

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Despite Papua's issues being recognized as internal matters for Indonesia to address, they have gained international attention, primarily due to human rights violation accusations. The widespread availability of information in the digital age allows countries and activists worldwide to monitor the situation in Papua closely. Pro-independence activists in Papua utilize social media to share images and videos, shedding light on human rights problems. The viral nature of such information often attracts attention from foreign news outlets, such as the BBC and the Guardian. For instance, the Surabaya incident 2019 gained significant traction through social media, prompting international coverage and leading the United Nations (UN) to request Indonesia's representative to investigate. In an official statement, the UN's High Commissioner for Human Rights expressed concern over the escalating violence and potential human rights violations in the region (OHCHR, 2019).

The internationalization of Papua's issues traces back to the early stages of Papua's integration into Indonesia. Due to unproductive dialogues between the two nations, the United Nations played a role in mediating the transfer of authority over Papua from the Netherlands to Indonesia (McGibbon, 2006). While the international attention to the issue initially subsided, it resurfaced following accusations of human rights abuses. Pro-independence activists from Papua

sought refuge abroad to evade arrest by Indonesian authorities and garner international support. While the international attention to the issue initially subsided, it resurfaced following accusations of human rights abuses. Pro-independence activists from Papua sought refuge abroad to evade arrest by Indonesian authorities and garner international support. It led to global discussions on Papua's issues, posing challenges for the Indonesian government's internal efforts to address the matter. The situation was further complicated by accusations of human rights violations in Papua by South Pacific countries, which have consistently raised these concerns in United Nations meetings since 2016 (Tuwo, 2016).

Understanding the roots of Papua is essential to grasp why the region's issues have garnered significant attention on the international stage. Papua's challenges can be categorized into four dimensions: human rights violations, unsuccessful socioeconomic development, prejudice and discrimination against Papuan indigenous people, and the historical and political context of Papua's integration into Indonesia's territory (Widjojo, 2010). Human rights abuses have inflicted deep wounds and suffering on the Papuan population, compounded by claims that the PEPERA Referendum, which led to Papua's incorporation into Indonesia, was conducted under duress. Papuans contend that representatives were coerced with threats of violence if they did not vote in favor of Indonesia. Additionally, there is a perceived injustice in the decision-making process, as a small number of individuals were entrusted with determining the future of Papua. The Indonesian

government only selected 1,026 people to represent 815,904 Papuans (Lantang & Tambunan, 2020).

Although Indonesia's efforts to control information following military operations in Papua, stories of human rights violations reached the global stage through those who managed to escape the province and the writings of journalists and scholars. For instance, Robin Osborne's work, "Indonesia's Secret War: The Guerrilla Struggle in Irian Jaya," vividly portrays the dire situation faced by Papuan indigenous people, resulting in loss of lives and mass displacements. The global attention on Papuan issues intensified following President Soeharto's resignation, ushering in a more open public discourse in Indonesia on various subjects (Wangge & Lawson, 2021). This newfound openness allowed other countries to criticize or question Indonesia's stance on the international platform. The Indonesian government has sought dialogue and negotiation with other nations to mitigate their accusations regarding Papua's issues. These efforts are primarily directed at South Pacific countries advocating for Papuan matters, with specific attention given to countries such as Vanuatu, Tonga, Palau, Tuvalu, Marshall Islands, Nauru, and Solomon Islands.

In the early 1970s, Indonesia began recognizing the importance of the South Pacific region for its economic growth, influenced by the Cold War tensions that underscored the significance of neighboring countries to President Soeharto. Initially, diplomatic relations with South Pacific nations were minimal, with Jakarta's engagement in the region considered less significant than its commitments to ASEAN. The Indonesian government perceived limited economic and political

benefits in forming associations with South Pacific countries, which faced challenges such as poverty, instability, and widespread corruption (Wardhani & Dugis, 2020). Throughout the 1970s, Indonesia established its first direct diplomatic post in Port Moresby, New Guinea. In the 1990s, during Jakarta's increased global presence, the nation finally established diplomatic relations with the rest of the South Pacific countries.

South Pacific nations consistently raised doubts about Indonesia's authority in Papua, with positive diplomatic support emerging in the late 1990s and reaching its peak in 2000. This surge was primarily influenced by the triumphant independence of East Timor from Indonesia. The shared ethnic characteristics between other Melanesian communities and Indonesia's easternmost island garnered sustained backing from South Pacific countries for the independence movement. The "Melanesian Brotherhood" formed the moral foundation, fueled by ethnic sympathy, driving continuous support for Papua's struggle (Wardhani & Dugis, 2020). Despite being economically and militarily weaker with a smaller population, South Pacific countries demonstrated a profound commitment to supporting their ethnic kinship across borders.

The escalation of human rights issues and environmental degradation in Papua drew global attention, further tarnishing Indonesia's image among South Pacific nations. Faced with these challenges, Indonesia sought to mend relations with regional countries. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs devised a strategy to enhance diplomatic engagement through state visits, multilateral partnerships, and development initiatives (Cindyara, 2022). Recognizing that threats to regional

stability could impact Indonesia's security and jeopardize national interests, the nation aimed to address concerns in the South Pacific.

Numerous South Pacific nations consistently endorse the United Liberation Movement for West Papua (ULMWP). Indonesia's strategic interest is to develop improved diplomatic ties through diverse approaches, such as fostering deeper collaboration within regional intergovernmental bodies encompassing Indonesia and the South Pacific nations. These organizations include the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), the Melanesia Spearhead Group (MSG), and the Pacific Islands Development Forum (PIDF). By engaging with these entities, Indonesia can adeptly monitor ULMWP activities and concurrently thwart separatist efforts to garner support from South Pacific nations within these forums (Aryani & Hapsari, 2021). This expanding influence strengthens Indonesia's regional partnerships, both on an individual-country basis and collectively within the MSG. Establishing alliances with specific South Pacific nations and the organizations they belong to is crucial for upholding Indonesia's sovereignty over West Papua and mitigating global discourse on the Papua issue.

Furthermore, Indonesia has illustrated potential economic collaboration opportunities for MSG members, aiming to strengthen its political standing and entice South Pacific nations to draw closer. Positioning itself as a conduit to the broader Asia region, the Indonesian government offers the South Pacific countries access to various benefits. Given most South Pacific countries' typically low GDP rates, they heavily rely on foreign aid from donor nations. Indonesia seized an opportunity when the traditional donor countries for South Pacific nations, such as

India, China, and Taiwan, reduced financial assistance (Wardhani & Dugis, 2020). Foreign aid is crucial for securing Indonesia's regional interests, preventing these countries from aligning with Papua-related issues. While Indonesia has enhanced its relations with South Pacific nations by directing substantial funds through grants or development projects, prioritizing aid distribution raises a significant concern. Despite Indonesia's accumulating national debt to finance its interests, its robust economic growth and purchasing power are noteworthy (Setneg, 2022). Suppose Indonesia loses its ability to raise funds to allocate to the South Pacific countries because there is no extra money to spend. In that case, these nations might revert to their original positions, advocating for Papua's independence and accusing Indonesia of human rights abuses in its easternmost province.

The Indonesian government is driven by national interests, including security and the nation's global perception, prompting swift resolution of Jakarta's challenges. Given the classification of Free Papua Movement (OPM) supporters as a terrorist group, Indonesia seeks to deter other nations from supporting the secessionist movement. Among South Pacific nations, Vanuatu has gained notoriety for providing refuge and allowing ULMWP members to participate in international meetings as representatives of their country (Tempo, 2019). Other nations in the South Pacific region have also demonstrated support and assistance to Indonesia's designated terrorist group. Additionally, in pursuit of positive trade and investment relationships to boost the Indonesian economy, it is crucial to maintain a favorable global reputation. Consequently, Indonesia aims to enhance its standing and image, particularly in the context of human rights.

Over time, Indonesia has formulated and executed diplomatic approaches to advance its national interests in the South Pacific region. The expectation was that adherence to these diplomatic strategies would foster positive relations with South Pacific nations and diminish the prominence of Papua-related concerns in the global arena. However, the reality diverges from the initial plan. The meeting between Fiji's Prime Minister, Sitiveni Rabuka, and ULMWP leader Benny Wenda (Wright, 2023), along with Papua's issues included in the 2023 MSG Communique, indicates that these matters persist in international discussions. This situation prompts a reassessment of the efficacy of Indonesia's foreign policy and necessitates an evaluation of its diplomatic strategies in the South Pacific region.

1.2 Research Questions

This study assesses Indonesia's particular foreign policy, primarily focusing on the nation's diplomatic approaches in the South Pacific region. The fact that global discussions continue regarding issues in Papua raises concerns. Should the effectiveness of the strategies be demonstrated as lacking, Jakarta may need to address the matter from an alternative standpoint.

With the background analysis as articulated above, the questions for this research will be as such:

- What are the specific diplomatic strategies employed by Indonesia in its interactions with countries in the South Pacific region?
- How do these diplomatic strategies contribute to either facilitating or impeding the process of Papua's internationalization?

1.3 Research Objectives

Considering the challenges mentioned above, which encompass the internalization of Papua issues and the interactions between Indonesia and South Pacific nations, this research is set to examine two key points.

Firstly, the study will analyze the diplomatic strategies adopted by the Indonesian government in its engagements with South Pacific countries. This exploration aims to uncover the elaborateness of Indonesia's approach, shedding light on the strategies used to develop relationships and manage the global discourse surrounding Papua.

Secondly, the research will assess the impact of these diplomatic strategies on the internationalization of Papua-related issues within South Pacific nations. The goal is to understand whether Indonesia's endeavors have effectively mitigated the globalization of concerns associated with Papua and whether the government has successfully reduced international tensions directed towards Indonesia's most eastern province.

1.4 Research Significance

The internationalization of issues related to Papua has been a persistent concern for Indonesia. As a sovereign nation, Indonesia has the prerogative to manage its affairs. Nevertheless, the predicament has now extended to the global arena, introducing another challenge the country must confront. This research contributes to the broader knowledge base on this subject.

Furthermore, in the course of investigating available documents, it is imperative to consider the characteristics of South Pacific countries. If the

Indonesian government were to discontinue its foreign aid, these nations may resurface with accusations against Indonesia at the United Nations. The research will also assist the Indonesian government in evaluating the measures taken to enhance its relations with South Pacific countries and whether these strategies have effectively diminished the internationalization of the Papua issues.

1.5 Research Outline

Chapter I: Introduction

This chapter contains the background of the research, the formulation of the research questions, the objectives and benefits that can be obtained from the research, and the research outline.

Chapter II: Literature Review

This chapter examines the literature review regarding Indonesia's diplomatic strategies toward the South Pacific countries, the internalization of Papua issues, and the framework of Realism theory with concepts, which will serve as the foundation of the research analysis.

Chapter III: Research Methodology

This chapter introduces the research's scientific methodologies, outlining the data collection and analysis approaches. The study adopts a descriptive-analytical method, utilizing secondary data sources, including various books, journals, and government data. The relevant data will be evaluated using Miles and Huberman's data analysis framework.

Chapter IV: Results and Discussion

This chapter presents the findings of the investigation and discussions concerning the Indonesian government's efforts to ease the internationalization of Papua issues initiated by South Pacific nations. The research explores the historical origins of Papua's challenges and how they evolved into a matter of global significance raised by South Pacific countries. Additionally, it elaborates on Indonesia's national interests and its implementation of foreign policy in the region to achieve it. The research further examines the diplomatic approaches that Indonesia has employed to moderate the strong positions of South Pacific nations. Ultimately, it assesses the efficacy of these diplomatic approaches via a policy evaluation.

Chapter V: Conclusion and Recommendations

This chapter discusses the conclusions of the research, along with constructive recommendations that can be used as guidance for Indonesian government policy toward South Pacific countries and further attempts at managing the Papua issues in the international sphere.