

Comparative analysis of secondary literatures on media representations of political tensions in Fiji and West Papua

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Chapter One: Introduction

When Fiji's political coups made news headlines in the years 2000 and 2006, they almost overshadowed special occasions of my own. When news broke out of George Speight staging a coup was the day before my eleventh birthday bash. When Frank Bainimarama released a press statement announcing a coup d'état in December 2006 our family was due to fly to Fiji a week later for a family reunion. In both situations the news media played a part in creating moral panic amongst my family, the diasporic community of Fijians and Indo-Fijians living in New Zealand and of New Zealand tourists holidaying in Fiji. Images of the military staunchly holding guns, standing at barricades or chasing journalists away from certain areas of Suva or of hostage takers in Fiji's coup in 2000 wearing balaclavas, guarding themselves with guns overloaded the news media in New Zealand. Images of tension were conveyed with contrasting images of church-goers supporting deposed parliamentarians, a rugby match and supporters of the coup rejoicing showing the divide in the nation. Coverage over West Papua's conflict though was overlooked by New Zealand mainstream media; a political conflict that preceded Fiji's first political coup in 1987 and has continued as West Papua struggles against Indonesia for independence has still has not made a headline in New Zealand mainstream media.

Initially my intention in my research proposal was to do a comparative review of Media Studies and Pacific Studies scholarship, using articles from *Pacific Journalism Review* and *The Contemporary Pacific* to analyse the authors' viewpoints. In the end and due to time constraints this comparative review will use Pacific Studies as a frame and context for reviewing works by Media Studies academics in *Pacific Journalism Review*, comparing what they have written on the political tensions of Fiji and West Papua. The *Pacific Journalism Review* was chosen as the main source for my literature review as it was where relevant articles on West Papua and Fiji's political conflicts from the perspectives of Media Studies scholars was located and could be comparatively analysed for this literature review. The purpose of comparing Media Studies journal articles on Fiji and West Papua was to assess what Media Studies academics were writing about Fiji and West Papua's tensions, what issues were being analysed and brought to the attention of readers from the perspectives of Media Studies and what was not being covered by Media Studies academics. I also wanted to explore similarities and differences in themes of the articles on Fiji and West Papua's political conflict and if underlying reasons are explained behind the political tensions. Having a background in Media Studies and Pacific Studies has been a motivating factor in pursuing this project, particularly in exposing the role mainstream media has in representing the Pacific and Pacific people in certain ways and what possible solutions are there to combat certain categories the Pacific is placed under. I was also provoked by the lack of Pacific journalists in mainstream media providing a voice for Pacific peoples and the confinements Pacific journalists are faced with from media organisations and Western models of journalism that is not always appropriate in covering the Pacific, its issues and its people. I felt that by undertaking this project I would be making a contribution as a responsible Pacific citizen, concerned with how political conflicts in the Pacific have been represented and as a way of serving justice to West Papua whose political conflict has continued to be unnoticed by many mainstream media organisations. This project may not make it into mainstream media but if it makes it into the hands of a few people it's a start to recognition of these issues happening right in our backyard.

Pacific Studies is an inter-disciplinary field that incorporates different subjects into its discipline. Terrence Wesley-Smith (1995) divided Pacific Studies into three rationales, the pragmatic rationale, laboratory rationale and the empowerment rationale and reflects on their implications in the field of Pacific Studies. The pragmatic rationale refers to the influence of countries such as the United States of America, Australia and New Zealand and their “pragmatic need to know about the Pacific Islands places with which the metropolitan countries have to deal” (Wesley-Smith, 1995:117). The laboratory rationale concerns the Pacific and Pacific peoples as ideal and unique scientific research objects and areas in acquiring a greater insight into other fields of discipline ranging from Political Science to Human Biology (Wesley-Smith, 1995). The empowerment rationale applies to Pacific Islanders being in total control over Pacific Studies, as a way of stepping out of the shadows of dominant Western views (Wesley-Smith, 1995). These rationales provide the Pacific Studies frame which will be referred to in what frame academic writers in *Pacific Journalism Review* are writing from in their articles.

Melanesia comprises of West Papua, Papua New Guinea (both of which are on the same island), Fiji, the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and New Caledonia with the term deriving from the Greek *melas* meaning black and *nesoi* denoting islands in reference to the dark skin of the natives (Encyclopaedia Britannica 2013).

Melanesia was associated with witchcraft, head-hunting, cannibalism and constant warfare in the past with retribution for killings or injuries of village members from another village being the main cause behind the conflicts (Howe et al, 1994).

Melanesia’s connection with violence was further stressed in Methodist missionary newsletters from Wesleyan Methodist missionaries such as James Watkin, who represented Fiji in a violent and primitive manner as a raising appeal to send more missionaries to Fiji to save Fijians from heathenism (Dinnen & Ley, 2000). Missionaries who had also travelled to Papua New Guinea with Fijian missionaries and Vanuatu found it more difficult in converting Papua New Guineans and Vanuatu people to Christianity because their communities were more isolated compared to Fijian villages. A group of Fijian missionaries who

joined the European missionaries on the crusade in Papua New Guinea were killed by Papua New Guineans but hailed as martyrs by the European missionaries (Dinnen & Ley, 2000). The representations of how Papua New Guineans were viewed by Methodist missionaries were categorised as being wild and relentlessly ready for warfare before being converted to Christianity (Dinnen & Ley, 2000). European missionaries' depictions of Melanesians provided a bias view where the European missionaries were writing through Eurocentric lenses, seen through their praise and criticisms of Fijian missionaries (Dinnen & Ley, 2000). From these representations of how some communities of Melanesians were viewed seem to have had a lasting effect on the ways political conflicts particularly in Fiji, have been represented and framed through mainstream media where Eurocentric views from the past still dominate news media in this present era.

The ways in which the media has represented what audiences watch, read and listen to in news reports over events in the Pacific has been of personal interest, particularly during my undergraduate study where I majored in Media Studies and Pacific Studies at Victoria University. What has been striking is the relationship between media and the audiences, especially what the media produce for audience consumption as well as what and how audiences decode what the media has presented to them. Pierre Bourdieu's theory of cultural production demonstrates audiences understanding of what they consume from the media through a meaning-making process (Louw, 2001). Louw explains the procedure of the media as encoders who present the information to the audience who decode what has been depicted from the media, interpreting the information in distinct ways (Louw, 2001). Audiences decipher what has been encoded in news coverage with pre-existing preconceptions, frames of reference and beliefs which can make the meaning-making process as prejudiced as what the media has encoded for audience consumption (Louw, 2001). The roles that both the media and audiences assume in the meaning-making process play an important part in how political conflicts in the Pacific are being represented by the media, in what ways audiences interpret these events with their own pre-existing presumptions and

framings on West Papua and Fiji and whether those factors affect their understanding of Fiji and West Papua's political conflicts.

Media organisations also incorporate their own pre-existing beliefs and opinions. (Harrison, 2007). Harrison (2007) explains of news media organisations being ideological in having the ability to delineate a world view that advocates their specific values and interests through controlling what audiences see, making it appear to be common sense or apparent. The influence of media organisations upon the audience is also felt by journalists, with the example of first Pacific Issues Correspondent for Radio New Zealand Richard Pamatatau. (Pamatatau, 2012). Pamatatau recalls his experience of being a journalist of Pacific descent in an organisation where preconceptions of beliefs, values and stereotypes of how Pacific people were to be represented or categorised in news reports often contrasted in either a light-hearted and cultural way or in a burdensome and negative light (Pamatatau, 2012). Pamatatau also recollects the expectations required of him as a correspondent from the organisation and his Pakeha colleagues in focusing on Pacific issues that conformed to stereotypes of the Pacific and Pacific people in mainstream media (Pamatatau, 2012). In Hanusch's article that compared coverage of international and Pacific news in *The Australian* and *The Fiji Times* publications it was concluded that both newspapers' coverage on Pacific news were insufficient (Hanusch, 2003). It was also found that *The Fiji Times* covered more foreign news on developing countries in the Pacific than *The Australian* but due to *The Fiji Times* reliance on Western news agencies, the news reports were more negative than *The Australian* (Hanusch, 2003). This all relates to how Western media organisations have the power over what, how and if political tensions in Fiji and West Papua are being presented in mainstream media and whether it is represented in a way that corresponds with Eurocentric views, especially as the countries are Melanesian and carry labels that were placed on them during the enlightenment era.

In mainstream media there is also the notion in news that if it “bleeds it leads” (Carter & Weaver, 2003). News of violence, political conflicts and war are seen as authentic journalism as Carter and Weaver state “truth is violence, reality is war, news is conflict...Journalism is combat” (Carter & Weaver, 2003: 21). Carter and Weaver (2003) further analyse the importance of reporting violence in Western journalism, done in a way where violence is represented in a certain way to the audience that concealed realities of fatalities and devastation to not provoke audiences question factors behind the conflict. This links with the political conflicts with West Papua and Fiji which will be further analysed in the comparative sections where simple reporting on the conflict was focused on, not considering the background story or factors that led to the political coups which were complex. The idea that ‘bad news sells’ in Western journalism where the conflicts are focused on but not the solution will also be reviewed through the *Pacific Journalism Review*, particularly how Western models of journalism has effected how political tensions in Fiji and West Papua have been portrayed in the media.

Chapter Two: Analysis on Pacific Journalism Review Articles on Fiji

This chapter will be reviewing literature on Media Studies exploring issues of the Fiji coups published from the year 2000 onwards. Political conflicts leading to these coups have been investigated through articles from the perspectives of Media Studies scholars, particularly on coverage of the two coup d'états in Fiji since 2000 and the way the events have been represented in the media. Media Studies scholars have taken different approaches in exploring Fiji's political upheavals but common themes have been found in their articles which will be discussed. Fiji's political conflicts began in 1987 where Major-General Sitiveni Rabuka overthrew the government headed by Prime Minister Timoci Bavadra and

his caucus, the Fiji Labour Party, due to racial tensions between Indigenous Fijians and Indo-Fijians. Two coups were staged in 1987, first in May then again in October (Prakash & Singh, 2006). The next coup, led (at least in public) by failed entrepreneur George Speight was held in May 2000, overthrowing the government of Prime Minister Mahendra Chaudhry who was also the leader of the Fiji Labour Party-again racial tensions were cited (Gounder, 2000). The most recent coup was organised and led by Commodore Frank Bainimarama in December 2006, following military unrest and political tensions with Prime Minister Laisenia Qarase. Bainimarama and the military placed Qarase under house arrest, removing him and the government from power after Qarase unsuccessfully tried to dismiss Bainimarama from his position in the military as commander (Durutalo, 2007)

Literatures that was reviewed was all taken from the year 2000 and onwards, as there was more literature on these political conflicts compared to academic articles written before the year 2000. It would also be more pertinent as there was more coverage, reports and analysis on recent political coups in Fiji. The *Pacific Journalism Review* was used in sourcing the literature through the Te Waharoa database in the VUW Library. The *Pacific Journalism Review* was where all academic media articles were found, providing the base in presenting articles from the perspectives of Media Studies scholars and journalists. From their views they explained the situation of the political conflicts in Fiji; how they perceived it and the implications it had or currently has for the media and media coverage on these political tensions. The military have played major roles in both of the coups where they have been behind both George Speight and Frank Bainimarama. The relationship between the military, police and the interim governments over the past two coups are analysed, particularly their stance on news media in Fiji and how each of the interim governments have dealt with the media during and after the coups.

Media freedom is a term that is regularly seen in the literature from *Pacific Journalism Review* on Fiji's coup d'états (Perrottet & Robie, 2011; Singh, 2012). Pacific media freedom has been an ongoing issue in Fiji, which has been observed in the articles from the coups in 2000 and 2006, where restrictions have been placed on media companies on what is allowed to be presented in the media and what is not. As opposed to the 1987 coup where Sitiveni Rabuka and his regime cracked down on media freedom in the Pacific (International Federation of Journalists, 1990) George Speight had taken advantage of the media. Articles that reflect on Speight's regular press conferences saw it as a way of publicising himself in the coup d'état (Field, 2001; Moala, 2001). In Pareti's article about the coup in 2000 stated "George Speight was a media person's dream" (Pareti, 2001: 35). Speight's knowledge of the value of the media was a way of spreading his perspectives about the coup and the accessibility journalists had to Speight was also maintained with the military (Pareti, 2001). Although Speight had welcomed journalists into parliament, there was still a threat to those who spoke out or broadcast opposing views on Speight and his coup, and these threats were met with abuse both physically, verbally and perhaps even mentally; with the Fiji Television station being damaged, the assault on some journalists by supporters of Speight and verbal insults against radio reporters (Moala, 2001; Ofotalau, 2001).

Rather than follow Speight's lead, Bainimarama emulated Rabuka in restricting media freedom in Fiji. In the aftermath of Frank Bainimarama's coup, decrees were passed to shutdown media freedom in Fiji (Singh, 2012). In April 2009, after the Fiji Court of Appeal ruling had decided that the post-coup temporary government was unlawful, Fiji's President at the time Ratu Josefa Iloilo annulled Fiji's 1997 constitution, removing all judicial officers and reinstated Bainimarama as Fiji's Prime Minister (Singh, 2012). What followed after Bainimarama's reappointment was the Public Emergency Regulations (PER) legislation that gave authority to the Permanent Secretary of Information over all news media in Fiji, and government censor admissions to all Fiji newsrooms to assess the news before being disseminated to the public (Singh, 2012). With the military in control the Public Emergency Regulations was removed but replaced by a legislation almost

parallel to PER and named the Public Order (Amendment) Decree 2012 only two days after (Singh, 2012). This decree provided police with unlimited powers to use force that included firearms to separate any meeting that was deemed a threat to public safety (Singh, 2012). This contributed to the suppression of media freedom in Fiji as police intimidated journalists in their position of authority.

Censorship over what news was shown and what was not during and after the 2006 coup were also analysed. Concerns over media ownership from Bainimarama's government were put into action after the 2006 coup. In June 2010 Bainimarama's regime announced the Media Development Decree which limited foreign ownership of the press to no more than ten percent of ownership, specifically targeting *Fiji Times* as it was against Bainimarama's interim government (Perrottet & Robie, 2011). *Fiji Times*, which was formerly under one of the branches of Rupert Murdoch's company News Corporation, was sold to the Motibhai group, a major Fiji trading company (Perrottet & Robie, 2011). Under the guidance of Australian former *Times* publisher Dallas Swinstead, the *Fiji Times* was to be published compliantly to the interim governments standards to maintain the business of the newspaper (Perrot & Robie, 2011). By restricting foreign ownership over news media it enforced censorship, leading to self-censorship where the local news media began removing or editing stories that would be critical of Bainimarama's regime or seen as too political (Hooper, 2013).

Penalties for presenting or voicing a critical stance against the interim government included being imprisoned, being fired from their occupation or being interrogated by the military (Hooper, 2013). The result of restricting what news media could present and self-censorship led to poor quality news, where news media in Fiji reported on weaker stories, emphasising on sports and the weather with the *Fiji Sun* newspaper, and writing positive stories on the Bainimarama's interim government (Hooper, 2013). The budding relationship Bainimarama's interim government has with China and Russia was also of concern to Hopper due to the power and influence they would have on Fiji, especially in media and higher

education where their dominance may further effect censorship and self-censorship in Fiji (Hooper, 2013). This was starting to be seen through top Fiji television news reporters being sent to Beijing for meetings with Chinese government officials where they were also treated to trips in other Chinese cities whilst being entertained. The reporters saw the deception behind it, yet they enjoyed the pampering they received (Hooper, 2013).

The issue of local and foreign coverage over Fiji's coups and who was more reliable were also explored in *Pacific Journalism Review* articles. Mason analysed how Australian media had covered the Pacific, examining what the news media chose to present using coverage on coups and conflicts in the Pacific. According to Mason "essentially, the Australian media is only interested in covering the Pacific if it involves a coup, conflict or a natural disaster" (Mason, 2001: 57). Journalist play a vital role in the Pacific media and in which has impacted on the way the Pacific is represented. Foreign correspondents are usually based in the Pacific where they live and work in the communities they write about, dedicated to the future of the Pacific (Mason, 2001). Commercial television and sensationalist newspapers are known to use a certain style of reporting termed "parachute journalists" (Mason, 2001: 59). Parachute journalists, who may have no background knowledge on the country they are travelling to, stopover where the conflict is happening, carry out reports on the events and leave once the conflict has ended (Mason, 2001). This links to Field's article on the foreign journalists who have no knowledge of Fiji and were suddenly thrust into the country to report on Speight's coup, becoming the participants rather than the observers of the coup d'état (Field, 2001). The journalists covering Speight's coup in Fiji suffered from Stockholm syndrome where they sympathised with George Speight, becoming a part of Speight's propaganda (Field, 2001; Prakash & Singh, 2006). Their involvement affected coverage of the coup as they had become the story rather than the writers.

Tupuelueu (2001) scrutinised the relationship between the police and the local reporters in being too close, especially on local media coverage regarding the murder of Fiji Red Cross director John Morris Scott and his partner Gregory Scrivener's (Tupuelueu, 2001). John Scott, who played a major role in assisting the hostages during Speight's coup, was found hacked to death with his partner, Gregory Scrivener in Fiji. Tupuelueu's analysis questioned the media's perspective on the event, the imbalance in its reports and how they reported it in a way that coincided with police commissioner Isikia Savua's comment on John Scott and his partner's lifestyle choice of being in a homosexual relationship as the reason for their deaths. The suggestion that John Scott was killed because of his role in the coup was quashed swiftly by police as it would bring forth possible political reasons for the deaths of Scott and Scrivener (Tupuelueu, 2001). There was also the issue of local reporters allowing spokespeople from Speight's camp to report on the situation of the conflict on the radio, using that time to also make a plea to indigenous Fijians to support their cause (Ofotalau, 2001). Parachute journalists were also a concern from the Pacific International News Association (PINA) who was alarmed about some of the coverage the coup was receiving from the foreign press (Ofotalau, 2001). The lack of knowledge in the complexity of Fiji's political past, history and not carrying out sufficient research on Fiji's crisis led to coverage that was simple and shallow (Ofotalau, 2001).

Racial tensions between Indigenous Fijians and Indo-Fijians seen as the cause of both of the coups this century as well as how the political conflicts were presented in the news media (Duncan, 2002; O'Callaghan, 2001; Moala, 2001; Ofotalau, 2001; Prakash & Singh, 2006). The divide between indigenous Fijian reporters and Indo-Fijian reporters was seen as a hostile situation stirred up by tense emotions where it was difficult for the reporters to keep an objective approach (Moala, 2001). It was also challenging with journalists reporting on politics in their own country as it is tied in with cultural loyalties as opposed to foreign reporters with no connection to the country (Moala, 2001). The *Daily Post* newspaper, partially owned by the government of Fiji placed stern rules when reporting on the situation; not giving Speight and his supporters too much

publicity through photos, regularly rotating reporters to avoid them getting involved in Speight's propaganda and using terms such as terrorists and leader of the kidnappers that denounced Speight and his men (Moala, 2001). The *Daily Post* focused on the effects of the coup on the people and the economy rather than focusing on the crisis. They were quickly banned from parliament, with Moala stating how important it is not to get personally involved in politics (Moala, 2001).

This differed to Duncan's perspective on Fiji's newspapers coverage of the coups. The *Fiji Times* and the *Daily Post* were comparatively analysed, paying attention to the perspectives of indigenous Fijian editors and their editorials on coup in 2000. What Duncan gathered from both newspapers was the colonial legacy of Fijian chiefs being the "rightful rulers of Fiji" (Duncan, 2002:10). The publications shared more similarities than differences in their opinions of the coup where editors found it necessary for the Fijian interests to be protected without considering the effect on the Indo-Fijian community. The friction between the Indo-Fijian community and Indigenous Fijians were cited but there was no indication of tensions between social classes within the Indigenous Fijian community (Duncan, 2002). It also did not look at the historical, social and economic factors that contributed to this coup, rather focusing the blame on George Speight (Duncan, 2001). The media also played a part in causing the lack of understanding with Fiji's 1997 constitution which was thrown out by Speight, instead paying attention to the debate on the constitution (O'Callaghan, 2001). It was also for the purpose of protecting indigenous interests that the media ignored clarifying the constitution (O'Callaghan, 2001). What may have played a part along the grounds of Speight's coup were the tensions between the Chaundry government and the local media, where Chaundry had accused the *Fiji Times* of emboldening treason, which led to *Fiji Times* reports portraying Chaundry's government in a negative way (O'Callaghan, 2001).

Supremacy of indigenous rights and racial conflicts as being the cause of the coup in 2000 were also seen as one-dimensional motives (Ofotalau, 2001). Indigenous Fijians, particularly those of the working-class were influenced by campaigners against Chaundry's government, feeding into the idea of losing everything to the Chaundry government if they were to be kept in power (Ofotalau, 2001). This covered the underlying reason of people wanting to have authority through unlawful means by removing the constitution and instigating a new system of government, using indigenous rights as a facade for their own agendas (Ofotalau, 2001). Frictions within the military caused during the 2000 coup separated the soldiers into two groups. The first were termed the "professional soldiers" whom under commander Commodore Bainimarama believed the military should not get involved in politics (Bohane, 2001). The other group of soldiers were named the "politicals" who wanted to safeguard the pre-eminence of indigenous rights (Bohane, 2001). With the military being made up of 98 percent indigenous Fijians, the aspiration of wanting Fiji to be led only by an indigenous Fijian prime minister in order to have more control over land leases had caused many of the soldiers to be undecided about being one of the "politicals" or one of the "professional" soldiers (Bohane, 2001).

Underlying reasons behind the coups not being presented by journalists was also due to the pressures and struggles faced in the newsrooms in Fiji. Newsrooms and newspapers found it difficult implementing investigative journalism in their news due to time constraints, lack of funding and being understaffed (Singh, 2012). There were also concerns over carrying out investigations that would uncover nothing, depending on current stories that were more dependable, as well as the backlash media organisations would receive from the government exposing corruption and bribery (Singh, 2012). The backfiring effect is a term used for punitive actions taken against media organisations and journalists by the military on any investigations they carry out on parties in or close to the government (Singh, 2012). Through legislations such as the Fiji Development Decree, journalists could be jailed or fined heavily for refusing to name confidential sources as a way of endorsing anti-whistleblowing in the news media (Singh,

2012). It was also placed as a way of removing any information on government corruption and bribery (Singh, 2012).

In spite of concerns over investigative journalism in Fiji, the media has still managed to expose some major scandals, such as the National Bank of Fiji loan scams in the 1990s and Mahendra Chaundry's US\$1 million undeclared bank funds in different Australian accounts in 2008 (Singh, 2012). Monthly magazines in Fiji such as *Mai Life* and *The Review* (no longer in publication) when compared with newspapers had an advantage in reporting investigative journalism as magazines were cheaper to produce and had more time to carry out their enquiries (Singh, 2012). Collaborating with other news media organisations was a way forward in investigative journalism, which was seen with *The Review* and *Fiji Times* working together in exposing the National Bank scandal to reach out to a wider audience (Singh, 2012). This relates with Morton's article discussing the greater impact of disseminating news through collaboration with different media organisations that would be accessible to more people (Morton, 2013). Media companies and journalists do not usually follow a story that has been reported by another and are not known to share stories but the need for collaboration in investigative journalism to reach a broader audience in exposing corruption is a necessity at such difficult times (Morton, 2013; Singh, 2012).

A need for change in a paradigm shift was seen with journalism in the Pacific, particularly for issues of conflict in the Pacific (Singh, 2013; Robie, 2013). As Western models of journalism and news values have been used in the Pacific, it has not always been well suited to a local Pacific context. Singh argues for a new model of journalism to be followed under the paradigm named responsible conflict reporting when carrying out journalism on conflict in the Pacific (Singh, 2013). Responsible conflict reporting is informed by conflict resolution, peace-building, peace journalism and development journalism, themes of the framework that go further than the Western model of journalism that focuses on the conflict and violence from it (Singh, 2013). These themes focus on ways of understanding

the background of the conflict; it is also a way of viewing the underlying reasons of conflict and exploring peaceful ways of solving the tensions, giving a voice to the non-elite sources and those who disapprove of the violence in the conflict (Singh, 2013). Robie analyses news values models, comparing the Western approach with alternative models such as deliberative and development journalism. Development journalism focuses on analysing “post-colonial national development” (Robie, 2013: 100) whereas deliberative journalism emphasises on exploring alternatives and solutions to the tensions as well as exposing the truth and critiquing the governments and institutions (Robie, 2013). Both are linked with responsible conflict reporting that would be better suited to reporting on issues in the Pacific as opposed to following Western models which rely heavily on elite sources rather than sources from the grassroots community (Robie, 2013).

The coverage over the coups in the years 2000 and 2006 has been represented by media negatively. Through the articles from the *Pacific Journalism Review* the issues of media freedom in Fiji, censorship, local and foreign coverage over the conflicts and following Western models of journalism and news values have all been factors to the ways the coups have been represented in the media. The roles of the government, military and the police have likewise had an effect on news media and reporting in Fiji. The relationship between the government and the military has been vital in restricting media freedom, encouraging censorship and self-censorship through their power over legislations on the media. Using racial tensions as a cover-up for the cause of the political conflicts was also analysed where the articles delved into the fundamental reasons behind the coups that were not reported by media. A step forward in how political conflicts should be presented in combatting simple reporting on conflicts was seen with Robie (2013) and Singh (2013) in adapting alternative approaches to journalism in the Pacific, centring on possible solutions rather than the problems. Robie and Singh’s models are more appropriate methods into how news media in Fiji should report on political conflicts and in exposing corruption in the government and institutions of Fiji. The need for more collaboration amongst Fiji media organisations in

following each other's stories was discussed as working collectively, creating reports that have more of an impact in reaching a wider audience (Singh, 2012).

Chapter Three: Analysis of Pacific Journalism Review Articles on West Papua

In this next segment I will be analysing Media Studies literature on the political conflict in West Papua, delving into articles published from the year 2000. Literature was also obtained from the *Pacific Journalism Review* through Te Waharoa database where articles on West Papua's conflict from Media Studies perspectives were located. West Papua was initially under the control of the Dutch, named as the Netherlands East Indies Government. Although Indonesia considered West Papua to be under their rule, the Netherlands pursued to have West Papua identified as a South Pacific territory in 1947 within the South Pacific Commission. West Papua's struggle against Indonesia for independence began after the Dutch placed West Papua under the United Nation's Temporary Executive Authority (UNTEA) in 1962 in the belief that an act of self-determination would be conducted by West Papua under Indonesia's administrative control (Browne, S: 1998). In 1969 a referendum 'Act of Free Choice' was held by the Indonesian president Major-General Suharto where 1,022 chosen representatives elected for West Papua to become a part of the Indonesian Republic. In spite of reports from foreign journalists and a United Nations representative of bribery, intimidation and subjugation on the elected delegates it received little international attention and West Papua officially became a part of Indonesia (Browne, S: 1998).

Indonesia's sovereignty over West Papua was enforced through restrictions on foreign journalists entering West Papua to conduct their reporting (Leadbeater, 2008; Matbob & Papoutski, 2006). The limitations foreign journalists have faced,

has effectively kept the conflict that West Papua has with Indonesia silent from international media coverage, with local reports on West Papua also being constrained due to the ownership of local West Papua newspapers under the Indonesian army, security forces and politicians (Matbob & Papoutski, 2006). The processes for journalists requesting a visa into West Papua have to undergo a lengthy administrative process from the Ministry of Information (Perrottet & Robie, 2011). Even then, foreign journalists who have applied for visas to go in to West Papua are usually denied by the Indonesian government whereas journalists who are given permission to enter West Papua are intimidated by the Indonesian military and closely monitored (Matbob & Papoutski, 2006). Intimidation taken to the extreme has resulted in two deaths, five abductions, eight assaults and two police arrests found in the media freedom report statistics in 2011 (Perrottet & Robie, 2011). This has also been a deterrent to foreign journalists especially the unexplained deaths of journalists, seen with the case of Mark Worth, an Australian journalist born in Papua New Guinea whose death came two days after the announcement of his documentary *Land of the Morning Star*, about West Papua's history and conflict (Matbob & Papoutski, 2006).

The Indonesian military and government work closely together, placing restrictions not only on journalists but also on the work of non-governmental organisations and international human rights workers due to continual reports of human rights breaches by the Indonesian military and police (Perrottet & Robie, 2011). West Papuan and Indonesian journalists have also had to deal with the company of Indonesian intelligence officers in their newsrooms, editing their news items and issuing out propaganda (Perrottet & Robie, 2011). The relationship between the Indonesian administration, police and military has exuded more control over media in West Papua where Indonesian media prevails over local media (Perrottet & Robie, 2011). Local and foreign journalists who report on West Papuan issues are accused of supporting the separatism movement of West Papua, which has resulted in violent attacks and threats against journalists and human rights workers from the Indonesian police and military (Perrottet & Robie, 2011). The military and police in Indonesia have been able to conceal their

brutality against journalists, choosing not to identify the attackers of journalists who have been assaulted and refusing further investigations into suspicious deaths of journalists (Perrottet & Robie, 2011).

Matbob and Papoutski's article analyses coverage over West Papua in Papua New Guinea newspapers, carrying out a comparative content investigation on three major publications in the time periods of 1984 and 2006, analysing how often and in what manner West Papua received attention on their conflict and issues they have been faced with (Matbob & Papoutski, 2006). The analysis uncovered the diminishing pattern on reports about West Papua, where there were 133 reports on West Papua in 1984 compared with 70 stories and two photo stories that were the only news to reach the front page in 2006 (Matbob & Papoutski, 2006). The sources used in the news stories indicated the reliance on elite sources for information (Matbob & Papoutski, 2006). Although elite sources were relied on in 1984, they were from the Papua New Guinea government, Indonesian government and Papua New Guinea organisations (Matbob & Papoutski, 2006). Elite sources in the period of 2006 relied on the Indonesian government officials followed by the Australian government and the Papua New Guinea government and organisations, there were also West Papuan sources but in both periods were not as dominant as those in power or associated with an organisation (Matbob & Papoutski, 2006). This relates to an article from Mason (2007) who refers to the use of elite sources in journalism stating "the sources need to have authority. If a news story is to remain objective, every statement needs to be attributed to somebody and preferably somebody in authority" (Mason, 2007:109). Mason (2007) further explains of the dependence journalists have on authorities to tell the story to make the news report credible.

The change in relationships between Indonesia, Australia, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea has affected the political conflict in West Papua as well as international coverage on West Papua's tensions (Leadbeater, 2008; Matbob & Papoutski, 2006). Leadbeater discusses Indonesia's shifting relationship with New

Zealand, from rebuilding their liaison with Indonesia after a volatile period during the Indonesian military's violent backlash of East Timor's independence from Indonesia, to New Zealand accepting the 2001 Special Autonomy legislation for West Papua as they perceived it to be "the best route to a peaceful solution in Papua" (Leadbeater, 2008: 172). New Zealand's mutual relationship with Indonesia, supporting their movement against the separatism of West Papua has also affected coverage on West Papua's conflict in New Zealand, with mainstream media in New Zealand overlooking the important issues West Papua are faced with by not reporting on them (Leadbeater, 2008). The exception to this has been Radio NZ which Zweifel (2010) states is not a public broadcaster driven by commercialism or ratings. Zweifel explains the difficulties with reporting on West Papua are the verification of information they receive usually through email, but they still make a concerted effort to report on West Papua's conflict (Zweifel, 2010).

The relationship Indonesia has with Australia and Papua New Guinea has also influenced how West Papua's tensions and issues with Indonesia have been represented (Matbob & Papoutski, 2006). Papua New Guinea media's reliance on international news agencies for reports on West Papua and the dependency on elite sources from Indonesia, Australia and Papua New Guinea are due to their diplomatic relationship and has shaped how West Papua is viewed in the news from people in positions of power, preferring not to refer to West Papuan sources as greatly or using West Papuan refugees or their representatives (Matbob & Papoutski, 2006). Western news values being followed by Papua New Guinea media on interesting activities currently happening and the dependency on authority figures for information particularly from Indonesia and Australia showed their power as well as the influence of Indonesia on Papua New Guinea's coverage over West Papua. Papua New Guinea's association with Indonesia through joint agreements benefitting Papua New Guinean journalists and organisations have led to more positive reports on Indonesia (Matbob & Papoutski, 2006). There has also been caution on coverage West Papuans receive from Papua New Guinea media, using safe terms in describing West Papuans who

have fled to Papua New Guinea and Australia to ensure that it would not attract international attention or awareness from the United Nations refugee agency (Matbob & Papoutski, 2006). In 2007 Australia signed the Lombok treaty with Indonesia as a covenant of their pledge to the principals and values of the United Nations, furthermore vowing to not interfere in each other's internal affairs (Davies, 2012).

The outcome in diplomatic agreements between Indonesia, Australia and New Zealand as well as Indonesia's influence over Papua New Guinea has resulted in West Papua being ignored by international media (Leadbeater, 2008). Different factors have aided the cause of West Papua's conflict remaining silent in mainstream media, with the Lombok treaty signed between Indonesia and Australia; West Papua is underrepresented in Australian media as Australia advocates Indonesia's regime and also has mining companies in West Papua (Davies, 2012). New Zealand is in a similar position to Australia, placing their bureaucratic relationship with Indonesia above West Papua and supporting Indonesia on keeping West Papua under Indonesian territory; hoping for a democratically stable and united Indonesia, although it depended on how tensions with West Papua were dealt with by the Indonesian government and military (Leadbeater, 2008). New Zealand journalists have not entered West Papua to come across its conflicts, while New Zealand ambassadors have made regular trips to West Papua to supervise aid projects and a training programme tailored for West Papuan police in community policing and conflict resolution (Leadbeater, 2008). Papua New Guinea also share a bilateral relationship with Indonesia, signing a Treaty of Mutual Respect, Friendship and Cooperation in 1986 with Papua New Guinea's current Prime Minister Sir Michael Somare, who once was a former critic of Indonesia's regime later becoming a comrade of Indonesia (Matbob & Papoutski, 2006).

A significant proportion of the attention that West Papua has received from foreign media has been as a primitive country in travel journalism (Pettersson,

2013). Petersson (2013) analyses how West Papua has been portrayed in the Swedish media from 1959-2009, examining articles on West Papua. Reports and news items on West Papua from the Swedish media have been based on West Papua as a primitive country and people and as a tourist attraction, focusing on West Papua's supposed primeval ways of living (Petersson, 2013). Indonesia had allowed limited access for foreigners into West Papua in 1976 to broadcast Indonesia as a nation stable in its democracy to a global audience (Petersson, 2013). Baliem Valley, located in the Papuan highlands was a popular tourist attraction that became the focus of news items in Swedish publications, seen as an area untouched by civilisation by Swedish media until Baliem Valley experienced social and political changes (Petersson, 2013). The attention was then turned to the Korowai and Kombai communities known as the 'tree house people' whose way of living was again of fascination to Swedish and other foreign media, becoming popular with international media (Petersson, 2013). The Swedish media's captivation of West Papua, concentrating their coverage on areas of West Papua deemed to be primitive or untouched was seen as a priority and an enormous task reporting on in travel journalism (Petersson, 2013).

West Papuans were represented in foreign and Swedish media in certain ways in regards to both conflict and in tourism journalism. The findings on constructions of West Papuans in the media were categorised into four frames of primitive representations: viewing West Papuans as threatening and destructive, as victims, as estimable and as fixed and timeless people with the first two categories placed under foreign journalism and the other classifications placed below travel journalism (Petersson, 2013); West Papuans labelled as victims in the media relates to Leadbeater mentioning academics' consideration of the existence of West Papuans being in danger due to the increasing effects of poverty, disease, unrestrained migration and loss of life-sustaining forests (Leadbeater, 2008). This also links with Howe's notion of the fatal impact theory conjured by historians in the eighteenth century who believed that Pacific populations faced extinction due to the impacts of European contact (Howe, 1977). And the reiteration in Petersson's article about the power of elite sources who give their comments to

conserve their own economic and political interests in West Papua through utilising the foreign media to present West Papua or West Papua's conflict in a particular way (Petersson, 2013).

The framing of West Papua by the Swedish and foreign press explores the concept of frames, with the term being defined as "organising principles that are socially shared and persistent over time, that work symbolically to meaningfully structure the social world" (Petersson, 2013:189). The history behind initial contact between Europeans and Africans who were viewed as primitives where West Papua was grouped with, has maintained the frame of primitiveness in travel journalism (Petersson, 2013). Different travel pieces have reflected each other in exploring West Papua, strengthening historic frames on perceptions of Africans onto West Papuans recreating the epic concept of a civilised European meeting a primeval African in a dramatic way (Petersson, 2013). The frames that have been constructed historically has influenced over time what is shown through the media, particularly international media's coverage of West Papua, emphasising on the country and the people as unchanging through travel journalism yet ignoring West Papua's conflict for independence (Leadbeater, 2008; Petersson, 2013). The agenda of journalism in when, what, how and if they choose to report on West Papua's conflict is connected to the categorical frames West Papuans are placed in with foreign and Swedish media presenting contrasting representations of West Papuans as timeless and fascinating in tourism or as dangerous and a problem in West Papua's tensions (Petersson, 2013).

There has been an emergence of indigenous West Papuan independent media organisations reporting on West Papuan matters (Davies, 2012; Perrottet & Robie; 2006). Davies (2012) focuses on West Papua Media (WPM) an organisation established in 2007 by four former human rights workers that provides ground-breaking news service exposing the abuse of human rights in West Papua, done in response to the struggles mainstream media was confronted with regarding verification of sources in their reports on West Papua. Local journalists are trained

in eye witnessing reporting for credible sources mainstream media to use, following the model of citizen journalism that involves sharing opinion, investigative reporting, networked journalism as well as eye witness reporting which all contributes towards providing in-depth and comprehensive reports (Davies, 2012). Strict procedures are followed to ensure the safety of local journalists gathering the information from the military and police; at times it also means disguising or not revealing the identity of the sources to protect both the witness and the journalist (Davies, 2012). This resonates with Bennett et al (2010) who along with other New Zealand journalists describe their experiences in reporting in conflicts and the risks they encounter personally and in the area of tension they report in, as well as the need for the safety of journalists to be taken more seriously (Bennett et al, 2010).

New technologies as well as social media are seen as platforms for sharing and spreading information about West Papua's conflict (Davies, 2012; Perrottet & Robie, 2006). West Papua Media has its own website, furthermore using Twitter and Facebook to send out links to their content and as a way of sharing their matters with others (Davies, 2012). The use of technologies and social media has played an important part in the rise of citizen journalism where citizens are active participants in sharing and disseminating information through media technologies, where footage of brutal tyranny is shown and voices are brought together through social media to push issues forward that have been kept quiet in mainstream media (Davies, 2012). Though technologies have contributed towards making issues known about West Papua, there is always the danger faced by people who take footage of moments of tensions happening without doing so safely, endangering themselves and those with them from Indonesian military and police (Davies, 2012). New technology has also been used as a way of intimidation on journalists and human rights workers by the military, sending SMS texts and leaving threatening voicemail messages for journalists and human rights workers (Perrottet & Robie, 2011).

West Papua suffers the worst case of media freedom in the Pacific (Perrottet & Robie, 2011). The intimidation and violent tactics against journalists from the Indonesian military and police has impacted on the tensions and issues of West Papua being reported in local and international media, with the brutality against journalists resulting in cases of assault, kidnappings and deaths which are not investigated further to put the perpetrators to justice (Perrottet & Robie, 2013). The close relationship between the Indonesian government, military and police in enforcing restrictions on local and foreign media reporting on West Papua as well as restricting access into West Papua particularly for foreign journalists and human rights workers had affected coverage over the conflict of West Papua internationally (Leadbeater, 2008). The reliance journalists have on Indonesian and foreign officials from elite countries to verify their news reports indicates the power of elite countries and sources over what is presented through local and foreign media (Matbob & Papoutski, 2006). The exception to this has been journalists carrying out travel journalism on West Papua shifting their focus on their fascination of West Papuans, using certain frames on West Papuans to highlight aspects of what foreign media deem to be the timeless culture of West Papuans while also promoting Indonesia as a politically stable nation globally (Petersson, 2013). The diplomatic association between Indonesia, Australia, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea has played a major role in West Papua's conflict being ignored internationally (Davies, 2013; Matbob & Papoutski, 2006; Leadbeater, 2008). Treaties that these countries have signed with Indonesia to not interfere with their internal affairs and Australia's involvement with mining companies located in Freeport of West Papua could also be other reasons as to why West Papua's conflict has been obscured by international media (Davies, 2012; Matbob & Papoutski, 2006; Leadbeater, 2008). Though the tensions of West Papua has not been covered adequately by local and international media, an uprising of indigenous West Papuan independent media organisations has been growing steadily using social media and technology to share their news, with the West Papua Media organisation being an example ((Davies, 2012; Perrottet & Robie; 2006). These organisations are cautious and are still faced with the threats and violence from the Indonesian military and police (Davies, 2012).

Chapter Four: Reflection and Conclusion

This chapter will be a personal reflection and analysis on what I have learned from *Pacific Journalism Review* articles on Fiji and West Papua, what Pacific Studies could gather from Media Studies analyses of Fiji and West Papua and what Media Studies could learn from Pacific Studies sources. I will also be comparing the similarities and distinctions between findings from the writings on West Papua and Fiji, exploring what Pacific Studies frame they were using in their articles whether it was the pragmatic, laboratory or empowerment rationale.

Pacific Journalism Review articles on West Papua and Fiji came from separate sets of writers with only David Robie writing articles for both Fiji and West Papua. The authors, who were Media Studies academics, journalists, editors and students from journalism courses and philosophy, came with their own perspectives and research to contribute to creating awareness in media coverage over political conflicts in West Papua and Fiji. What was interesting were that the articles on West Papua came from the perspectives of foreigners with one writer being the closest to West Papua of Papua New Guinea descent. Writers on Fiji's coups were a mix of foreigners, Indo-Fijians and one former Fijian editor Jale Moala. It was noteworthy as there were not many perspectives of Indigenous Fijians, West Papuans or even Indonesians from the articles I reviewed in *Pacific Journalism Review*.

The frames the *Pacific Journalism Review* authors used conformed with Wesley-Smith's pragmatic, laboratory and empowerment rationales. Foreign writers, particularly those writing on West Papua's conflict discuss the relationships between Indonesia, Australia and New Zealand and Indonesia's growing power in signing treaties with Australia and New Zealand so they wouldn't interfere in their tensions with West Papua. Authors focusing on Fiji's political conflicts discuss

the ignorance international journalists from Metropolitan countries carried when entering Fiji to report on Fiji's coup in 2000, which led to sensationalised reports on the coup. The influence of the Australia and New Zealand was seen from articles on West Papua and Fiji and Indonesia's impact on West Papua was also widely analysed in West Papua conflict articles. The laboratory rationale was evident in *Pacific Journalism Review* articles where Fiji and West Papua's political conflicts were made examples of as the worst two cases of media freedom, approaching it from the perspectives of Media Studies, Philosophy and Political Science in understanding the broader outlook of West Papua and Fiji's political tensions. The empowerment rationale was also apparent where a paradigm shift away from Western journalistic models and news values was explored in reporting on political conflict in the Pacific (Singh, 2013). West Papuans who used technology and social media as a way of disseminating information about their situation and the rise of indigenous media organisations also came under the empowerment rationale as a way of West Papuans combatting Indonesia's dominance through social media. Wesley-Smith's Pacific Studies rationales provided a useful frame for understanding these articles.

The similarities that were found in the *Pacific Journalism Review* articles on West Papua and Fiji included the impact the Indonesian government and Fijian interim government had and still currently has upon their media freedom using their militaries to ensure their strict legislations are followed. Censorship over what could be reported and what was disallowed was followed up by government officials in Fiji and intelligence officers in Indonesia checking news reports before publication. Media Studies academics also discussed intimidation tactics of the military in West Papua and Fiji against journalists, where threats and cases of harassment in West Papua and Fiji and even deaths in West Papua were used as a way of instilling fear in journalists that would keep media freedom suppressed. The articles in *Pacific Journalism Review* also discuss legislations made against foreign journalists, local journalists and local news organisations in West Papua and Fiji. Comparative analyses, assessing local and foreign coverage over political conflicts in West Papua and Fiji were examined, using local, well established

publications to compare with foreign publications, looking into the content as well as the context of the reports over the political tensions in Fiji and West Papua. The resemblances in articles over West Papua and Fiji show some of the common features shared by both countries in their political struggles and the overwhelming authority of the government and military over the media in Fiji and West Papua.

What made the political conflicts of Fiji and West Papua distinctive were also discovered through the *Pacific Journalism Review* writing. In both sets of literature there were different factors that led to their respective political conflicts. West Papua's struggle for independence from Indonesia was the main reason behind their political conflict that was discussed in *Pacific Journalism Review* whereas Fiji had multiple underlying reasons of Fijians wanting power in the government and corruption that were placed behind the facade of racial tensions between Indigenous Fijians and Indo-Fijians as the way news media saw the cause of the Fiji's coup whereas the reason behind Bainimarama's coup was not discussed in any of the *Pacific Journalism Review* articles I reviewed. *Pacific Journalism Review* paid attention through Davies' article on the role of new technologies in reporting around West Papua due to the severe media restrictions faced when reporting about West Papua's political tensions with more West Papuan indigenous media organisations being established, yet it was not discussed in articles about Fiji's coups. The reliance on elite sources (Indonesian, Australian and Papua New Guinea officials) to make the news report verifiable were discussed in articles on West Papua in regards to their comments having the power to represent the news report in a particular way for their own interests. The different points from *Pacific Journalism Review* articles on West Papua and Fiji and the different perspectives on Fiji and West Papua's conflicts, though specific all add pieces to the puzzles behind West Papua and Fiji's tensions.

The focus on Indonesia's diplomatic relations with Australia was seen in *Pacific Journalism Review* writings on West Papua's conflict as a possible factor in West Papua not receiving international media coverage whereas Fiji's diplomatic

relationship with other countries such as Russia and China with Bainimarama's current regime were of concern in restricting media freedom in Fiji even further. Investigative journalism in Fiji was also explored in *Pacific Journalism Review* in exposing corruption and bribery among the Fijian government and corporations which was not discussed in articles on West Papua. The focus on West Papua as a timeless and unchanging in the media was explored which affected the way they were represented in the media, framed in Eurocentric categories where they were either portrayed as victims or as savages (Petersson, 2013). Framings on Fijians were not explicitly conferred to

As a Pacific Studies student, I found the Media Studies articles to be useful and enlightening although superficial at times as some articles had a more narrow focus on Media Studies alone. I found this especially with *Pacific Journalism Review* articles regarding Fiji's coup in 2000, placing emphasis on local and foreign media coverage over the event. Articles written about West Papua's political conflicts were very informative and illuminating as they delved into West Papua's history of political tensions with Indonesia, giving readers a comprehensive understanding of West Papua's beginning of instability before focusing on the media perspective. Although Media Studies articles on Fiji could be shallow at times it would be beneficial in having *Pacific Journalism Review* articles read in Pacific Studies courses to encourage more of awareness in media representations of political conflict in Fiji and West Papua. It would also be very important in establishing the realization of how long West Papua's conflict has gone through the years in silence from mainstream media and in analysing the diplomatic relationships between Indonesia and Metropolitan countries.

As a BA in Media Studies graduate, I also found the articles to be informative and valuable and I appreciated the perspectives of Media Studies academics that brought through issues of the media, from media representations of the political conflict to Western journalistic models and news values not always being appropriate in coverage of political conflicts in Fiji and West Papua. Media

Studies should be assigning more *Pacific Journalism Review* articles to their courses to create awareness on media representations of political conflicts in Fiji and West Papua as well and to also see the worst cases of media freedom in the Pacific and the effect that has on news coverage over West Papua and Fiji's political tensions. It would furthermore show Media Studies students alternative approaches that would be more fitting in reporting on political conflicts and other issues in the Pacific, showing experiences of academics and journalists reporting on and in the Pacific as well as letting the students reflect on their positions as consumers of the news and what difference they could make reading the *Pacific Journalism Review* articles.

This exercise has helped in comprehending the reasons why Fiji's coups have received more coverage in mainstream media than in West Papua. Though both countries face harsh restrictions in media freedom, The Indonesian government, military and police's severity on consequences for not following media restrictions has followed in assaults, kidnappings and deaths at the hands of military and police who are able to cover their tracks (Perrottet & Robie, 2013). The close relationship between the present Indonesian government, military and police show a united front over suppressing West Papua's struggle for independence against Indonesia in mainstream media. The enforcement of their authority in the newsrooms of Indonesian mainstream media through restrictions and sending Indonesian intelligence officers into Indonesian newsrooms to monitor their news (Perrottet & Robie, 2011), restricting access into West Papua for journalists (tracking technology of mobile phones belonging to journalists in West Papua (Davies, 2012) and enlisting the services of military and police in dealing with journalists who enter West Papua and Indonesian news organisations as ways of maintaining control over media's silence on West Papua. Although Fiji has similar restrictions what makes the countries distinct are the diplomatic treaties that Australia and New Zealand have signed with Indonesia in not interfering with Indonesia's internal affairs (Matbob & Papoutski, 2006; Leadbeater, 2008). This is also another possible factor in why West Papua

continues to not be receiving as much international coverage from Australia and New Zealand compared to Fiji's political coups.

This research has taken me on a journey to more questions rather than answers regarding media representations of political conflicts in West Papua and Fiji. *Pacific Journalism Review* articles gave a sense of urgency for readers to start asking more questions to foreign governments and media organisations on their roles, though they have the power in taking a stand against abuses of human rights and media freedom in Fiji and West Papua, informing citizens on political conflicts in West Papua and Fiji which has been seen with sanctions against Fijian military officers, there has still been no effort towards bringing West Papua's conflict to the attention of the international community as discussed in *Pacific Journalism Review* articles. Questions raised such as how can we as consumers more responsible in our consumption of news? Why does mainstream media still rely on elite sources for verification in their news reports when they could be bias in their comments? When will mainstream media take a more comprehensive approach to political conflicts in Fiji and West Papua rather than keeping their coverage simple or silent and focusing on political conflicts on the other side of the world?

The need to make political struggles in the Pacific known is imperative especially with the diasporic Pacific communities here in New Zealand. It will not be considered significant though until mainstream media starts making changes to some aspects of their Western journalism models and until we as citizens start questioning what and how media is representing issues of political tensions in Fiji and West Papua it will either remain as partial news coverage through Eurocentric lenses or continue to be swept under the rug. This research has also spurred me into becoming an advocate for media freedom in West Papua and Fiji; this is remarkable since 'media freedom' is, a term I had never heard of until undertaking this project. I hope to raise more awareness on these issues by sharing the knowledge I have learnt through social media, personal communication with

others and hopefully in the future as a Pacific journalist in my own articles. Being a part of the paradigm shift in Western journalism models and news values is a move I would like to contribute to in presenting these political conflicts in appropriate ways that does not focus on the problem but the solution. It has been long overdue for there to be changes but until more awareness is made, the representations of these political conflicts will be stuck in certain ruts, either one that is ignored as it deepens or as one that is carelessly covered up.

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