaripi analogy of the company as *kaokapaiti*, as having explicit exchange obligations, suggests that in Kamoro interpretive schemes there are re-evaluations that take place as outside things, ideas and persons are transformed from unknown to known. The common theme that unites both of these strategies of engagement with foreigners is reciprocal inequity, which results in Kamoro perceptions of being exploited, having what is rightfully theirs stolen or uncompensated.

Material in this thesis also demonstrates the explicit use of *amoko-kwere* as socio-political devices to rationalise ownership or to legitimate rights of access to areas within the Freeport Project Area as well as to the mine's products. In the cases presented in Chapter Six for example, one Kamoro group's *amoko-kwere* was opportunistically exploited by another Kamoro group as a means to rationalise the occupation of land.

In many of his writings, Pouwer comments about how the essential aspects of *amoko-kwere* remain unchanged; this thought is deceptively insightful. He of course is referring to the *mopere* of the *amoko-kwere*. In keeping with this notion, I offer an account of some events that took place at the first *Kamoro Kakuru Ndaitita*, the Festival of Kamoro Lifeways, held in April 1998 at Hiripao village. For me the festival was a microcosm of some of the major forces that inform the complex realities on the ground in Papua today, in particular those in Timika. The

event was particularly intriguing because it highlighted Kamoro culture in some unexpected ways. I start with an explanation of the observable events that transpired at the festival, the *epere*. My account ends with an *amoko-kwere* and a revelation, a fleeting view of the *mopere* of the festival and more broadly Kamoro perceptions of their contemporary socio-political situation.

EPERE

A brazen personal assault on the village teacher's wife and son interrupted the preliminary days of the festival. Though both the woman and her child sought refuge in their house, they could not entirely evade the hail of rocks that rained down on them. The attack ignited a full-scale riot that threatened to cut short the arts festival before any of the key events, an art auction, a dance competition, and canoe races had been completed.

The following morning the festival's organising committee gathered all of the *Kepala Suku Adat*, the "cultural chiefs," together for a meeting in the village school to determine whether or not the festival should be cancelled to avoid further violence. As I was technically a committee member, I too took my place in the back of the crowded schoolroom and listened as a freelance consultant hired by executive level Freeport management to serve as "adviser" to the Arts Festival Committee chaired the meeting.

The instigator of the riot was conspicuous in his absence. Interestingly, the man who stepped forward to apologise on his behalf was neither from the same village nor was he a direct relative. Although to my knowledge, he held no formal government position that would establish at least his administrative right to represent the instigator, the man claimed to be the *Kepala Suku Umum Mimika Barat*, the "Overall Tribal Chief of West Mimika". Before the assembled committee members and *Kepala Suku Adat(s)*, the adviser to the committee accepted an apology from the "Overall Tribal Chief of West Mimika," tacitly endorsing his self-proclamation. Although the offended teacher accepted his apology and financial reparations for damages paid by Freeport on the offender's

behalf, there was a definite reluctance in his comportment and his face showed no trace of satisfaction.

The silent sub-text of the meeting stood out to all of us who remained in the room as more powerful than the words that had just been spoken. Though the festival was ostensibly to promote pride in Kamoro culture, it was first and foremost a Freeport Public Relations event. With Executive Management due to arrive the following day, the Freeport adviser to the committee had hastened a resolution to avoid embarrassment. That the festival would go on, was a foregone conclusion; the “Overall Tribal Chief of West Mimika” was the most convenient vehicle through which to reach this conclusion. The very cultural practices that the festival was meant to celebrate, which should have been employed to resolve the problem, were superseded by the needs of the company. This act was significant on at least two grounds.

In the first place, the *Kepala Suku Umum Mimika Barat* was well known to myself and to most of the others in the room as the man who had recently signed away 90,000 hectares of land on behalf of other Kamoro in West Mimika for logging and transmigration.⁵ In fact, it may have been in light of this “donation” that he acquired his title. To others of us, he was known to be one of four Kamoro who had signed the infamous Act of Free Choice.⁶ The fact that this man apologised on behalf of the offending party seemed particularly unpalatable to many of the Kamoro present at the meeting.

After the meeting, several people remained behind in the cramped schoolroom in the silence. The Freeport organiser and the “Overall Tribal Chief” were quick to make public announcements that a resolution had been reached. As

⁵ An article in the Jakarta Post describes how, along with other “chiefs”, these men “...gave up their land because they want to see more resettlers in their areas. They believe they can boost development activities in their region with the help of resettlers.” The article also quotes the head of the Provincial transmigration office as saying that “the Komoro tribe in the regency of West Mimika appeared pleased with the progress enjoyed by their brothers in East Mimika following the resettlement program there” (Jakarta Post 28 January 1997).

⁶ From a brief interview that I conducted with the so-called *Kepala Suku Umum* in Kokonao nearly two years earlier, I was aware that his economic situation appeared far better than most of the other Kamoro. His house was larger and appeared to contain more material possessions than other Kamoro houses. The Indonesian crest displayed prominently in his front sitting room gave it the feel of a government office.

their proclamations of a “successful” resolution echoed on the loudspeaker in the background, I approached the teacher. When he looked up at me I commented “The look on your face tells me that you aren’t satisfied.” He replied, “My wife and my child were attacked. I couldn’t respond directly. There’s no balance. *Nawarapoka apokona.*” The teacher’s explicit usage of *nawarapoka* reflects his formulation of the events in terms of social and economic reciprocity. *Nawara(poka)* is considered to be a kind of *aopao*, social reciprocity, which deals explicitly with the revenge, retaliation and economic sanction.

Though the financial reparation paid by the company on behalf of the offender was adequate, it denied and superseded Kamoro agency in the resolution of the problem on their terms, leaving the village teacher feeling eviscerated. Indeed, it was a typical development effort among the Kamoro. In a sense, the offending party, with Freeport and the *Kepala Suku Umum* as his accomplices, had absconded with the more important substance of social reciprocity that would form the foundation of a true settlement. In many respects, the story of the first Kamoro Arts Festival bore the hallmarks of an *amoko-kwere*, an idea to which I will return at the end of this paper.

Other Side(s) of the Arts Festival

A small group of committee members and I had just returned from the *Bupati*’s (the Regent/District Head) house where we were mending an apparent breach in etiquette on behalf of the arts festival committee, our own style of *aopao*.⁷ Rounding the last turn just north of Hiripao around four o’clock in the afternoon, we were confronted by a policeman standing in the middle of the road. The officer stood in the middle of the street, with his right hand extended toward me,

⁷ The “breach” was only uncovered when several committee members (including myself) went to the assigned place to have lunch. We discovered that our food was given to the police who were working at the festival when we were late to arrive due to the festival work we were doing. When word of this reached the *Bupati* and his wife, they were embarrassed. Apparently provision of foods on such occasions is something that, according to informal Indonesian government protocol, should be arranged by the regency ladies-club headed by the wife of the *Bupati*. She had

his palm turned downward. He motioned as if he were pumping my brake pedal with his hand. Approaching the driver's side of the vehicle, he explained that there had been a riot and that we should turn back.

I was surprised with at ease with which he allowed us to pass once we revealed our festival identity cards. Passing by the roadblock, it was impossible to penetrate within one hundred metres of the festival grounds. People overflowed from either side of the narrow street. Two large troop-transport trucks, which had carried riot police to the festival grounds, leaned awkwardly in the culvert on the right side of the road. I pulled my truck into a friend's front yard where I saw Father Nato, the former Parish Priest of Timika, talking to the police. I asked him what was going on. He explained that he wasn't entirely sure, but a major fight had broken out and that people were scared.⁸

By the time I had walked to the edge of the road of the St. Aloisius village school, the access point to the festival grounds, I was shocked. I saw people running and smoke rising from the roof of the festival building. The festival grounds were strewn with litter; burnt pieces of wood, scraps of paper, children's makeshift playthings made the area look like a dumping ground. Though its construction had been completed just days earlier, it appeared run-down and dilapidated. Rain dripped through holes in its roof where flaming pieces of wood and arrows had been shot through it; bare nails stuck out of the railing where planks had been ripped out. Burn marks charred the floor. Electric lights, property of the *Tiga Raja* Catholic Church, were destroyed in the mayhem, as were other borrowed items. The malaria control clinic built especially for the festival had most of its windows broken out and a gaping hole in the back wall. The taps on the industrial water system set up explicitly to service the large crowds of the festival had been broken off and rendered useless. The place looked like a war zone.

asked us to come to her house to make arrangements for food for the committee for the remainder of the festival.

⁸ Father Nato's involvement in the initial stages of trying to resolve the problem is interesting. Father Nato has been a vocal activist leading demonstrations against Freeport and supporting LEMASA (*Lembaga Musyawarah Adat Suku Amungme*), the Amungme people's foundation.

Over a third of the roughly 2000 people that had arrived for the festival had fled into the jungle adjacent to the Wania River. Some of them ran in such haste that they left their belongings behind in the temporary shelters built for the festival. After a brief meeting with the festival organisers, we had learned about the personal attack on the village teacher's wife and son that I had described earlier. Apparently they were fortunate to escape with minor injury from the hail of rocks that pelted their house, which in turn was also partially ransacked.

The unfolding of the events of the riot proved uniquely parallel to the circumstances of *amoko-kwere*. It began with the attack on the Hiripao teacher's wife and child. Witnesses to the attack from Hiripao village mistakenly counter-attacked (*aopao/naware*) not the attacking party but a different group who were on their way to the village teacher's house when the attack had occurred. This group was in fact seeking peaceful resolution to a separate festival-related problem: they had been given neither the housing nor the food that they had been promised by the committee. Both of these issues fell under the Hiripao teacher's responsibility as chairmen of the "*Konsumsi*" committee; they sought *aopao* from the teacher. As they were arriving, the assault on the Hiripao teacher's family had just occurred. The fighting escalated when East Mimikan villages allied to Hiripao joined the retaliatory attack (*aopao/naware*) against the supposed West Mimikan attackers. It is not difficult to see how this could have erupted into a riot.

As darkness fell, the villagers who had remained behind in the temporary shelters pleaded with the four of us, Yufen, Father Yustinus, Matarani, and me to run the giant generator lights all night for their safety.⁹ Fearing reprisal attacks

Although Father Nato is not an Amungme, he is from the neighbouring highland *Me* ethnic group, many Kamoro perceived that he favoured the concerns of the highlanders over their own.

⁹ I remember at that time that I could not help but reflect on the strange linkages that brought our foursome together which at the same time, linked us deeply into Kamoro history. Father Yustinus was the Parish Priest of the Timika area. His father was one of the cadres of Kei Island teachers brought to Mimika by the Roman Catholic Mission. By blood, Father Yustinus is a Kei Islander, though he himself was born in Mimika. He and his church were regularly called upon to assist in the mediation of local disputes, often caused or exacerbated by Freeport-related projects. Yufen is an Asmat, a traditional enemy of the Kamoro from the east. He is the curator of the Asmat museum in Agats; he is also associated with the Catholic Church, but a different order, the Crosiers, who are based in Minnesota. Yufen's museum had received funding from Freeport, and

from the home village (Hiripao), those Kamoro who remained at the festival site also requested military protection.¹⁰ The tremor in their voices and the looks in their eyes explained that their fear was genuine. During the interim until the lights came on, I offered to walk around with my flashlight, which they gratefully accepted. Together we rationalised that because I was known among many Kamoro and because I am a Westerner, I would not be harmed. Though I saw this to be true in the other major riot that I had experienced almost two years earlier in Timika, where no Westerners were physically harmed despite colossal property damage, I too was worried. As I made my rounds to the temporary shelters on the high bank of the river I was warned on three occasions: “Be careful, there are spirits on the river.” Hearing these words sent chills down my spine. Father Kowatzki had noted precisely the same phrase in 1929 along this same river after a brutal attack on the coastal village of Atuka by the neighbouring Asmat. The parallels were striking: in both cases attacks were aggravated by the increased presence of foreign trade goods, *kata*.

This was just one day in a long history of similar actions and reactions in the lead-up to the festival. There seems to be no true beginning of the events that trigger *aopao* and no end. One could analyse the chain of events at any particular place and find that for the Kamoro, *aopao* was the key to fuelling the activities. For instance, when the *Kepala Desa* (village head) of Hiripao was reluctant to offer land in his village for the festival not only because it meant massive tree clearings but because it was his family’s personal land. Not having time to negotiate with him, the Freeport adviser went straight to the *Bupati*, avoiding

he was invited to sit on the committee of this festival. Matarani, a middle-aged Kamoro man from West Mimika, was an even-tempered man and a particularly good organiser. He had orchestrated a fairly large scale Kamoro cultural festival in Kokonao recently in honour of the 100th anniversary of Father LeCoq d’Armandville’s arrival on the Mimika Coast. Interestingly the Freeport adviser claimed that such a large gathering had never before occurred in Mimika. Indeed, the Dutch Catholics made similar claims during the first baptism feast at Atuka in the 1930s.

¹⁰ They explicitly requested that we contact KOPASSUS, the Special Forces, to protect them. Many Kamoro are in fact members of KOPASSUS.

both Kamoro and government protocol—going around both the *Kepala Desa* and the *Camat* (sub-district head).¹¹

Receiving permission from the *Bupati* to use the festival site, clearing began without the approval of either the *Kepala Desa* or the *Camat*.¹² Of course the *Kepala Desa* reacted to the arrogant violation of his property and the undercutting of his administrative authority by absconding with funds with which he was entrusted to purchase materials for the festival (his own *aopao*), and the story unravels again.¹³ In this case, the subversion of Indonesian administrative procedure was also a subversion of Kamoro practice. Ironically two of the three impacted Indonesian government officials were Kamoro (the *Kepala Desa* and the *Bupati*).

The Freeport committee adviser's goal was first and foremost to make the event happen. At that time, he was not formally linked into other company development or research agendas, so after the festival, he was free to leave the problems behind. For those who lived and worked inside the Freeport Project Area (Freeport employees, church and government officials), the impacts of numerous consultancy activities like this one that were not part of locally driven and more comprehensive development schemes were all-too-familiar.

Like almost all of Freeport's development activities, regardless of how well or poorly planned and executed, the festival was by no means a complete failure. Considering baseline development indicators such as actual financial benefits

¹¹ In my experience both as a Freeport consultant and as a non-Freeport observer this was quite common practice, in particular when the directive was generated from management in Jakarta or New Orleans, rather than locally. Driven either by shareholder pressure for "tangible" development activities or whims of higher management, meeting the short-term time constraints to produce something tangible took precedence over economy and proper procedure.

¹² A Freeport account of the festival stated that "During the past few weeks of preparations, the bupati [sic] had to throw his considerable weight around to cut through Gordian knots too complicated for the organizing committee. This included the land-rent payment to the three families who owned the festival grounds, which kept escalating out of all reasonable proportions, payment for the clearing of the festival grounds which had not been adequately budgeted by Lemasko [sic LEMASKO] (PTFI 1999:17). I note here how the writer's perspective shifts any culpability for both the land and financial issues squarely out of the hands of Freeport.

¹³ Father Nato also assisted a group from Kipia and myself in acquiring materials to replace those that the Hiripao *Kepala Desa* had run off with and transporting them to the festival site at the last minute. Again, he assisted in rectifying Freeport-related problems from behind the scenes.

directly reaching the broadest community base, this project far surpassed any Freeport community project I know of save the most recent “recognition” package for the Nawaripi and Tipuka communities.¹⁴ Other funds, funnelled through various “foundations” (*yayasan*) seem to have been squandered on pet projects and personal purchases of a limited few.

The event was also deemed a success by those expatriate and Indonesian Freeport employees and their families whose jobs have little to do with the community. For the accountants, warehouse managers, caterers, and their families who also live in the area, the Kamoro Arts Festival was a much anticipated opportunity to interact with the Kamoro in what they perceived to be a “safe” environment.¹⁵ At the same time, they viewed this as a chance to “help” the community by purchasing carvings and appreciating their culture. The threat of the festival’s cancellation was a major let down for them. The Kamoro also seemed to sincerely appreciate opportunities to engage with outsiders in a village setting.

But what caused the attack that threatened the festival in the first place? As it turns out, it appears that the underlying factor in the attack was related both to the committee’s composition and the Freeport adviser to the project. I was an observer, and to a lesser degree a participant, in the project from the start. I remember sitting in the Public Arts Building in Timika Indah (a section of urban Timika) when a group of Kamoro made a seemingly strange choice for the Festival’s committee chairman. Almost immediately after the meeting, all of the

¹⁴ The “recognition” package was part of a land-usage agreement whereby Freeport acquired the usage of lands belonging to the Nawaripi and Tipuka Kamoro communities for disposal of the mine’s tailings. The package was “facilitated” by a Jakarta-based Non-Governmental Organisation, the Sejati Foundation (*Yayasan Sejati*). The Freeport community program that literally reaches the largest number of people, Kamoro and otherwise, in the Freeport Project Area (and indeed beyond it) is the Public Health and Malaria Control Program.

¹⁵ For most of the company employees that do not work with the community their only understanding of community relations is from the steady stream of “disturbances” of varying levels aimed at Freeport’s operations. Many of the employees were quite sympathetic to the local communities and sought ways that they could actively engage with them. Unfortunately interactions between Western employees (and their families) with the local communities were extremely limited and only seemed encouraged as part of broader “charity work” rather than getting to know particular communities from extended interaction (something which some employees expressed to me that they wanted).

men who had selected the chairman began to tell me that they did not trust him, and that he had a bad reputation for both drinking and squandering money.¹⁶

Under the circumstances, they may have chosen him for a number of reasons. First, he was a well-known informant and assistant for the Freeport adviser who ultimately controlled the festival's budget. Second, the fact that the Freeport adviser was in attendance may have asserted some feelings of pressure on the assembled group that they ought to choose his informant. They certainly did not choose the man because of his knowledge of Kamoro art and culture; he did not even speak *akwere Kamoro*, the Kamoro language. Nor was he selected for his leadership abilities. He was chosen, then, for his well-known and proven ability to access funds through a particular source, the Freeport adviser. Ultimately it was this man's selection as committee chairperson that was most probably at the heart of the attack on the teacher at Hiripao.

The man who led the attack was a schoolteacher from West Mimika who presently resided in one of the local transmigration settlements. He was also the head of the Social and Cultural section of the foundation meant to serve as a Kamoro representational body, LEMASKO (*Lembaga Musyawarah Adat Suku Kamoro*). Because ostensibly the festival was "sponsored" with money from LEMASKO he should automatically have been offered the position as protocol. Instead, he was passed up for the most prominent position on the festival's committee in favour of the Freeport adviser's informant. In this situation, leadership ability and knowledge in arts and culture were of lesser import than ability to access money.¹⁷

The Hiripao teacher whose family had been attacked remained bitter, and much of his village seemed to share his growing resentment toward the man who

¹⁶ He was also a former member of the government-chosen Regency Assembly (the *Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah*, or DPRD) when the area was part of the Fak-Fak Regency.

¹⁷ In a section of his report regarding the future of the festival a Kamoro man from Timika Pantai wrote: "The head of the committee must be a person who works openly and in a cooperative manner with all sides and a person who is not a drunk who squanders the festival's money" (Mamapuku 1998b:6).

led the attack and by extension his home village.¹⁸ People in Hiripao explicitly described the situation to me as “*naware*” or “*aopao apokona*,” literally there was no balance or compensation. Due to the underlying problems of the first festival, Hiripao village refused to host the second festival in 1999. The expensive infrastructure, the massive water tanks and piping system, the clinic and the festival structure itself, stood as hollow reminders (indeed the *kao*) of a development project which had cost tens of thousands of US dollars. As I mentioned earlier in this chapter, like most Freeport development projects, *something* good, even if just an understanding of how *not* to do approach a project, often emerges from them.¹⁹ Earlier I described how the festival allowed funds to directly reach Kamoro communities and how it provided an engaging point of interaction for Freeport employees. More importantly, the Festival was a success in promoting aspects of Kamoro culture, though in an unexpected and concealed manner which did not reach the company’s public relations materials. With this final extract from my notes on the first Kamoro Arts Festival I revisit an *amoko-kwere* that sheds light on Kamoro engagement with the contemporary socio-political environment and ultimately reveals the *mopere* of contemporary (and eternal) Kamoro concerns.

MOPERE

Aopao...that is the main lesson Freeport has to learn: you are quite right in emphasising this. (Jan Pouwer in response to my first letter to him, 19 July 1997).

Thanks to my knowledge of the combined resources of Dutch authors and my own fieldwork, among many Kamoro I was perceived by many as being knowledgeable about their history and culture. Because of this perception, I was

¹⁸ By now the community’s bitterness had also shifted to blame Freeport for creating the problem then leaving them behind to resolve it.

¹⁹ A similar project generated from Freeport’s home office in New Orleans which considered establishing a museum and cultural centre in Mimika (that never eventuated) was the vehicle that brought me to the area in 1996.

asked to be a judge for the festival dance competition.²⁰ One of the performances that I particularly admired was an enactment of one of the most widely known *amoko-kwere* in Mimika, the Nani or Mirokoteyao. On the surface, this *amoko-kwere* is central to Kamoro perspectives on the origin of specific feast houses and the origin of the world's populations. It is also among the best-documented Kamoro *amoko-kwere*, with versions collected from informants born as early as 1880 (collected by Drabbe) to contemporary versions that I collected during my own fieldwork.

Here I give one final re-telling of the story based on the version dramatised that night. The story tells of a dragon that devours all of the Kamoro people, except for a single pregnant woman. Thinking that he had eaten all of the people, the dragon swims downstream to the coast where he lives. Eventually, the pregnant woman gives birth to a son, Mirokoteyao, who grows miraculously fast, the sign of a cultural hero and also the sign of an explicit relationship with the spirit world.

Within a week he has established himself as a prolific hunter. All animals living in the interior forests have become part of his bounty. One day, instead of following his mother's instructions and going towards the interior to hunt, he goes in the opposite direction where he discovers the coast and its marine life. When he returns home, his mother is shocked by his outright disobedience. At the same time, Mirokoteyao accuses his mother of deceiving him by concealing the existence of the coast.

The experience prompts an explanation about the dragon that motivates Mirokoteyao to return to the coast to exact revenge (*aopao/naware*) on the beast. After building various feast houses, planting wooden, stone, and iron-tipped weapons inside the successive structures, he lures the dragon with smoke from a fire. This was ingeniously adapted to the dance when a performer dressed in a bark-cloth designed to represent fire danced around a carved (and covered) dragon, which he ultimately lured out of its concealment. During the

²⁰ I was also asked because they wanted a “*bulé*” (western) judge and the other possible one, the Freeport adviser, was not able to remain at the festival site through the night because of prior engagements with Freeport VIP guests in Timika.

performance, the anticipation of wanting to see the concealed dragon heightened its impact when it was ultimately revealed. The performance also made clear Mirokoteyao's explicit connection with the spirit-world; the dancer wore a *mbii-kao*, a spirit mask.

When the dragon ultimately emerges, furious that he hasn't annihilated all of the people, he attacks the buildings. He crushes the house with the wooden weapons, incurring only minor injury. The stone weapons cause deeper wounds. In his final action, the dragon becomes mortally impaled when he attacks the building with the iron-tipped weapons.

Mirokoteyao then partitions the dragon. In the danced version, several Kamoro men assist in the partitioning with long imitation *parangs*. The hero throws a section of flesh toward the interior, which rises up and becomes the highland people. Other parts he throws toward the west, which rise up and become Europeans and Asians. Finally, another part is thrown that becomes the other populations of New Guinea. In this way, the world was populated out of the consumed flesh of the Kamoro.

I watched the initial performance of the dance with pleasure (it was performed again the following day in another "heat" of the dance competition). This performance was at night time and I noted how the on-lookers, all Kamoro with the exception of myself and Yufen the curator of the Asmat museum, seemed to really enjoy the performance. After the competition had ended for the evening, I sat and chatted with Yan Imini, a man from Porauka (also known as Pronggo, West Mimika), the village responsible for the performance of the Mirokoteyao *amoko-kwere*. Although I already knew the answer, as we squatted under his temporary sleeping structure avoiding the rain and enjoying a cup of coffee, I asked him if they were enacting the Mirokoteyao story demonstrating the origin of the world's populations. He responded: "Yes, but there's a more philosophical interpretation. The dragon represents anything that is negative or bad. Thieves (*otomo-we*), Freeport and the government can all be the dragon. Mirokoteyao's attempts to slay the beast is an attempt to gain control or balance (*aopao*) over these forces."

I wonder if Yan could have known how profound his succinct analysis of the story was. In just four sentences, he had captured what a fortune in consultancy fees had failed to. There was no mention of thousands of hectares of land lost to roads, urban sprawl, transmigration, port facilities and mining waste; no dramatic stories of ill-tasting fish or discoloured molluscs collected from poisoned ancestral water sources. Though these are certainly issues that confront Kamoro communities, in particular the Nawaripi and Tipuka communities, and need to be dealt with more seriously, these are at the same time arguments which are privileged more by Non Governmental Organisations and other commentators than by the Kamoro. Though responding to similar physical and environmental problems, the Kamoro are more concerned with protecting themselves, and their *kata* from thefts and ultimately, with the maintenance of *aopao*.

Needless to say, this performance received my vote for best dance performance. In the end, it turned out that many of the Kamoro agreed with my assessment. Out of thirty-nine performances, the one from Pronggo finished second.



Image 25: Harnessing the power of the spirit, depicted here with the usage of an *mbii-kaao*, a spirit mask, *Mirokoteyao* attempts to effect control or balance over the dragon (photo by author, April 1998 at Hiripao village).

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¹ This bibliography is drawn largely from *An Annotated Bibliography for the Kamoro People* (1997). Compiled by Chris Ballard, Todd S. Harple, Fredrik Sokoy, Alfons van Nunen and Matt Richards. March 1997

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