
A DISCOURSE ON SEPARATISTS¹

Dave McRae

"After I contacted several people and saw for myself [the situation in East Timor] it was undeniable that the development and integration conducted there are to raise the East Timorese people's living standards and to develop East Timor. And in the end I concluded: East Timor is Indonesian property and Indonesia is East Timorese property."

Xanana Gusmão, following his capture in 1992²

"The problem or question is, has the OPM [Organisasi Papua Merdeka, Free Papua Organization] taken root in every person's heart in Papua, or does every person in Papua adhere to OPM ideology, and how can they become Pancasila-abiding Indonesians?"³

Shortly after his capture by Indonesian forces, Xanana Gusmão appeared on TVRI, the government television channel in Indonesia. He apologized for his actions, requested that his supporters surrender rather than continue their campaign based on

¹ This article is adapted from a section of my honors thesis, which was inspired by confusion in Australia over Indonesian attitudes to East Timor in 1999. Many thanks to Amrih Widodo for his numerous helpful suggestions during the writing of my thesis, Ed Aspinall for encouragement to re-edit the thesis, my sister for her valuable suggestions, and to the anonymous markers for their useful comments. Also to the anonymous reader at *Indonesia* for many constructive criticisms and suggestions. Unless otherwise attributed, all translations of Indonesian are my own.

² Original quote: "Setelah saya mengadakan kontak dengan beberapa orang dan melihat sendiri (keadaan Timtim) maka tidak bisa dipungkiri bahwa pembangunan dan integrasi yang sudah berjalan adalah untuk mengangkat derajat hidup orang Timtim dan untuk membangun Timtim. Dan akhirnya saya simpulkan bahwa: Timor Timur milik Indonesia dan Indonesia adalah milik Timtim." "Xanana Menyesal dan Minta Maaf: Timor Timur Milik Indonesia Indonesia Milik Timor Timur," *Kompas*, December 2, 1992, p. 14.

³ Original quote: "Adapun yang menjadi masalah atau pertanyaan adalah apakah OPM itu sudah berakar di hati setiap orang Irian Jaya atau apakah setiap orang Irian Jaya berideologi OPM dan bagaimana membuat mereka menjadi orang Indonesia yang ber-Pancasila?" J. Djopari, *Pemberontakan Organisasi Papua Merdeka* (Jakarta: Grasindo, 1993), p. 151.

"seventeen years of Portuguese lies," and stated that while he was safe and well, he could not be happy thinking of his actions, which had left many East Timorese in a difficult situation.⁴ The display of this captured separatist⁵ leader on national television eloquently demonstrates that the question of separatists was contested on discursive grounds as well as through physical conflict. The repentance of a key separatist leader, and his reconciliation of his own views with what will be identified below as core elements of a dominant discourse on separatists, was important evidence of the veracity of this discourse.

In this essay, I examine what was written about OPM, Fretilin,⁶ and GAM⁷ during the New Order (roughly 1967–1998). I have limited the scope of enquiry to texts published in Indonesian in Indonesia, of which most were written by Indonesians for an Indonesian audience. I am interested in what was written, why it was possible to write like this, and what hegemonic notions were produced about separatists and East Timor, Papua, and Aceh.

Of course, not all writing on separatists over the thirty-two-year period of the New Order government was identical. As much as these texts have common features, assumptions, and themes that make it possible to think of them and talk about them as a set, they do not form a single, perfectly coherent account. In this sense, the Gusmão quote is important in another way. Xanana Gusmão could only be quoted in the Indonesian media because he was speaking in the terms and language of the state's "common sense" perspective on East Timor. Although this is an extreme case, in that his comments are undoubtedly the result of coercion, this demonstrates how authors had to position their texts within what they imagined the state's dominant perspective to be. Whatever the various motivations of the authors may have been, and whatever they may have privately thought, their accommodations helped to inculcate key notions of the discourse.

One of the keys to the discourse on separatists is the idea of Indonesian national unity. The unity of the nation is written about as natural and final, and this enables texts to be framed as studies of how to preserve of this unity. Texts on separatists refer to a number of pieces of evidence to confirm that the people of these territories essentially identify themselves as Indonesians. Much of this evidence is historical; for example, some authors see a continuous link between the Mataram, Sriwijaya, and Majapahit kingdoms and the Indonesian nation-state. When striving to integrate Papua, Sukarno and others repeatedly asserted that Indonesia was constituted from the former colonized territories of the Dutch.⁸ When East Timor became the focus of attention a decade later, this argument was altered, and colonialism came to be

⁴ "Xanana Menyesal dan Minta Maaf," *Kompas*, December 2, 1992, pp. 1, 14.

⁵ Paul Tickell points out that the term "separatist" itself implicitly recognizes the validity of Indonesian national unity, however, I continue to use the term as a shorthand for these movements, as most readers will be familiar with the movements I discuss as "separatist movements," rather than "nationalist movements." See Paul Tickell, "Old Language, New Politics: Indonesia/n and its Discontents," in *Indonesia: The Uncertain Transition*, ed. Damien Kingsbury and Arief Budiman (Crawford House, 2001).

⁶ Frente Revolucionária de Timor-Leste Independente, Revolutionary Front of Independent East Timor.

⁷ Gerakan Aceh Merdeka, Free Aceh Movement.

⁸ *Buatlah Irian Barat Satu Zamrud yang Indah: Kumpulan amanat-amanat dan pidato-pidato penting khusus mengenai Irian Barat, 1 Mei 1963 – 1 Mei 1964* (Jakarta: Departemen Penerangan RI, 1964), p. 50.

defined as a force that had split a previously united nation, rather than a force that had played a formative role.⁹ Cultural, geographic, and pragmatic factors, as well as common blood, are held as evidence of the naturalness of Indonesian national unity. In addition, many authors also assert that the form of the nation set down in the 1945 constitution is unchangeable.

Although authors thus write about people in East Timor, Papua, and Aceh as Indonesians, they also frequently note that these territories and their people are less developed, or somehow otherwise inferior,¹⁰ compared with other Indonesian territories where separatist movements are not active. Writing firmly from within the resultant position of relative superiority, some authors then make statements concerning the obligation upon Indonesia to develop these people. As the second epigraph, quoted above, shows, the assumed superiority of the writers allowed texts to be framed in terms of how these comparatively inferior people could be made into "proper" Indonesians. While I will not explore the link in this paper, many of these statements are strikingly similar to colonial comments on Orientals.

The first section of this essay will discuss how separatists are treated in discourse. This will involve a brief note on what sort of texts were written about separatists during the New Order, and a much lengthier appraisal of precisely what was said about separatists. The second section examines why it was possible for authors to write about separatists in the way they did.

Discussion of Discourse

Although a number of books produced by these separatist movements have appeared since Suharto's resignation in 1998, separatist voices were strikingly absent from New Order material. Apart from press articles, the Indonesian reader during the New Order had a rather limited range of books dealing with the separatist movements available to read (admittedly, my knowledge of these is limited by Australian library holdings). Earlier sources include a military history of the Cenderawasih command and an almanac of official documents, photographs, and general commentary on the integration of East Timor. Apart from an Information Department pamphlet on East Timor, I was not able to locate any studies of separatist movements published during the early and mid 1980s. However, in the late 1980s and early 1990s a large number of books on this topic were published; in this literature, Aceh received less attention than East Timor and Papua. These books range from reproductions of academic theses through memoirs of journalists, military officials, and other officials. In all, the number of books published in Indonesian on separatist movements within Indonesia during the

⁹ Consider, for example, "Through these Indonesian songs, it was as if they [the East Timorese] had re-discovered their national identity." Original quote: "Melalui lagu-lagu Indonesia itu, seolah-olah mereka dapat menemukan identitas nasionalnya kembali." See Soekanto, *Integrasi: Kebulatan tekad rakyat Timor Timur* (Jakarta: Yayasan Parikesit, 1976), p. 107. Also consider Djopari's later comments on how a different experience of colonialism had created a rift between Papuans and other Indonesians. See Djopari, *Pemberontakan Organisasi Papua Merdeka*, pp. 51, 161.

¹⁰ Thanks to *Indonesia's* anonymous reader for this succinct summary.

New Order seems small—I was able to locate less than twenty non-media sources in Australian libraries.¹¹

Authors of these books often minimize the significance of separatists in their accounts. Sometimes, they simply use dismissive vocabulary. For example, in an early text on Papua, Indonesian soldiers “*berjuang*” (struggle¹²), whereas members of the OPM “*bertualang di dalam hutan*” (adventure in the jungle). Often separatists are described as “*terjepit*” (squeezed), “*semakin terjepit*” (increasingly squeezed), “*terdesak*” (hard up), or “*kepepet*” (painted into a corner).¹³ Many authors also compare separatist movements to previous revolts, most often RMS,¹⁴ Darul Islam/TII,¹⁵ and PRRI-Permesta.¹⁶ This comparison places GAM, Fretilin, and OPM in a familiar context. More pointedly, in some texts, this places these movements in a category of revolts that have been put down, with clear implications.¹⁷

Other books and articles also assert that these movements have already had their heydays and are in decline. On several occasions, writers have published claims that these movements are finished.¹⁸ Most common, however, is the claim that only “*sisa-sisa*” (remnants) of the resistance forces remain. “*Sisa-sisa*” at times seems a blatantly pejorative label, rather than any semblance of a description. One striking example is an account of early military operations against the OPM, which aimed to smash Ferry Awom’s group, a resistance force that, according to this report, numbered fourteen thousand people and was armed with approximately one thousand assorted firearms. According to this account, by the third quarter of the year, after capturing thirty-nine weapons and sixty prisoners, killing seventy-three people and accepting the surrender of 3,539 others, the military is again dealing only with “remnants.” The report came to

¹¹ A large number of books have been published since Suharto resigned.

¹² A positive word in the Indonesian context, for example “*perjuangan kemerdekaan*” (struggle for independence).

¹³ See, for example, “190 Pengungsi Irja Kembali,” *Kompas*, November 19, 1984, p. 4; “Situasi di Kota Dili Teratasi,” *Kompas*, November 13, 1991, p. 1; “Kerusuhan di Dili Disesalkan dan akan Diusut Sampai Tuntas,” *Kompas*, November 14, 1991, p. 1.

¹⁴ Republik Maluku Selatan, Republic of South Maluku.

¹⁵ Darul Islam, Abode of Islam. Tentara Islam Indonesia, Indonesian Islamic Army.

¹⁶ PRRI, Pemerintahan Revolusioner Republik Indonesia, Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Indonesia. Permesta, Perjuangan Semesta, Universal Struggle. See *Irian Barat dari Masa ke Masa* (Irian Jaya: Dinas Sejarah Militer Kodam XVII/Cenderawasih, 1971), p. 146; Soekanto, *Integrasi*, pp. 329-330; Djopari, *Pemberontakan Organisasi Papua Merdeka*, p. 146; “Kelly Kwalik,” *Gatra* 11 (1996): 21; N. Sjamsuddin, *Integrasi Politik di Indonesia* (Jakarta: PT Gramedia, 1989), p. 80; F. Eda et al., eds., *Aceh Menggugat* (Jakarta: Sinar Harapan, 1999), p. 24.

¹⁷ Consider particularly: “If before, in the time of the DI/TII, which enjoyed such great support from the people, then surely now we can put down [the rebellion of] these GPK who have very little support . . .” F. Eda et al., eds., *Aceh Menggugat*, p. 24.

¹⁸ In 1984, General Moerdani declared the OPM to be a “big zero in military terms.” See “Seruan Pangab kepada Warga Timtim yang Masih Bercokol di Hutan: Lupakan Keinginan untuk Mendirikan Negara Baru,” *Merdeka*, July 3, 1984, p. 1. Subroto claims that GPK ceased to exist during General Theo Syafei’s command in East Timor, while GAM was declared “put down” in early 1992. See Hendro Subroto, *Saksi Mata Perjuangan Integrasi Timor Timur* (Jakarta: Sinar Harapan, 1996), p. 240; and Isma Sawitri et al., *Simak dan Selamatkan Aceh* (Jakarta: Panitia Peduli Aceh, 1999), p. 13.

this conclusion despite the fact that 961 of one thousand weapons and about 10,028 of the fourteen thousand insurgents were still at large, by military estimates.¹⁹

Separatists were also frequently placed into three categories, namely GPK, communist, and foreign pawns. Each of these categories would already be familiar to the Indonesian reader, as they were widely used to describe a range of criminal activity and dissent. Their use to describe separatists denies these movements their own specific context and places them firmly within an Indonesian setting. Each of these categories is described in detail below.

a) GPK

GPK is an Indonesian acronym that translates to "security disturbing gang," or "security disturbing movement" ("*gerombolan pengacau keamanan*" or "*gerakan pengacau keamanan*," but more commonly used as an acronym). It connotes criminality, and the word "*pengacau*" suggests a group striking at the core of the state, an action that threatened the "order" (*ketertiban*) that was central to New Order ideals.²⁰

The term "GPK" itself probably dates to the late 1970s and early 1980s, although variants of the term appear in texts published as early as 1971.²¹ By the 1990s, the tag "GPK" was integral to official language.²² Sometimes it is used in isolation, i.e. "GPK"; other times it appears in compounds such as "GPK/OPM" or "GPK Aceh." The term has two functions: it depoliticizes the movements, and is a dehumanizing tag that legitimizes the mobilization of state violence against these movements.²³

GPK depoliticizes these movements by decontextualizing them. GPK is used for other, non-separatist movements and individuals who are engaged in activities vastly different from that of the three movements considered. The GPK by definition disturb security; their actions are criminal, not political:

A number of incidents of terror, intimidation, and destruction that the GPK have carried out since last May have turned out not to be part of a political movement, as widely suspected. "In the end, it was concluded that they are a pure criminal group, that is, a group that merely engages in criminal actions," said Brigadier General Nurhadi Purwosaputro, head of the ABRI Information Center.²⁴

¹⁹ *Irian Barat dari Masa Ke Masa*, pp. 141-145.

²⁰ Virginia Hooker, "New Order Language in Context," in *Culture and Society in New Order Indonesia*, ed. Virginia Hooker (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 277.

²¹ See *Irian Barat dari Masa ke Masa*, which refers to GPL (Gerombolan Pengacau Liar). Also see Soekanto, *Integrasi*, which uses simply "*gerombolan pengacau*."

²² Consider, for example, the report of the National Fact-Finding Commission into the Santa Cruz Massacre released in December 1991. Although it reports a death toll that contradicts the numbers previously maintained by the government, the report exclusively uses the term "GPK/Fretilin." See "Kepala Negara Sampaikan Belasungkawa: Korban Insiden Dili Sekitar 50 Orang Tewas," *Kompas*, December 27, 1991, p. 1. In general, the acronym "GPK" was more frequently used in the media than in books.

²³ Violence by the population may also have been tacitly approved. On this point, see "Indonesia, Continuing Human Rights Abuses in Aceh," *News from Asia Watch*, June 19, 1991, p. 1.

²⁴ Original quote: "Sejumlah teror, intimidasi dan pengacauan yang dilakukan GPK sejak Mei lalu ternyata bukan gerakan politis seperti banyak diduga. 'Akhirnya disimpulkan bahwa mereka adalah kelompok kriminal murni, artinya, kelompok yang semata-mata melakukan tindak kriminal,' kata Brigjen. Nurhadi

The tag "GPK" denies the movements a specifically separatist identity; similarly, it also eliminates distinctions between each of the separatist movements. Although it is sometimes used in compound form, e.g. "GPK/Fretilin," quite frequently, as in the quote above, only the acronym "GPK" is used. If the reader did not observe the place names, many of the reports on Fretilin, OPM, and GAM would be entirely interchangeable.

As resistance persisted, "GPK" also became a dehumanizing tag that legitimized the use of state violence. Van Langenberg links this shift to the "mysterious killings" of alleged criminals after 1982.²⁵ Indeed the increasing prevalence of GPK is accompanied by mention of separatists as criminals. Texts also established a dichotomy between GPK and "*penduduk*" (literally, "inhabitants"), with the former designated as a deserving target of state violence. Official comment on the Santa Cruz massacre in East Timor in 1991 is instructive on this point:

But what glasses should we be looking at it through? They [the deceased] were Fretilin. If for example you were marching under a flag apart from the Indonesian one, what would you expect? ²⁶

"Apart from followers of the security disturbing movement, normal inhabitants were also amongst the victims," said the Governor of East Timor.²⁷

The military official is defending his actions, while the civilian governor is criticizing the massacre. However, both are confined to the hegemonic notion that GPK are not inhabitants, and deserve to be shot.²⁸ Viewed in this light, the increased prevalence of GPK in the late 1980s and 1990s is perhaps not coincidental: in 1989 Aceh was declared a Military Operations Area and military repression of GAM was intensified;²⁹ in the early 1990s under Theo Syafei ABRI adopted a more combative approach against the Fretilin guerrillas in East Timor.

The use of the name "GPK" also highlights an interesting point about the propagation of the discourse. During the latter period of Suharto's rule, the media

Purwosaputro, Kepala Pusat Penerangan ABRI. "GPK Aceh: King, Ganja & Teror," *Tempo* 20,18 (1990): 22. See also, *Aceh Menggugat*, ed. Eda et al., p. 36, p. 56, p. 149; "Aceh Menarik Rambut," *Tempo* 20,21 (1990): 35.

²⁵ Michael van Langenberg, "Analysing Indonesia's New Order State: A Keywords Approach," *RIMA* 20,2 (1986): 13. Following disquiet over the rising urban crime, a series of state-sponsored killings were conducted, with the corpses of alleged criminals often being left in public places as an example. At the time, the government denied involvement in what were dubbed "Petrus" ("Penembakan Misterius" = "Mysterious Shootings"), however Suharto took credit for them later in his autobiography.

²⁶ Interview with Rudolf Samuel Warouw, Operational Command Officer, the top military officer in East Timor at the time. Original quote: "Tapi harus dilihat dari kacamata mana. Mereka itu Fretilin. Kalau misalnya anda berjalan di bawah salah satu bendera yang bukan Merah Putih, bagaimana." "Tanggung Jawab Saya: Wawancara dengan Warouw," *Tempo* 21,42 (1991): 39.

²⁷ Original quote: "Selain pengikut gerakan pengacau keamanan, penduduk biasa juga ikut jadi korban, kata Gubernur Timtim itu." "Belasungkawa di Santa Cruz," *Tempo* 21,39 (1991): 24.

²⁸ In the late 1990s, the term "*teroris*" (terrorist) is also used. See "Laporan Utama," *Gatra*, October 25, 1997, pp. 25-36 and *Aceh Menggugat*, ed. Eda et al., pp. 28-33. This clearly also legitimates the use of state violence and criminalizes the movements.

²⁹ *Potensi Disintegrasi Aceh Dari Wilayah Republik Indonesia: Transkrip Diskusi Internal Lesperssi* (3 Agustus 1999) (Jakarta: Lesperssi, 1999), p. 2.

frequently reported statements of prominent officials and military officers verbatim as news items. As an example, much of the reporting in *Kompas* on Aceh in 1991 consists of either court reports or quotes of military officials about effective strategies to eliminate GAM. The differing vocabularies of these two types of report are striking. The military officials' comments refer to insurgents as "GPK" almost exclusively, while the court reports rarely use the term "GPK," but frequently use GAM or AM (*Aceh Merdeka*). The language of the court reports is, of course, chosen by journalists.³⁰

The infiltration of military style into other published material is also evident in the book, *Pemberontakan Organisasi Papua Merdeka* (The Rebellion of the Free Papua Organization). This text provides several chronological accounts of OPM activities. The author—an academic and former *camat* (district head)—uses both military histories and foreign activist accounts as sources. Where working from military sources, the author uses the derogatory vocabulary item "*gerombolan*" to describe insurgents, but when using foreign sources he uses the more neutral "TNP" (*Tentara Nasional Papua*, National Papua Army) or "*pasukan OPM*" (OPM troops). Each time, the transition is sudden and absolute.³¹

b) Communist

The New Order regime was born out of an abortive coup blamed by the Suharto government on the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) and the subsequent army-sponsored slaughter of anywhere up to a million supposed PKI sympathizers. By invoking the specter of communism and the PKI, the New Order government warded off dissent and justified the need for state supervision of all spheres of life. Kuntjoro-Jakti, quoted in van Langenberg, describes the role that the PKI plays in the state's discourse:

Even more, the invidious, pervasive evil of the PKI is emphasized by referring to the underground party as an OTB [*Organisasi Tanpa Bentuk*, Formless Organizations]. Thus, citizens had to be ever vigilant and dependent upon the state for continuous protection. The danger is not easily identified.³²

Accounts of separatists often explicitly linked separatist movements with communism, although "GPK" largely replaces the term "*komunis*" in 1990s media reports. A notable example is the almanac *Integrasi*, which links Fretilin to the PKI,³³ Portuguese Communist Party (PCP) and Movement for the Renovation of the Party of

³⁰ Compare, for example, "Panglima Aceh Merdeka Diadili di PN Lhokseumawe," *Kompas*, May 25, 1991 with "Ketua Bakorstanasda Sumbagut: Penanganan Masalah GPK Aceh, Harus Melalui Pendekatan Ipoleksosbud," *Kompas*, May 14, 1991, p. 11. But lest this trend be considered absolute, see "Lagi, Penghubung GPK Aceh di Medan Dituntut 15 Tahun," *Kompas*, May 31, 1991, p. 5. Also consider that these reports rarely describe GAM actively doing anything—they instead focus on what is being done about GAM.

³¹ The first instance is pp. 110-112, which is sourced from military history, but then pp. 114-123 do not use the phrase "*gerombolan*" at all. The second instance is on pp. 156-159. The best example is the last two paragraphs on p. 159. Footnote no. 21 marks the end of the use of military sources, and in the very next sentence we see, "Selama ini berita tentang jumlah TNP atau militer OPM . . ." All page references to Djopari, *Pemberontakan Organisasi Papua Merdeka*.

³² Van Langenberg, "Analysing Indonesia's New Order State," p. 16.

³³ Soekanto, *Integrasi*, p. 227.

the Proletarian (MRPP),³⁴ the Viet Cong,³⁵ the Soviet Union,³⁶ China,³⁷ Cuba,³⁸ and Maoism.³⁹ Whatever their validity, the effect of the repetitive and disproportionate mention of communist links within the Indonesian context should be obvious.

Authors depict separatist organizations as communist not only by tagging them explicitly as "*komunis*," "*PKI*," and "*OTB*," but also by describing their organizations with a style of writing and vocabulary that readily calls to mind the latent communist threat in Indonesia. The purported communists "*menyusup*" (infiltrate), "*menghasut*" (incite), engage in "*agitasi*" (agitation) and "*memanfaatkan situasi*" (exploit the situation), requiring the population to remain "*waspada*" (vigilant).⁴⁰ This vocabulary also occurs frequently in accounts of separatist movements.

c) Foreign Pawns

Foreign interference is a common theme in the discourse on separatists. Authors linked the OPM and Fretilin to the outgoing colonial regimes; in Papua, separatists were described as a "time bomb" left by the Dutch, while Fretilin members were denounced as former collaborators.⁴¹ The almanac *Integrasi*, while decrying foreign influence over Fretilin, includes this statement.

The Portuguese delegation, in relation to the above:

- a. Grant the Indonesian Government freedom to *increase* their guidance of Apodeti⁴² in a covert, discreet manner.⁴³ (*my emphasis*)

Evidently the author does not consider Indonesia a foreign power.

In the 1990s, organizations and the media—rather than governments—were the main focus of suspicion. It was often alleged that foreign nationals engineered incidents

³⁴ Ibid., p. 171.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 227.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 296.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 677.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 677.

³⁹ Ibid., pp. 93-4, 171.

⁴⁰ For a good example of this vocabulary usage and a partial discussion of the implications of the use of the tag "*OTB*," see *Gatra*, October 28, 1995, pp. 17-31.

⁴¹ Original quote: "Indonesia menegaskan kepada Majelis Umum PBB bahwa yang menyebut dirinya Fretilin bukanlah gerakan kemerdekaan sejati mewakili rakyat Timor Timur, melainkan hanyalah kolaborator tersayang rejim kolonial Portugal." "Fretilin Bukan Gerakan Kemerdekaan Sejati," *Berita Buana*, October 19, 1982, p. 7.

⁴² Apodeti (Associação Popular Democrática de Timor, Timorese People's Democratic Association) was a political party that supported integration with Indonesia.

⁴³ Original quote: "Delegasi Portugal sehubungan dengan hal tersebut di atas: a. Memberikan kebebasan kepada Pemerintah Indonesia untuk meningkatkan pembinaan Apodeti secara tertutup dan tidak menyolok." Soekanto, *Integrasi*, p. 139.

such as the 1991 Santa Cruz massacre in Dili,⁴⁴ or that protests were performed specifically for the international media.⁴⁵

Motives

Many authors writing during the New Order assert that separatists, fundamentally, are not motivated by a desire to secede from Indonesia, but employ this demand to achieve other ends, or as a reaction to feelings of frustration and injustice. In re-interpreting, or perhaps better, re-presenting the motives of separatists, authors generally neglect to quote the separatists themselves or even refer to them specifically. This is truer of media reports than of published books.

The following passage is long, but provides an excellent example of how New Order publications manage to discredit the separatists' own explicit motives and goals:

Indeed, we could ask whether a society that "rebels" against the center [Jakarta] can immediately be labeled a disintegrative society?

It cannot be immediately considered that these rebels lack what Renan calls "grand solidarity." They could have "rebelled" on account of reasons that are in no way connected to the problem of disintegration. For instance, they may be dissatisfied with a government policy. Alternatively, a group in society may act "strangely," because they experience injustice, or even [because of] an imbalance perpetrated by a more dominant societal group.

It is natural if a societal group that was previously "spoiled" with various concessions subsequently protests when their privileges run out. They are "engrossed" in enjoying their privileges without realizing that these privileges come with a time limit. Here, those to blame are the givers of the privileges. The giver did not prepare them to realize that there was a time limit. Or, rather, in actuality they needn't have been given anything, so as to avoid them becoming hooked on their privileges.

If this is what they feel, then *in truth they are only protesting matters that in their view should not be the way they are. They do not desire secession, let alone to form their own country.* It's just that if their dissatisfaction accumulates over a period of years, it is not impossible that their orientation will change.

As such, what do our brothers from the eastern extreme want? Occasionally the OPM's voice is still heard. What voice is it and whose is it? What mission does it proclaim?

*Based on reading materials, it turns out that what they want is "Make your brothers here feel that they also own a stake of the Republic of Indonesia."*⁴⁶ (*my emphasis*)

⁴⁴ See "Pangab di DPR: ABRI Terpaksa Menembak sebagai Upaya Bela Diri," *Kompas*, November 28, 1991, p. 1; "Sekjen PBB Mungkin Kirim Misi Penyelidik," *Kompas*, December 2, 1991, p. 1.

⁴⁵ See, for example, Subroto, *Saksi Mata Perjuangan Integrasi Timor Timur*, p. 235; "Pangdam Trikora, Mayjen I Ketut Wirdhana 'Saya Akui, Penembakan untuk GPK Memang Ada,'" *Forum Keadilan* 11 (1995): 15.

⁴⁶ Original quote: "Memang, bisa dipertanyakan juga, apakah suatu masyarakat yang 'membangkang' terhadap pusat (Jakarta) dapat langsung dicap sebagai masyarakat yang disintegratif?"

The italicized sections inform the reader that there is no need to address the demands for secession, as this is not what the separatist really wants. Indeed, the author concludes, a page later, "So, the problem in Papua is how to increase the welfare of society in a more even manner."⁴⁷ To back up his transposition of separatist claims from the political to the specifically economic, the author cites two sentences written in 1945, and conversations with two to three Papuans; apart from this he refers to "reading materials" without providing an example or even source reference to the reader.⁴⁸

Separatists are also described as spoilt or perhaps unaware that the difficulties that they face are commonplace. The following editorial, for example, analyzes the motives of four Papuan separatists who sought political exile in the Netherlands:

Indeed what are called the remnants of the "Free Papua Organization" still remain. Examined more objectively, the stronger motive in several cases in Papua, perhaps including the case of these four people, is not political, but say, a social motive.

There is a particular sensitivity, with the result that disappointments large or small, which also affect fellow Indonesians in other places, are all expressed politically, or made into political issues.⁴⁹

"Para pembangkang tidak dapat langsung dianggap tidak mempunyai apa yang disebut Renan sebagai 'solidaritas luhur.' Bisa saja mereka 'membangkang' karena alasan yang tidak ada hubungannya sama sekali dengan masalah disintegratif. Misalnya, mereka tidak puas terhadap suatu kebijaksanaan pemerintah. Atau, suatu kelompok masyarakat bertindak 'aneh-aneh,' karena merasakan ketidakadilan, maupun ketimpangan yang dilakukan oleh kelompok masyarakat yang lebih dominan.

"Adalah wajar bila ada sekelompok masyarakat yang tadinya 'dimanjakan' dengan berbagai kemudahan, kemudian protes setelah masa itu habis. Mereka 'terlanjur' menikmati kemudahan tanpa menyadari bahwa hal itu terbatas pada waktu tertentu. Di sini yang perlu disalahkan adalah pemberi kemudahan tersebut. Sang pemberi tidak mempersiapkan mereka untuk menyadari adanya batas waktu. Atau malahan, sebenarnya mereka tidak usah diberikan apapun untuk menghindari keterlenaan dalam kemudahan.

"Jika yang dirasakan demikian, maka sesungguhnya mereka hanya memprotes hal-hal yang menurut pandangannya seharusnya tidak pantas ada. Mereka tidak menghendaki pemisahan, apalagi membentuk negara sendiri. Hanya saja, jika perasaan ketidakpuasan terakumulasi sampai sekian tahun, maka tidak tertutup kemungkinan timbulnya perubahan orientasi mereka.

"Selanjutnya, sebenarnya saudara kita di ujung timur itu menginginkan apa? Suara OPM (Organisasi Papua Merdeka) kadang-kadang masih terdengar. Itu suara apa dan suara siapa? Misa apa yang dikumandangkan itu?

Berdasarkan temuan bacaan, ternyata yang diinginkan adalah "Jadikan saudara-saudaramu di sini merasa turut memiliki Republik ini." M. Hamdan Basyar, "Kesimpulan dan Saran," in *Penelitian Kesadaran Kebangsaan: Wilayah Irian Jaya* (Jakarta: LIPI, 1992), pp. 104-105.

⁴⁷ Original quote: "Jadi, masalah di Irian Jaya adalah bagaimana mensejahterakan masyarakat secara lebih merata." Ibid., p. 106. For a similar example concerning the 1991 massacre in East Timor, see "Mengapa Bom Waktu itu Meledak," *Tempo* 21,40 (1991): 31.

⁴⁸ Although in fairness to the author, it must be said that he does realize the shortcomings that result from the lack of fieldwork in his research; see Basyar, "Kesimpulan dan Saran," p. iii. However, after noting this limitation, he nevertheless proceeds to draw confident conclusions, unimpeded by doubts or qualifications.

⁴⁹ Original quote: "Memang masih ada yang disebut sisa-sisa 'Organisasi Papua Merdeka.' Diteliti lebih obyektif, yang lebih kuat pada berbagai kasus di Irian Jaya termasuk barangkali peristiwa empat orang di atas, bukanlah motif politik, melainkan sebetulnya, motif sosial.

"Ada kepekaan khusus, sehingga sesuatu kekecewaan besar atau kecil yang menimpa juga sesama

A further example is provided by a comment written by the respected Indonesian intellectual, Arief Budiman, again following the 1991 Santa Cruz Massacre. After denouncing other aspects of writing on separatists (the use of normative labels [by this he means the label "GPK"], underestimation of the numbers of separatists, etc.), he then moves on to possible solutions to the continuing conflict.

From several East Timorese living in Java whom I know, I have observed that after living here for a few years, their stance on Indonesia is quite positive. To them I say that injustice is faced not only by East Timorese, but also by the common people in Java and other areas.⁵⁰

Separatists are also often characterized as mistaken or misguided. Separatists, or those influenced by them, are often described as "*sesat*" (misguided);⁵¹ when separatists have been captured, or have put down their arms, the phrase "*menjadi sadar*" (becoming aware) is commonly used to depict their transformation. The idea of repentance is frequently introduced, for instance in accounts of separatists who receive and accept their sentences without appeal, again suggesting that advocates of separatism are generally mistaken.⁵²

An important corollary to this notion of "mistakenness" is the assumption that the state can and should correct such deviance. In 1991, seventy-seven GPK members were handed over to the Governor of Sumatra to be "*dimasyarakatkan kembali*" (resocialized), according to one account.⁵³ A more interesting example, though, can be found in this summation of an interview published shortly after the Santa Cruz massacre; the interview was conducted with a Fretilin commander who had been captured and was now, according to the summation, under ABRI's "guidance":

Maukalo is still under ABRI's "guidance." This second-grade dropout from a Portu High School, who aspired to become a priest, has been under guidance for six months so far. "For people like Maukalo, it takes a least a year to achieve results," remarked an officer in Dili.⁵⁴

orang Indonesia di tempat-tempat lain, serta-merta dinyatakan secara politik, atau dijadikan isu politik." "Minta Tiket ke Belanda," *Kompas*, March 15, 1984, p. 4.

⁵⁰ Original quote: "Dari beberapa orang Timtim di Jawa yang saya kenal, saya melihat, setelah hidup beberapa tahun di sini, sikap mereka cukup positif terhadap bangsa Indonesia. Kepada mereka saya katakan, bahwa ketidakadilan tidak hanya dihadapi penduduk Timtim. Tapi juga oleh rakyat jelata di Pulau Jawa dan di wilayah-wilayah lain." Arief Budiman, "Timtim: Berpikir Dingin Mencari Alternatif," *Editor* 5,11 (1991): 26-27.

⁵¹ See, for example, Soeharto, *Amanat Kenegaraan: Kumpulan pidato kenegaraan di depan Sidang Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat 1967-1985* (Jakarta: Inti Idayu Press, 1985), p. 207. Also "Seruan Pangab kepada Warga Timtim yang Masih Bercokol di Hutan," *Merdeka*, July 3, 1984, p. 1.

⁵² See, for example, "Menlu Mochtar: Tidak ada Lagi Gerakan Politik di Irja dan Timtim, yang Ada Cuma GPK," *Berita Buana*, September 8, 1984, p. 1. "Orang-orang yang terlibat Gerakan Pengacau Keamanan ini bahkan sudah banyak menerima hukuman . . . Mereka menerima hukuman mereka dengan baik tanpa naik banding." (Many people who were involved in this Security Disturbing Gang have received their sentences. . . . They have accepted their sentences without appealing.)

⁵³ F. Eda et al., eds., *Aceh Menggugat*, p. 63.

⁵⁴ Original quote: "Maukalo memang masih dalam 'binaan' ABRI. Jebolan kelas dua SMP Portu yang bercita-cita menjadi pastor ini baru enam bulan dibina. Sedangkan, 'Untuk orang seperti Maukalo, paling

It may take time to "guide" the misled separatist to his proper place in Indonesia, however the state is prepared and able to do so.⁵⁵ And if even a commander can be resocialized, then "guidance" surely must succeed for the general populace who have been incited by the "remnants" of these movements.

In summary, the writing on separatists discussed above does not seriously treat any demands for secession from Indonesia. Rather than discussing how these demands might be handled, authors consistently explain that the movements are not what they seem, or that separatists are not really motivated by a desire to secede. By categorizing separatists repeatedly as GPK, communist, and foreign pawns, and by describing their actions and organizations either pejoratively or dismissively, authors treat these movements as Indonesian movements. By re-presenting separatists' motives, authors are implicitly asserting that they understand the conditions that separatists live in better than the separatists do themselves. The remainder of this essay will discuss how authors were able to write in this way.

Controls

The New Order state exercised control not solely through physical force, but also through a project of ideological domination. This involved both the authorship of a state ideology and the restriction of freedom to express challenges to this ideology. To the latter end, the regime maintained a Department of Information, as well as several clandestine civil and military intelligence bodies.

Much of this control on the press and book publishing was direct and overt. All press publications were subject to a licensing system—the SIUPP,⁵⁶ or, before 1982, SIT⁵⁷—whereby their license could be revoked at any time. More than thirty press publications were banned during the New Order.⁵⁸ In 1997, Stanley Prasetyo Adi estimated that as many as two thousand books may have been banned during the New Order.⁵⁹ In 1989, a "clearing house" was established to advise the Attorney General, who, by citing legislation authored under Sukarno, could criminalize the possession of certain books.⁶⁰

tidak setahun baru ada hasilnya,' ujar seorang perwira di Dili." "Sosok Seorang (Bekas) Fretilin," *Tempo* 21, 43 (1991): 16.

⁵⁵ On this point of correction, we could also consider instances when separatism is described through medical metaphors, such as "trauma," "virus," and "wounds." This implies a need for treatment, and also suggests that separatism is foreign to the "body" of these peoples. See, for example, "Virus itu Sudah Terjadi," *Tempo* 21,39 (1991): 24-25; "Antara Trauma dan Kecemburuan," *Tempo* 21,39 (1991): 39; "Saudara Kita Orang Timtim," *Tempo* 21,40 (1991): 33.

⁵⁶ *Surat Izin Usaha Penerbitan Pers*, Press Enterprise Operational License.

⁵⁷ *Surat Izin Terbit*, Publishing License.

⁵⁸ Ariel Heryanto and Stanley Prasetyo Adi, "The Industrialization of the Media in Democratizing Indonesia," *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 23,2 (2001): 337.

⁵⁹ Stanley Prasetyo Adi, "Orde Baru 31 Tahun, 2000 Judul Buku Diredel," *Tempo Interaktif*, January 29, 1996, cited in HRW, *Academic Freedom In Indonesia: Dismantling Soeharto-Era Barriers*, Chapter V, <http://www.hrw.org/hrw/reports98/indonesia2/>.

⁶⁰ HRW, *Academic Freedom In Indonesia*.

However, an important element of control was the reaction of the press and publishers to these restrictions. Fear that their license might be revoked by the SIUPP created a "management of fear" in press enterprises, which in turn produced a "journalism of fear."⁶¹ Self-censorship and subtle restraints imposed by journalists upon their fellow journalists were some of the most effective sources of control.⁶²

Of course, some journalists developed a number of strategies that enabled them to continue to convey information. One tactic that the press used was euphemism.⁶³ Seno Gumira Ajidarma explains how he felt able to report certain occurrences provided he used phrases such as "*alat provokasi*" (tool of provocation) and "*orang tertentu*" (certain people) to incorporate his report within the government position.⁶⁴ However, we should not exaggerate the extent to which New Order journalists resisted the regime and its preferred discourse. Luwarso argues that the mainstream media helped prolong the rule of Suharto's regime by adopting and broadcasting its slogans:

The shackled Indonesia press and its journalists also played a large role in internalizing the regime's slogans without attempting to interpret them critically. Slogans such as "latent danger of communism," "stability for the sake of development," "ABRI as dynamizator [Indonesian: *dinamisator*]" are examples of the regime's slogans that the press broadcast, which society then had to swallow as the truth.⁶⁵

It is not difficult to see how this process fostered the propagation of the labels that we have discussed.

The fact that New Order officials enjoyed easy access to the media also helped sustain the regime's discourse on separatists. Luwarso described "talking news," for instance, whereby journalists faithfully transcribe officials' statements before reporting them as a news item,⁶⁶ a method that enables the officials to establish a version of events for the media to comply with.⁶⁷ Officials' unfettered access to the media, along

⁶¹ Seno Gumira Ajidarma, *Eyewitness*, trans. Jan Lingard (Potts Point: EET Imprint, 1995), p. 24.

⁶² Lukas Luwarso, *Peran Media Membangun Civil Society*, unpublished paper, 1998. This control was exercised through the state-sponsored Press Council and Indonesian Association of Journalists (PWI), which was the sole legal journalists' body during the New Order. At the time he wrote the paper Luwarso was chairperson of the Alliance of Independent Journalists (AJI).

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ajidarma, *Eyewitness*, p. 9.

⁶⁵ Original quote: "Pers dan wartawan Indonesia yang terbelenggu juga berperan besar dalam menginternalisasikan slogan-slogan rezim tanpa mencoba menelaah secara kritis. Slogan-slogan seperti: bahaya laten komunis, stabilitas demi pembangunan, ABRI sebagai dinamisator, adalah contoh slogan-slogan rezim yang disebarkan oleh pers dan harus ditelan oleh masyarakat sebagai kebenaran." Luwarso, *Peran Media Membangun Civil Society*.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ One article published after the 1991 Santa Cruz Massacre in Dili contained a backhanded message that newspapers could not be expected to contradict the government line, as the Head of the Indonesian Association of Journalists (PWI, a government-sponsored body to control journalists) declared that: "... the national press has the right to publish field observations, outside the official government clarification, as long as it considers beforehand whether or not its reports are beneficial to the nation." Original quote: "... pers nasional berhak menulis laporan temuan di lapangan, di luar keterangan resmi pemerintah, asalkan sebelum disajikan dipertimbangkan apakah laporannya menguntungkan kehidupan

with overt government restrictions on which sources could be quoted in news reports, and the simple inability of the Indonesian press to meet with separatist figures, all limited the direct, accurate reporting of separatist voices, so that these voices made only ritualized appearances in the media.⁶⁸

However, this process of "feeding" news to journalists does not adequately explain the scarcity of separatists' statements in the discourse. In fact, the discourse not only deals with challenges as they occur, but also discredits possible dissenting voices in advance, in a manner strikingly similar to the way colonial discourses concerning the "Oriental" discredited statements made by the "Orientals" themselves as untrustworthy or intentionally deceptive.⁶⁹ As a result, dissenting opinions are often not sought, as they tend to be dismissed as lies or not considered because it is assumed they would merely confirm what is already known:

But don't imagine it's the same in East Timor as it is in Java. Because there it's still chaotic. Information is confused and incoherent and sometimes people say anything at all. They look quite straightforward but they're not. In Java, ordinary people can be believed but apparently they can't there. Maybe because it's to do with anti-integration attitudes.⁷⁰

This quote illustrates the distance established between Java (but also other parts of Indonesia) and these territories. The following section discusses this idea in more detail.

Distance

East Timor, Aceh, and Papua are geographically distant from most of Indonesia's population, and the majority of Indonesians have no link with these territories in any way. Indeed, Indonesia's nationalists coined the catchphrase "*Dari Sabang Sampai Merauke*" (From Sabang [in Aceh] to Merauke [in Papua]) long before they themselves had set foot in Papua.⁷¹ For many years after East Timor was integrated with Indonesia, the province was closed to arrivals from other parts of the country. As a result of this isolation, much of the available history on these "outer regions" has necessarily been gleaned from military or other governmental archives (this is

bangsa atau tidak." "Instruksi Presiden Soeharto tentang Insiden Timtim: Penanganan Dilakukan dengan Cermat dan Dikoordinasikan Sebaik-baiknya," *Kompas*, November 18, 1991, p. 1.

⁶⁸ For example, Xanana Gusmão and Maukalo, who is interviewed in *Tempo* almost as a specimen, as discussed above. Also see Syamsuddin Haris and M. Riefki Muna, "Dilema Penyelesaian Kasus Timor Timur," in *Indonesia di Ambang Perpecahan?, kasus Aceh, Riau, Irian Jaya dan Timor Timur* (Jakarta: Erlangga, 1999), p. 261, for an explanation of government tactics in appropriating token separatists.

⁶⁹ Cf. quotation of Cromer in Edward Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*, 2nd edition (London: Penguin, 1995), p. 38.

⁷⁰ Explanation of the Chair of the Commission of National Investigators, M. Djaelini LLB, quoted in Ajidarma, *Eyewitness*, p. 15.

⁷¹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 2nd edition (London: Verso, 1991), p. 176. As Anderson notes, a few hundred Indonesian nationalists were detained in Papua.

particularly true for East Timor and Papua),⁷² and hence it is liable to infuse subsequent histories with a certain bias.

In addition, and more importantly for the public perception, the structure of Indonesian television news reporting reinforced the government's dominant position in determining the representation of these territories. Although during the late-New Order five private television channels operated in addition to the government-owned TVRI, these private channels could not afford to maintain permanent bureaus in any more than a few of Indonesia's major cities. Thus, when a newsworthy incident took place, it was common practice to rely heavily upon TVRI archival footage as the image component of the news story. This footage typically included scenes of traffic along a city street, marketplace scenes, and maybe a picture of government buildings. When access to the site of the occurrence was restricted, this archival footage may have been the only available image component in Indonesian media reports for several days or longer, even when the story received significant airtime on news bulletins.⁷³ This practice restricted the broadcasting of images that may have been graphically at odds with the commentary of the news bulletin.

However, in the context of separatists, more important than this geographical distance was the ideological distance authors were able to establish between themselves and their subjects. One of the main notions that enabled authors to perceive the ideological gap in this manner had to do with "development."

Numerous authors have noted the centrality of development (*pembangunan*) to the New Order regime's conception of itself.⁷⁴ President Suharto was named Father of Development; the New Order also called itself the Development Order; and all cabinets during the New Order regime were called Development Cabinets.⁷⁵ Heryanto writes:

Pembangunan, which since the beginning of its history in Indonesia . . . has been linked to the concept of "modernization," not only works at renovating the life of society, but also opposes, rejects, and eradicates (on a small or large scale, openly or not) anything which is considered "traditional" or "anti-modernization."⁷⁶

The key point concerning development is the possible dichotomy between those who actively *develop*, on the one hand, and those who are the targets of development or who resist development on the other. Benedict Anderson notes that during the New Order Indonesia was viewed as an inheritance to be possessed and preserved, rather

⁷² Ironically, the prevalence of military history sources is probably related to the activities of the movements in question, which were met with military force by the Indonesian regime.

⁷³ For instance, when conflicts between Christian and Muslim mobs commenced in January 1999 in Ambon, television channels had great difficulty getting their reporters to the island. For at least a week after the violence commenced, descriptions of the violence were accompanied by TVRI archival footage of peaceful street scenes: women selling produce in markets, motorcycles going by on New Order-built roads, and so forth.

⁷⁴ See for example Ariel Heryanto, "The Development of 'Development,'" *Indonesia* 46 (October 1988): 1-24; Hooker, "New Order Language in Context"; van Langenberg, "Analysing Indonesia's New Order State."

⁷⁵ Heryanto, "The Development of 'Development,'" p. 11.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

than a common project to be undertaken.⁷⁷ For the centralized New Order state, Anderson continues, the Acehnese in Aceh and Papuans in Papua became an inconvenience, rather than people to be negotiated with or to join in a common project.⁷⁸ The state then asserted its right—although more often described as an obligation—to preserve this inheritance, in part through development. In this context, Anderson shrewdly notes how New Order officials rarely accuse rebels of betraying the nation—as was typical in the 1950s—but instead accuse them of ingratitude.⁷⁹

In New Order discourse, these territories were firmly established as the targets of Indonesian development. This is particularly evident for Papua and East Timor.

Upon their integration, East Timor and Papua were said to present two challenges to Indonesia: to develop these “backward” provinces; and to secure (or consolidate) their political allegiance to Indonesia. Repeated reference is made to the former of these two challenges. President Suharto made special mention of this challenge as it applied to East Timor in his 1976 Independence Day Address.⁸⁰ However, no statement better expresses the manner in which the Indonesian elite perceived their role than this comment by a member of the Indonesian delegation that visited East Timor prior to the ratification of integration:

“I am not an agricultural expert. But the land in East Timor looks barren. It contains a lot of calcium. As such, you could perhaps grow teak, pine, acacia and other crops—perhaps corn. Also it would be best to construct an irrigation system like in Taiwan. That is by constructing a reservoir on top of a mountain to store rainwater, which can then be channeled as necessary. Also we should get Indonesian volunteers in here,” said Imron Rosyadi, touching upon the plans for development that he had already started to visualize. Whereas, his impressions on life in East Timor were as follows: “To see the East Timorese people makes me ask myself, ‘What is it that people here live for?’ It is as if they do not have an aim in life. They are like objects. The meaning of life is just to live. As such, after integration, everything will have to be started afresh from ABC, in all fields of development. It will be incredibly burdensome. But no matter how burdensome it is, we must bear it for the sake of humanity.”⁸¹

⁷⁷ Benedict Anderson, “Indonesian Nationalism Today and in the Future,” *Indonesia* 67 (1999): 1-11.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.

⁷⁹ On the point of a power relation between “real” Indonesians (Anderson’s term) and East Timorese, consider the comments of an East Timorese about his conversations with East Timorese students studying in Indonesian universities, quoted by Anderson: “He told me that what really enrages East Timorese students is that they are always being told how ungrateful they are. ‘Look at all we have done for you! Where is your gratitude?’ is what they hear day in day out from deans, professors, fellow students and so forth.” Benedict Anderson, “Imagining East Timor,” *Arena Magazine*, April-May 1993, p. 25.

⁸⁰ “But our foreign and internal challenge is not finished. Internally, a task of development awaits in East Timor, which at the moment is backward as a result of a long period of colonization.” Original quote: “Tetapi tugas kita ke dalam dan ke luar belum berakhir di sini. Ke dalam, tugas pembangunan telah menunggu di Timor Timur yang saat ini dalam keadaan terbelakang karena penjajahan yang panjang.” Soeharto, *Amanat kenegaraan*, p. 207.

⁸¹ Original quote: “Saya bukan ahli pertanian. Tapi tanah di Timor Timur memang tampak tandus. Banyak mengandung kapur. Karenanya, yang bisa ditumbuhkan di sana mungkin pohonjati, pinus, accasia dan palawija seperti jagung. Selain itu sistem irigasi sebaiknya dibuat seperti di Taiwan. Yaitu dibuat waduk di atas gunung untuk menampung air hujan, kemudian secara terencana dialirkan seperlunya. Tenaga Butsi

The primacy of development, and Indonesia's imperative to implement it, in turn allowed for the deployment of a legion of development experts to these territories. This took the form of a "territorial operation" from ABRI. This territorial operation "provides guidance to local inhabitants, from teaching to planting rice to providing charitable labor."⁸² Importantly, the guise of the territorial operation allows ABRI to maintain a greater presence in these territories, despite the claim that only very few separatists remain.⁸³ ABRI's "guidance" was claimed to have secured the allegiance of the local inhabitants to Indonesia⁸⁴ and to have thwarted the separatists:

They carry out their activities in the city, whispering in people's ears. Why? Because in the villages their message isn't wanted. It has been thwarted by our territorial operation.⁸⁵

When the territorial operation failed in the cities, and resistance continued elsewhere, this was not interpreted as evidence that the premises of this approach ought to be questioned, but rather as evidence that ABRI needed to gain more knowledge in order to determine how the operation might be made to succeed.⁸⁶ Several sources highlighted inappropriate development strategies as the cause of disquiet in these territories; Djopari suggests that the Indonesian government appeal to Papuans not through common colonial experience, but through the promise of development:

An appropriate theme that the people of Papua would accept is that of "left-behindness" or a theme of "backwardness," as these are themes that really match up with the real situation and experiences in Papua.⁸⁷

supaya dikerahkan juga ke sana,' demikian Imron Rosyadi menyinggung tentang perencanaan pembangunan yang sudah mulai dipikirkannya. Sedangkan kesannya mengenai kehidupan di sana, diungkapkan sbb: 'Melihat penduduk Timor Timur, saya bertanya dalam hati. Orang di sana sebenarnya hidup untuk apa? Seolah-olah mereka tidak mempunyai tujuan hidup. Seperti barang saja. Artinya hidup sekedar untuk hidup. Sebab itu, setelah integrasi nanti, seluruhnya harus dimulai dari ABC lagi, di semua bidang pembangunan. Sungguh berat. Tetapi betapapun beratnya harus kita pikul demi perikemanusiaan.'" Soekanto, *Integrasi*, p. 683.

The similarity to Lord Cromer's comments on Britain's "obligation" to Egypt some sixty years earlier, as quoted in Said, *Orientalism*, p. 37, is too striking to pass by. Lord Cromer's words:

"But it is essential that each special issue should be decided mainly with reference to what, by the light of Western knowledge tempered by local considerations, we conscientiously think is best for the subject race, without any reference to any real or supposed advantage which may accrue to England as a nation."

⁸² Original quote: "... melakukan bimbingan pada penduduk setempat, mulai dari mengajar menanam padi sampai kerja bakti." "Letupan Kecil di Gudang Isu," *Tempo* 21,37 (1991): 29.

⁸³ See for example, "Kekuatan OPM tidak Berarti," *Kompas*, January 7, 1999, where a military commander is asked whether troops will be withdrawn from Papua. His answer: "If I withdrew them, who would help society, for example teaching and undertaking other governmental tasks?" "Kalau saya tarik, siapa yang akan membantu masyarakat, misalnya mengajar dan melaksanakan tugas pemerintahan lainnya."

⁸⁴ Cf. E. Said, *Orientalism*, p. 37.

⁸⁵ Original quote: "Mereka melakukan kegiatan di kota, kasak-kusuk. Kenapa? Karena di hutan dan desa-desa sudah tak laku. Sudah terlindas oleh operasi teritorial kita." "Virus itu Sudah Terjadi," *Tempo* 21,39 (1991): 24-25.

⁸⁶ Cf. E. Said, *Orientalism*, p. 36.

⁸⁷ Original quote: "Tema yang tepat dan dapat diterima oleh orang Irian Jaya adalah tema 'ketertinggalan' atau tema 'keterbelakangan' karena tema ini benar-benar tepat dengan pengalaman dan keadaan nyata di Irian Jaya." Djopari, *Pemberontakan Organisasi Papua Merdeka*, p. 161.

The ranking of territories judged according to their perceived relative states of “development” places all East Timorese and Papuans in a position of permanent inferiority; the implications for separatists—portrayed as destructive deviants who resist the process of development—are even more serious.⁸⁸ When the discourse suggests that laudable development can be expected to eradicate any elements opposed to modernization, the phrase “*sisa-sisa*” (remnants), so often employed by New Order officials to describe separatists, takes on a new and grim connotation.⁸⁹ Apparently these separatists, marginalized by this discourse of development, are to be perceived as the remnants of a pre-modern, non-rational state of affairs, and as such are to be swept away.

Challenges

Although many historical conditions supported the dominance of this discourse on separatists, the discourse itself was neither uniform nor unchallenged. Dissent was possible, although from a weak position in a heavily skewed power relation. In this particular case, it is especially notable that many of the challenges have come from the designated audience, and not the target, of the discourse.

Challenges could take two forms: statements that subvert the dominant discourse itself, and action on the part of separatists of a sort that would attract media coverage. Much of the dissenting material produced under or beyond state surveillance is necessarily ephemeral, and I could not obtain it. However, some challenges to the dominant discourse on separatists can still be traced.⁹⁰

Separatist movements were not of central concern to activists prior to the 1990s. The published court defense speeches of student activists from 1978 do not mention separatists.⁹¹ Reports from ASIET⁹² and *Kompas*⁹³ suggest that the first instance of a joint demonstration involving East Timorese and Indonesians occurred on December 7, 1995, despite earlier supportive statements by some pro-democracy groups. However, such demonstrations did not pose a significant challenge to the dominant discourse, as those involved had no access to the media reporting their actions.

⁸⁸ The factor of destructive, anti-development activities applies equally to separatists in Aceh. Aceh does not fit well with much of the preceding discussion of development. Aceh became part of Indonesia at the nation's inception in 1945.

⁸⁹ Thanks to Amrih Widodo for suggesting this point.

⁹⁰ Several readers have commented on the absence of discussion of works by George Aditjondro on East Timor. I did obtain and read several of his works, however, as I had limited myself to material published in Bahasa Indonesia within Indonesia, these texts were ruled out.

⁹¹ See for example, Heri Akhmadi, *Mendobrak . . . Belenggu Penindasan Rakyat Indonesia* (LBH & KPM-DM-ITB, 1979); Lukman Hakim, *Kudengar Indonesia Memanggil* (Jakarta: BKS-PMI, 1980). Some activists in the 1990s, however, did make mention of East Timor in their defense speeches. See *Xanana Gusmao: Timor Leste Merdeka Indonesia Bebas*, ed. Siswowyhardjo (Solidamor, 1999), p. xi.

⁹² ASIET, *Fighting Together—Indonesians and East Timorese Join in Struggle* [www.asiet.org.]. (ASIET, Action in Solidarity with Indonesia and East Timor).

⁹³ “Lagi, Aksi Loncat Pagar 116 Pemuda Timor Timur,” *Kompas*, December 8, 1995, p. 1.

Dissent could also be conducted through e-mail lists and web sites such as *Tempo Interaktif*. A number of interviews with Xanana Gusmão were published on e-mail sites such as *Kabar dari Pijar* during the 1990s. The impact of such challenges to the discourse should not be exaggerated, however. Public Internet access stations did not become available in Indonesia until 1996, and it is estimated that only about 50,000 to 100,000 Indonesians were able to gain access to the Internet during the late stages of the Suharto regime.⁹⁴ David Hill and Krishna Sen correctly note that "the definition of the internet in Indonesia as a political medium has been determined . . . by the political agency of a section of Indonesian society."⁹⁵ On the whole, the Internet circulates political information only to those who are already challenging the dominant discourse. Usage of the Internet surged after the July 1996 riots in Jakarta, when it was presumed that the national media was concealing information;⁹⁶ there was no equivalent incident concerning separatists to arouse public interest between 1996 and 1998.

Another avenue of dissent was cultural criticism, which was often allowed when "political" challenges were censored.⁹⁷ One example is the *Saksi Mata* (Eyewitness) collection of short stories written by Seno Gumira Ajidarma. This set of short stories, written during a period when Ajidarma was suspended from editing the weekly *Jakarta Jakarta* magazine, undermine many of the state's typical claims about separatists. However, Ajidarma's intervention cannot be unequivocally defined as a challenge to the discourse, as M. Clark explains in discussing one of the stories, titled "Salazar":

"Salazar" is ambivalent towards colonialism, and even goes so far as to implicitly encourage the Timorese to accept Indonesian rule as a part of a peaceful process of resolution. It is at this point that the problematics of Seno's position with regard to East Timor is [sic] most contradictory. As an Indonesian writing "on behalf of" the Timorese, Seno poses a crucial question: is he writing for a Timorese audience or an Indonesian audience? Either way, whilst not unsympathetic towards the Timorese spirit of resistance, and the ongoing tragedy in East Timor, in its exhortation for a more acquiescent approach to Indonesian rule in East Timor, "Salazar" treads a fine line between post-colonial and colonial literature.⁹⁸

Separatists' active resistance was a second form of challenge. Two prominent events that attracted international and Indonesian attention were the 1991 Santa Cruz Massacre, during which the Indonesian government shot and killed a number of separatist protestors, and the 134-day hostage incident in Mapnduma, Papua in 1995, during which a scientific team of Indonesians and foreigners was abducted. In these cases, rather than cover up the occurrence of these incidents, the regime represented them on their own terms. In the case of the Santa Cruz massacre, the incident was

⁹⁴ Krishna Sen and David Hill, *Media, Culture and Politics in Indonesia* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 194, 199.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 211.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 201.

⁹⁷ Virginia Hooker and Howard Dick, "Introduction," in *Society and Culture in New Order Indonesia*, ed. Virginia Hooker (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 5.

⁹⁸ M. Clark, "Imaging East Timor: Post-Colonialism and Identity in the Short Stories of Seno Gumira Ajidarma," (Unpublished subthesis towards Bachelor of Asian Studies [Indonesian] [Hons], Australian National University, 1996), p. 72.

criminalized, while an inquiry was launched and senior officers removed from their commands to show that the state had dealt with the incident. News reports at the time, which broadcast government statements, and also some subsequent accounts depicted the Santa Cruz Massacre as an event engineered by foreigners to entrap the military. As for the hostage incident, it was portrayed by the media as an emergency that had been capably contained by Prabowo, Suharto's son-in-law, and that demonstrated the proficiency of his elite Kopassus unit.

The international media often covered these incidents, and organizations such as Amnesty International wrote reports. Some of these filtered back to Indonesia. The Indonesian media periodically carried statements that attempted to undermine the credibility of these reports, and questioned the international community's over-developed sensitivity to human rights.

National press reports, he continued, were very important to balance the reportage of the foreign press, which tended to dramatize the riots in East Timor, thus resulting in an impression inside Indonesia that facts were being covered up.⁹⁹

When asked whether Amnesty International should be viewed as a sensational organization, Ambassador Marpaung stressed that on several points the Amnesty International report was not balanced . . . resultantly the seriousness of Amnesty was doubtful.¹⁰⁰

Conversely, these media statements, by implication, asserted that the kinds of statements typically found within the New Order's discourse on separatism were *the* truth.

Conclusion

Before proceeding to a discussion of the continuing relevance of this discourse, I will briefly sum up the features and effects of this discourse. Two of the key notions that characterize the form of this discourse are the steadfast assertion of Indonesian national unity, and the distance—both ideological and geographical—from which authors write. This leads to a dilemma, since the Indonesian authors of these texts are claiming that separatists really are Indonesian, but nevertheless they are also in some way inferior, misled, or not yet developed.¹⁰¹ This makes them the same, yet different. Authors who accept that this "difference" exists have produced a number of texts to explain the differences (between "genuine" Indonesians and "inferior" Indonesians) and reinterpret separatists motives. The resultant position of superiority also creates

⁹⁹ Original quote: "Laporan pers nasional itu, lanjutnya, sangat penting untuk mengimbangi pemberitaan pers asing yang cenderung mendramatisasi kerusuhan di Timtim, sehingga ada kesan di dalam negeri bahwa ada fakta-fakta yang ditutup-tutupi." "Instruksi Presiden Soeharto tentang Insiden Timtim: Penanganan Dilakukan dengan Cermat dan Dikoordinasikan Sebaik-baiknya," *Kompas*, November 18, 1991, p. 1.

¹⁰⁰ Original quote: "Ditanya apakah Amnesty Internasional dipandang sebagai suatu organisasi yang bersifat sensasional, Dubes Marpaung menegaskan laporan Amnesty International dalam beberapa hal tidak berimbang . . . sehingga disangsikan kesungguhan Amnesty." "Laporan Amnesty Internasional ttg Timtim Dianggap Bohong di Australia," *Sinar Harapan*, July 1, 1985, p. 1.

¹⁰¹ Thanks to the anonymous reader at Cornell for this succinct statement.

an imperative for the Indonesian state to develop or educate these separatists and the people of these territories in general so that they come to understand their identity as Indonesians.

To understand how this discourse on separatists is still relevant, a few cautionary notes are in order on the nature of ideological domination. Increasingly, scholars have cautioned against a simple dichotomy of state and society as the subject and object of power respectively.¹⁰² Were the discourse on separatists simply a politically expedient campaign of concealment and misrepresentation identified with a discrete and separate New Order state, then it would hardly have been so persistent or pervasive. Yet it was both persistent and pervasive, and its influence has clearly outlasted the New Order.

Two simple examples may help clarify this. The two books, *Pemberontakan Organisasi Papua Merdeka* and *Integrasi Politik*, were each written by academics who were not immediately affiliated with the state.¹⁰³ However, both are written as studies of how to strengthen or consolidate Indonesian national integration.¹⁰⁴ Evidence of the New Order's ideological control over these academic authors can be found in the questions and assumptions that form the basis of their studies.

Heryanto provides a second example, in the context of the communist specter. In his discussion of the "messy" nature of authoritarianism, he cites this comment by a former head of Indonesia's intelligence service (Bakin), Sutopo Yuwono:

The funny thing about the world of intelligence is the technique of psy-war [psychological warfare]. As intelligence officers, we make up issues, and we disseminate them in the press, radio or television. We treat them as if they are real. When they are already widespread, usually people will talk about them and they tend to add to and exaggerate the issues. Finally, the issues will come back [to the intelligence bodies] in reports. What is so funny is that these reports incline us to believe that these issues are real, hahaha. In fact, we get terrified and begin to think, "what if these issues are real?" Hahaha.¹⁰⁵

Although state authors doubtless attempted manipulation for political ends, they themselves were subject to the images they and their predecessors had initially propagated. These authors could propagate images, but could not readily control their effects and circulation. Their ideological control succeeds, not when the state is able to forcefully suppress other views, but when (as with the discourse on separatists) its images are accepted as common sense and come to frame both state knowledge and writings composed by authors who have no direct state affiliation. They may be reproduced in challenges to the state, as was true in the case of the governor who asserted that more than just GPK were being killed. This hegemony is never total, and

¹⁰² For an excellent example concerning Indonesia, see Ariel Heryanto, "Where Communism Never Dies," *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 2,2 (1999): 147-177.

¹⁰³ Although Djopari was a former *camat*.

¹⁰⁴ Both books contain suggestions that the authors also perceive other ways in which their studies might have been phrased. However, for whatever reasons, they incorporated their works into the New Order discourse.

¹⁰⁵ "Sutopo Yuwono," *Jakarta-Jakarta*, June 5-11, 1993, cited in Heryanto, "Where Communism Never Dies," pp. 155-6.

a number of texts have now been published in Indonesia that represent a definite break with this discourse on separatists. However, the notions of this discourse still persist, and the contestation between this discourse on separatists and newer discourses will influence continuing responses to separatist demands from Papua and Aceh.