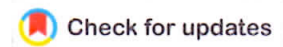




(RESEARCH ARTICLE)



Identity, power, myth contestation and land control in Manokwari, West Papua-Indonesia

Adolof Ronsumbre* and Marlon Arthur Huwae

Department of Anthropology, University of Papua, West Papua-Indonesia.

World Journal of Advanced Research and Reviews, 2022, 14(01), 223–228

Publication history: Received on 8 March 2022; revised on 10 April 2022; accepted on 12 April 2022

Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30574/wjarr.2022.14.1.0318>

Abstract

This article investigates the power of the tribes in Manokwari to occupy back the land controlled by the state. The basis of the claim is rooted in tribe myth about the customary land ownership neglected by the state in the past. Qualitative research is utilized to reveal how the tribes use the myth, power, and connection to control and claim the land. Tribe claim over land becomes more frequent, especially when West Papua is given special autonomy and Manokwari becomes the capital city. The spirit of sovereignty over land and Papuanisation of bureaucrats are amplified during the implementation of special autonomy. The special autonomy, Papuanisation of bureaucrats, power to mobilize masses, and connection with the elite and bureaucrats have strengthened and rejuvenated the power of the tribes in Manokwari to exercise power by retaking, squatting, and controlling the state land.

Keywords: Identity; Power; Land Control; Myth; Manokwari

1. Introduction

Long before the nations of the world came to Manokwari, the Manokwari region was a nameless region. There comes a tribe that calls themselves the Biak people with the spirit of seeking new territories. Due to frequent visits to this empty area, they began to think about names. The first name given by the Biak people to this nameless area was Mnu kwar. Mnu means village, and kwar means old, so mnu kwar is the old village.

In 1855, armed with a mission to spread Protestant Christianity, two German missionaries named C.W. Ottow, and J.G. Geissler arrived on Mansinam Island. The two missionaries, or in local terms called apostles of the Papuan people, were accepted by the Biak ethnic group on the island of Mansinam on February 5, 1855. This is the history of the early arrival and spread of Protestant Christianity in Papua, so Manokwari (Mansinam island) is often referred to as the early civilization of Papua [1]. Manokwari Regency was labelled as the City of the gospel even to commemorate this event. In 1898, precisely Europeans arrived at Mnu kwar. This area was designated as the government centre, or a kind of first government centre in Papua, on November 8, 1898, by the Resident of Ternate Van Horst on behalf of the Governor-General of the Dutch East Indies. J.J.van Oosterszee was appointed as controller of Afdeling Noord Nieuw Guinea (supervisor of North New Guinea) based in Manokwari.

In the modern context, the formation of a New Province, namely the Province of West Irian Jaya (IJB), is established to separate from the Province of Papua. Manokwari is selected as the Capital of the Province of West Irian Jaya. The realization of this discourse is contained in the state's decision through Law Number 45 of 1999 concerning the establishment of the Province of West Irian Jaya (IJB) with the capital city of Manokwari Regency. Then based on Government Regulation Number 24 of 2007, dated April 18, 2007, the name of West Irian Jaya Province (IJB) was changed to West Papua Province, with the capital city in Manokwari. In addition, the implementation of special

* Corresponding author: Adolof Ronsumbre (ronsumbreadolof@gmail.com)
Department of Anthropology, University of Papua, West Papua-Indonesia.