

UNIVERSITY OF WINCHESTER

**Our Past is Our Future – Indigenous Perspectives on Conflict and
Peacebuilding in West Papua.**

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MA in Reconciliation and Peacebuilding

Faculty of theology and Religious Studies

February 2022

**Independent Study has been completed as a requirement for a higher degree of The
University of Winchester**

The Word Count is: 20,330

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would firstly like to thank all of the participants who took part in interviews, discussions and dialogue, and gave me time and permission to ask questions and learn together. You provided incredible insight and shared deeply personal experiences. Without all of you this process would not have been possible and I hope that the results will be able to contribute to ongoing discussions on peacebuilding in West Papua. Secondly I would like to thank my supervisor, Simon Keyes for his very helpful advice which helped deepen and shape the research process. Finally, a special thanks to my incredible family for giving me space, time and understanding as I worked on my thesis.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of Ibu Lenny Kogoya, a dear friend who spent her life working for peace in her community.

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ABSTRACT

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The people of West Papua have lived within a context of multi-layered, direct and structural violence for over half a century. There has been multiple efforts towards resolving the conflict and building peace and reconciliation between the indigenous Papuans and the Indonesian state but peace has remained unobtainable and the conflict continues to escalate. The aim of this research is to explore why resolving conflict and achieving peace in West Papua has not been successful to date. It particularly focuses on analysing the situation from an indigenous Papuan perspective including: understandings and experiences of violence and conflict; indigenous understandings of peace; efforts and capacities for peacebuilding and traditional practices of conflict resolution; analysis of past peacebuilding initiatives and current proposals; and ways forward to resolve the conflict. The research is situated within the paradigm of adaptive peacebuilding and uses the combined methodology of action based research and secondary information to embed local perspectives within the learning processes and develop proposals for way forward. Findings of the research process showed that peacebuilding in West Papua has been unsuccessful because local indigenous Papuans have not been included and their perspectives on conflict and peace have not been listened to or understood. The research also concluded that the way the conflict is understood, the visions for peace and understandings, inclusion and support of local capacities for peace affects how peacebuilding initiatives are designed and how successful they are. Learning from action research was used to propose next steps for peacebuilding in West Papua based on local solutions and capacities. Finally, it is recommended that local social and political capacities for peace in situations of oppression and structural violence need to be better supported and understood in order to build and sustain peace in the long term.

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1. Introduction

“Peace is not merely a distant goal that we seek but a means by which we arrive at that goal”

Rev. Martin Luther King

West Papua hosts one of the longest and least known conflicts in the world. The incorporation of West Papua into Indonesia in 1969 through a contested referendum is still not accepted by the majority of West Papuans and there has been ongoing armed insurgency as well as an increasing civil resistance movement from the Indigenous West Papuans against the Indonesian State for almost 60 years. This has resulted in a multi-layered, escalating conflict that has withstood all efforts at resolution to date. Over the last few years there have emerged various efforts at resolving the conflict but none have had been able to make any real progress. As we enter 2022 the situation is even more entrenched. West Papuans are intensifying non-violent civil resistance and armed groups are increasing their activity. Meanwhile the government has escalated its security approach while at the same time forcing new decentralisation and autonomy laws which take away power away from the region and are totally rejected by the majority of Papuans.

The main problem that this research will tackle is the lack of progress in achieving peace in West Papua. This paper will argue that in order to transform conflicts, especially complex, multi-layered conflicts where oppression and structural violence are core characteristics, peacebuilding must be localised, ongoing and centred on local capacities to drive peace. It will also put forward the argument that the way the conflict is understood, analysed and experienced as how peace is understood, affects how peacebuilding is designed. Through an action research process and support from various academic sources the paper will argue that current and past peacebuilding initiatives have not succeeded in West Papua as they have not included local perspectives and experiences in conflict analysis or included West Papuans in the design and management of conflict resolution or peacebuilding processes.

The objectives of the action research process were as follows:

1. To examine why there has been no progress in resolving the conflict to date and answer the question of one of the s West Papuan academic who were interviewed – ‘Why can’t West Papua ever achieve peace?’
2. To examine local peacebuilding capacities and perspectives regarding the conflict and peace initiatives.
3. To propose a way forward for peacebuilding in West Papua based on local perspectives and experience of the conflict and peacebuilding efforts.

The research looks at the topic of peacebuilding in West Papua through the lens of adaptive peacebuilding, a theory developed by De Coning (2018), which is informed by concepts of complexity, resilience and local ownership. The theory learns from the experience of failed peacebuilding in the past and argues that for every peacebuilding intervention that is attempted or planned it is not enough to only consider technical considerations but it is also necessary to consider political ramifications of each option. It views peacebuilding as essentially local and political. Within adaptive peacebuilding *“it is essential that the societies and communities that are intended to benefit from a peacebuilding intervention are fully involved in all aspects of the peacebuilding initiative and puts forward that external fixes will not stick if they have not been internalised and it is thus the local adaptation process that is critical for sustainability”* (de Coning, 2018).

The understanding of peacebuilding used by this research process draws on Lederach’s theory of conflict transformation which uses various lenses to understand a conflict situation, looking at the past, the present and the dynamics of relationships in order to build constructive processes for change which reduce violence and increase justice. Lederach defines peacebuilding as *“an array of processes, approaches and stages needed to transform conflict toward more sustainable, peaceful relationships”* (Lederach, 1998). He describes the “goal” of peacebuilding as the *‘generation of continuous, dynamic, self-regenerating processes, composed of ‘a web of people, their relationships and activities, and the social mechanisms necessary to sustain the change sought’.*

The research process also draws on Paffenholz's theory of perpetual peacebuilding which proposes that peacebuilding can take place amidst violence and should be viewed as *"entailing continuous negotiation, and re-negotiations, of the social and political contract of a society and polity, with pathways to peace marked by opportunities, setbacks, catalysts, friction and resistance"* (Paffenholz, 2021). This is vital in a conflict like West Papua where violence is consistent and structural. In terms of the action research approach this has the implication that practitioners and researchers from the 'outside' should no longer focus only on the provision of solutions but focus on facilitating the envisaging of the society which people want to build and help them adapt their approaches accordingly. Peacebuilders should be prepared to ask questions which empower people and organisations to unearth those approaches and strategies which are needed to create pathways to more peaceful inclusive societies (Paffenholz, 2021).

The paper will firstly present the details of the conflict in West Papua in Chapter 2 and then go on to outline the methodology used (Chapter 3) and briefly summarise findings from interviews and discussions (Chapter 4). Chapter 5 will examine and compare different understandings and experiences of the conflict and then look at how different actors analyse root causes and what this means for how they respond to the conflict and try to bring change. Chapter 6 will examine indigenous perspectives on peace, and look at various Papuan visions for peace as well as indigenous traditions for conflict resolution and dialogue which have the potential to be used in peacebuilding processes. Chapter 7 will examine strengths and weaknesses of peacebuilding initiatives and proposals from a Papuan perspective and experience. Finally in Chapter 8 the paper will bring all the learning from the previous chapters together and propose a way forward for peacebuilding in West Papua.

2. West Papua – The Land, The people and its History

The land known as West Papua or Tanah Papua (Land of Papua) is located in the western part of the Island of New Guinea with Papua New Guinea forming the other half (See figure 1). West Papua comprises the two Indonesian provinces of Papua and Papua Barat. It is one of the most biodiverse regions on the planet, rich in natural and mineral resources¹. It is estimated that the island of New Guinea with 0.5% of the world's land mass contains as much as 10% of global biodiversity (Firdaus, 2020; ICP, 2021). There is also incredible ethnic and linguistic diversity among the indigenous population with 276 indigenous tribes, 274 with living languages and two with second languages with no mother-tongue speakers (ICP, 2021). Culturally the Papuans consider themselves Melanesian and have little in common culturally with the rest of Indonesia (MacLeod, 2007). They share common forms of social organisation, leadership and livelihood sources with other Melanesian regions such as Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands (ICP, 2021).



Figure 1: Map showing the region of West Papua

There has been extreme changes in population growth and demographic composition of West Papua since it was incorporated into Indonesia, mainly due to both Indonesian Government driven transmigration programs as well as spontaneous migration. In 1971 the

¹ Largest operators in the mineral sector are the Freeport Gold and Copper Mine in Mimika Regency and the British Petroleum Tangguh Gas exploitation in Bintuni Bay. Foreign investors have also expressed interest in exploiting coal deposits (Firdaus, 2020).

census reported a population of 923,000 inhabitants, consisting of 96% indigenous Papuans and only 4% or 36,000 of non-Papuan descent. By 2010, the population had increased to 3,612,854 people consisting 47.9% indigenous Papuans and 52.1% non-Papuans (Elmslie, 2017). This decrease has led to a serious concern among Papuans and debate around what some authors have argued is an intentional destruction of Indigenous Papuans (Brundige et al., 2004; Ondowame, 2006; Elmslie and Webb-Gannon, 2013). Other have put forward the case that despite the reduction in the representation of the Indigenous population the government is not intentionally setting out to cause harm (ICG, 2006; Anderson, 2015). The inability for international agencies to be able to access the region in order to properly research the situation does not help in clarifying the situation.

The province of Papua remains the poorest province in Indonesia according to the 2020 Human Development Index (BPS, 2020). Forty percent of households live below the poverty line and Indigenous Papuans have the highest maternal and child mortality in the country, the highest rates of illiteracy, and the lowest life expectancy (Anderson, 2015).

It is agreed by the majority of writers and observers of West Papua that the history of how the territory was incorporated into Indonesia is one of the main causes of the current conflict (Chauvel & Bhakti 2004; Kivimäki, 2006; Widjojo et al., 2008; ICTJ & ELSHAM Papua, 2012; ICP, 2021). When the Dutch government recognised Indonesia's independence in 1949 all of the territories of what was the Dutch East Indies, came under Indonesian sovereignty, apart from the territory of Papua. Papua remained under Dutch authority until it was transferred to Indonesian control in 1962 as part of an agreement brokered by the UN, with the requirement that a referendum of self-determination take place in 1969 (Saltford, 2003). The key events and details of what happened during this period are outlined in **Appendix 3**. This is the period when the narration of histories diverge and the exclusion of Papuans from decisions affecting their future is solidified (Tudor, 2021).

This brokering and influencing from the US and other powers to resolve the conflict between the Netherlands and Indonesia is described by Papuans as a Colonial peacekeeping process which took place without the involvement of the Papuan people and only took into account the economic and political needs of States and international politics (Giay, 2000; Ondowame, 2006; Tudor, 2021). The decolonisation dispute between Indonesia and

Netherlands did not leave space for Papuans to participate, instead they were tangled in the power struggle between the Dutch and Indonesians (Hernawan, 2017). Their land and their future was negotiated without one Papuan being present. The handover from UN to Indonesia has also been called a re-colonisation as the UN brokered the New York Agreement, legitimising Indonesia's claims to the region (Tudor, 2021). The UN administration intentionally did not listen to the many Papuan voices against integration with Indonesia, prioritising the Indonesian position² (Saltford, 2003; Tudor, 2021). There was also an underlying perception that Papuans were too primitive to be able to make their own choices³.

The incorporation or annexation of Papua by Indonesia in 1969 through the 'Act of Free Choice' continues to be contested by the majority of Papuans as a forced and violent act that they did not choose. Despite Indonesian government claims that the process was peaceful and consensual, there is ample evidence that once UNTEA transferred authority over the territory to Indonesia, the Indonesian military forces immediately began suppressing political activities in Papua (Saltford, 2003; Drooglever, 2009; Tudor 2021). The 1,026 tribal leaders that were selected to vote on behalf of the entire Papuan population in the referendum were put in special internment and isolation for weeks. They were guarded by the army and had to go through drills to learn by heart their wishes to integrate with Indonesia (Drooglever, 2009). Hernawan (2017), in his book, *Torture in West Papua*, puts forward the argument that internment represents a deliberate intention to brainwash people and possibly could be constituted as a form of psychological torture. "*As the public space had been colonised, Indonesian security services found little difficulty to colonise the body and soul of the Papuan representatives*" (Hernawan, 2017). This was to be the foundation for the future.

From 1960s through to the present there is wide acknowledgement that Papua continues to be the site of serious human rights violations by Indonesian security forces in the context of

² Rawlings, the UN Commissioner for Biak reported in December 1962: "I have yet to meet any thinking, sober, generally responsible Papuan who sees any good with the coming link with Indonesia. Unwelcome as the anxiety and resistance of thinking Papuans maybe, it is of course hardly surprising if one is not under pressure to close one's eyes to what is in fact happening to this people at the hands of the three parties to the Agreement" (Saltford, 2003).

³ One advisor to the Kennedy administration went so far as to declare that self-determination for the 'stone-age' Papuans would be meaningless (Quoted in Saltford, 2003).

both military operations against a small armed separatist movement and the suppression of nonviolent independence activists including killings, torture, repression of peaceful assemblies, arbitrary arrest, impediment of media and civil society activity⁴. This has been carried out with total impunity (Widjojo *et al.*, 2008; King, Elmslie and Webb-Gannon, 2011; ICTJ and ELSHAM Papua, 2012; Amnesty International, 2021; ICP, 2021). The intensity of this has varied over the years and has varied according to locality with many locations experiencing very little presence of security forces up to recently. There has been significant levels of horizontal violence including between tribal groups and violence between those loyal to local political elites (Anderson & Morel, 2018). This is often ignored as a part of the wider conflict although other authors and Papuan sources argue that a lot of this is provoked or encouraged by security forces. It is important to note the very high levels of discrimination and racism that have been experienced by West Papuans which also is a significant factor in how they understand their situation and the wider conflict.

In 2001 Papua was granted special autonomy under Special Autonomy Law No. 21/2001 to try and deal with increasing demands for independence. It has recently been renewed without any participation of the Papuan people or the bodies that represent them and there has been widespread intimidation and crackdown on those opposed to the new law⁵. According to ICP (2021), a network that documents the human rights situation in West Papua, the conflict has severely intensified since December 2018 with a deterioration of the security situation in the central highlands causing a significant increase in the number of internally displaced people from various districts⁶. The government will not allow access of any local or international humanitarian organisations to provide aid. There has also been a

⁴ In the years after the Act of Free Choice rebellions in the highlands were met with heavy force by Indonesian military. Local people have a collective memory of military operations which resulted in disappearances, arbitrary arrests and detention and killing, the trauma of which is still felt today in these communities and has never been addressed (interviews).

⁵ In an effort to halt the revisions, the Papuan Peoples Council (MRP) from Papua and Papua Barat filed a petition in the Constitutional Court to invalidate the revised law, arguing that the central government had violated clause 77 of the 2001 Special Autonomy by not involving MRP and provincial governments in the amendment process. Just days before the petition was filed, the MRP leaders were finally invited to meet with government leaders, where they restated their demands for a comprehensive review of the law and implementation of Article 77. Security agencies responded to these developments by suppressing and imprisoning critics (IPAC, 2021).

⁶ The number of IDPs as of January 2022 is estimated at close to 60,000 (interview with Church Leaders)

significant increase in rebel activity⁷ and a responding rise in deployment of military troops accompanied by increases in criminalisation of activists, extra judicial executions, enforced disappearances and political prisoners (Amnesty International, 2021; ICP, 2021). The violence that has gripped the region has exposed the failure of the government and Special Autonomy in addressing entrenched racism and discrimination. It also shows Jakarta's tenuous grip on security in the most heavily militarized part of the country (IPAC, 2021).

⁷ Deployment of security forces in Papua has increased steadily in response to escalating attacks from the Free West Papua Movement armed wing, the West Papua National Liberation Army (Tentara Pembebasan Nasional-Papua Barat, TPN-PB). Following the latter's "Declaration of War" in January 2018, its attacks on Indonesian security forces are more frequent, deadlier, and more widespread in regions that had rarely seen any rebel activity in the past (IPAC, 2020)

3. Methodology

West Papua is a challenging place to carry out research due to government restrictions on researchers, journalists and non-profits. According to Webb-Gannon, (2017). West Papua is an academic 'no-man's land' for research compared to neighbouring Papua New Guinea, Indonesia and the Pacific. However, the author previously lived in West Papua for 13 years and has an ongoing relationship with activists, academics and faith leaders in her daily work, which has put her in a good position to be able to carry out this research, despite the challenges of the pandemic.

According to Galtung (1969), the purpose of peace research is to promote peace, not just peace studies. With this in mind, this research process was not just an academic exercise but seeks to influence positive change. I endeavoured to allow the process to be shaped by Papuan perspectives, acknowledging that the land of West Papua belongs to indigenous West Papuan people and that understanding conflict, approaches to build peace as well as understanding what is possible in the development of new pathways to peace needs to be intentionally grounded in indigenous experiences, knowledge, perspectives and imagination.

It is helpful here to quote the late West Papuan leader Otto Ondawame's critique that *"previous examinations [of West Papua's conflict], mainly presented from foreign perspectives, have attempted to explain the reasons behind the conflict, but they fail to address the main colonial cause of the conflict and so do not construct their solutions within the framework of a political approach"* (Ondawame, 2010) .

This research process was designed as *an action research process* with the objective of learning together with West Papuans, as well as being able to use learning to input into the ongoing discussions regarding peacebuilding processes in West Papua. Action research is explained by Kaye and Harris (2018) as a combination of *research* - to arrive at new knowledge and understandings, and *reflection and action* - to bring about change. Another central feature they highlight is collaboration with and the participation of the people who are experiencing the problem.

The process was designed like this on the request of those involved. Those interviewed repeatedly said that they were happy to talk if their thoughts and input fed into a process of learning and action which helped them think of new ways to engage with their context. In this way it is hoped that the research can become a small part of the peace process itself and feed back into discussions and learning by those involved.

Kaye and Harris, (2018) advocate that the use of action research, particularly in peacebuilding research, is increasingly acknowledged as contributing towards peaceful solutions to social problems occurring at a community level. It constitutes an effective method in peacebuilding and peace studies as it provides a systematic way of developing a theory, obtaining the necessary data, and with the participation of the respondents - developing and testing an intervention. They also argue that academic research alone is inadequate when the goal is change and transformation (Kaye and Harris, 2018). Seen through the lens of action, the constructive nature of peacebuilding considers “theories that might work and brings them together with values about what ought to work” (Galtung, 1969).

Various sources and methods were used to gather perspectives and information and all ideas and conclusions were then discussed back with participants to ensure learning took place. Firstly, the author undertook desk based research using academic research, NGO and Human Rights reports, and government documents. Sources were in both English and Indonesian. Secondly, a series of semi-structured interviews⁸ of key informants who could provide critical insight into the topic being researched were carried out. I also held four focus group discussions with four to five people in each group. The interviews and focus group discussions were carried out using a questionnaire (see appendix 1) and then answers were organised in an excel spreadsheet to enable the identification of patterns and key words. The people who took part in interviews were selected based on their ability to provide critical insight into the topic under research and also because they are actively involved in peacebuilding. Those interviewed were drawn from a variety of backgrounds and

⁸ According to Flick, (2015) a semi-structured interview is one where a number of questions are prepared that between them cover the intended scope of the interview. An interview guide is developed but the semi-structured format allows the interviewer to deviate from the sequence of questions and may not stick to the formulation of questions. The aim of the interview is focused on obtaining the individual views of the interviewees on an issue and the questions help initiate a dialogue.

included church leaders, youth activists, women leaders, and academics. Those involved in focus groups were all Indigenous Papuan men and women who are actively engaged in peacebuilding and faith based social justice work

Thirdly, the research was informed by discussions as part of an online course on conflict transformation that the author facilitated during the pandemic. The course took place over 12 weeks and involved two hour teaching and discussion each week with group assignments. The participants were mostly activists and faith leaders. During the course we covered most of the topics that are covered in this research. Finally, the research draws on information produced by an activity to research meanings of dialogue in West Papua that the author organised in early 2020 (See Appendix 2 for detail on participants. Names of participants are not mentioned in this document for security purposes).

I would also like to acknowledge that even though as a researcher, I have endeavoured to look at peacebuilding from both an Indonesian state perspective as well as an Indigenous perspective, I am not arriving at this topic free of bias. I have lived and worked alongside Papuan civil society for 15 years and am coming at the topic from having been a witness to their lived experience and cannot claim to take a neutral position. This means that the research prioritises the Papuan perspective. However, I have also endeavoured to include Indonesian perspectives through interviews and academic research. The research process is also biased towards future pathways that are favoured by West Papuans and that they feel would work. This runs against the norm of peacebuilding and conflict research on Papua which leans more towards learning from other contexts and proposing traditional peacebuilding and transitional justice options without including a West Papuan perspective.

The relevance of the chosen research methodology for the West Papua context is supported by Web-Gannon's overview of methodologies used by international researchers in West Papua. She concludes that *"From an outsider's (non-West Papuan) perspective, it appears that the most transformational research (ethno-graphic exercises) are those that are creative and unexpected, that do not stick to traditional academic formats but make use of academic knowledge, that involve and lobby powerful individuals or bodies who have the ability to enforce structural change, and, last but not least, that are led by or developed in collaboration with West Papuan people"* (Web-Gannon, 2017).

4. Summary of findings from interviews and discussion groups

This section will summarise the main findings of interviews, focus discussion groups and dialogue exercise. Further detail and examples provided can be found in later chapters.

4.1 Explanation of Conflict

All of the participants spoke about the situation in West Papua as being a historic conflict between the Papuan people and the State of Indonesia that goes back to the early 1960s. For the majority of those interviewed they feel that the conflict situation affects the way they live, their mental state and how they relate to Indonesians (non-indigenous Papuans). The participants on the whole see it as an all-encompassing conflict with historic roots but that is continuously evolving with new actors and new dynamics. A majority of interviewees felt that there was intentionality from the Indonesian Government to reduce the population of Indigenous people. Only a small number of respondents indicated that they did not believe there was intentionality to destroy indigenous Papuans. However, they stated that government policies and practices had the result of marginalising West Papuans and that the government is turning a blind eye to what is happening and blaming it on Papuans themselves. Details on key events in history identified are in Appendix 3.

4.2 Root causes of conflict and Drivers

The majority of respondents agreed that the main root cause of the conflict is the incorporation of Papua into Indonesia. Those that varied on this opinion did agree that this was a root cause but they felt that racism was the core underlying cause, which then led to *'exclusion of Papuans in deciding their own future'*. One respondent called racism the *'foundation of everything that has happened and is happening in West Papua'* and that the belief that West Papuans were inferior provided a basis for Indonesia and the International Community to take their lands and resources and decide their future. Another person suggested that the annexation of Papua should be framed as a racist act. All respondents agreed that other root causes identified by academics are results of the first two identified. An interesting observation was also that the foundation of racism in society has manifested itself in the policies of the government such as transmigration which is a *'racist policy packed up nicely'* and another said the government promoted transmigration as they didn't

think Papuans could look after their land by themselves. One respondent gave the example of continued racism as the stigmatisation and labelling of Papuans as traitors, terrorists and creating myths about who they are.

Five other causes were mentioned by the majority of respondents. These were injustice and inequality, militarisation, failure of development and welfare, human rights abuses and exploitation of natural resources. Regarding injustice and inequality, one participant explained it as the occurrence of '*migrant bias policies*', which prioritise infrastructure over people. Most respondents and especially in discussion groups interchanged causes with drivers as all of the factors continue to occur and increase in scale and impact. The other factors that were mentioned by several respondents were: colonialism, fascism, capitalism, and fake news.

4.3 How to tackle the root causes

In interviews and discussion groups, participants were asked how to respond to the root causes. Opinions differed as to whether the solution was an immediate referendum on independence or whether there should be negotiations or dialogue. The majority supported some form of dialogue as part of the process but most agreed that this would be with the purpose of moving towards another referendum. A minority of participants believed that a peaceful process would not work and that an armed response was the only way. The majority of respondents agreed that there should be a process to bring perpetrators of human rights abuses to justice. Other solutions or ideas put forward include: opening discussion on racism in Indonesia, truth and reconciliation commission, reduction in military, recognition of culture and symbols, the non-violence movement must be better supported and funded.

4.4 Opinions on previous efforts and proposals to bring resolution to conflict

Road Map to Peace (LIPI) – It is agreed by the majority of participants that the *Papua Road Map* is one of the most important pieces of work to be done on Papua. Those that felt it was very significant and useful were church leaders or academics. However, at least half the respondents felt that the process was not inclusive to Papuans so their voice was not

recognised in it. The majority also felt that although it is well known, it did not work. Most of the youth respondents had only heard of it in name and did not know much about the content. At least half of the respondents felt that the process was biased, or was not neutral, and did not really understand root causes. Also, the recommendations did not allow for an open ended peace process. As one participant explained *“it is not clear what the concept of peace is that is promoted in this document? Who defined it?”*. Another participant said that *“it feels more like a copy paste solution from other places which are different and don’t fit with Papuan context. It is top down and not designed participatively”*

Papua Peace Network and Papua Land of Peace Movement – The majority of respondents stated appreciation for the idea of the network and movement but felt that it hasn’t worked and is currently not having very much impact. All those interviewed stated that there was a lack of inclusion of younger people and those outside the Catholic church. Most also said the agenda was also not clear. Several respondents argued that the network had no legitimacy among decision makers. When asked about the Papua Land of Peace Movement, the majority said they felt that this is a good concept but it is not clear who is leading it or who is involved and what the goals are. A small number of respondents felt it was a waste of time and that they would never be listened to.

Welfare/Special Autonomy – There was total agreement from all participants that the welfare approach from the government has failed. All participants felt that the requests that Papuans made were ignored and never implemented. All participants were unanimous in their opinion that the renewal of Special Autonomy was not in West Papuan interests and would escalate the conflict. Again, all participants stated that special autonomy was for Papuans in name only and although initially had the approach of resolving the conflict and responding to demands of independence, it has ended up only benefiting migrants and Papuan elites. Several interviewees pointed out that if it was implemented as originally designed, it would have worked well and could have resolved a lot of issues but the government didn’t adopt the most important part and refused to listen to Papuan concerns.

Non-Violence Movement and armed struggle – The majority of participants are very supportive of the non-violence movement and believe that this is the best way for Papuans to move their cause forward. A small number of participants agreed with the non-violent

approach but felt that an armed struggle was necessary to reach their goals. The majority of the respondents also said they did not agree with the violent approach saying that it didn't work and was counterproductive. Several participants gave examples of when armed groups were co-opted by the military and that the army was behind a lot of the incidents that were blamed on the TPN-OPM (West Papuan Freedom Army). The challenges for the non-violent struggle mentioned includes state oppression, arbitrary arrests, poor communication, lack of financial support, capacity, unity, lack of free speech, internet shut offs, strategic direction, and stigmatisation as terrorists. There was a difference in opinion as to whether the non-violent movement and the armed resistance coordinate or worked together. Some stated that they did and others felt that there was no evidence that they were working together. One participant asked the question 'surely as the civil resistance movement grows the armed resistance should decrease? But this is not happening. Does this mean there is there a disconnect?'. One interesting perspective that came out is that the Indonesian government perceives the non-violent movements' actions as violence as it is threatening to Indonesia's sovereignty.

All participants agreed that the recent increase in action from churches speaking out on what is happening is very welcome and important. However, some respondents said that many churches (especially at local level) had been compromised and divided by the government. This had made them weak. Another point made is that the non-violence movement excludes more general civil society and NGOs and focuses on student activists. They could have more impact if they widened the movement. Another participant suggested that the movement is not solid as the various parts act on their own. Also women's participation is lacking.

Cultural recognition – The majority of respondents agreed that cultural recognition is important. Several participants made the point that this is not a symbol of reconciliation but is a recognition of political identity. One person argued that cultural recognition is a right which was taken away from us which the government had no right to take. *"it cannot be said that they will give it to us as it wasn't theirs to take in the first place"*. Another participant made the point that Indonesia sees Papuan cultural identity as a political identity. They stated *"it is ok to have an tribal identity but not a Papuan identity as this is seen as political"*. The majority of participants highlighted that cultural recognition

demands of Papuans have all been denied. This includes: local political parties, use of flag, use of national anthem, representative body and use of local languages in curriculum.

Truth commission – The majority of participants said they didn't understand what this would mean or consist of. All of them are aware that it was supposed to be part of special autonomy but that it never went through. All felt there is no chance to have a proper truth commission where perpetrators are held accountable as the state has already rejected it. All participants said it is necessary to have some process that would document their *memories of suffering*, facilitate a discussion on the past and current conflict and investigate human rights abuses. There were some interviewees who argued that a truth commission would not be appropriate at the current time, as it should happen once the conflict had ended. If it happened while the conflict was still ongoing, then there would be no hope of achieving any justice or reconciliation. There would also be no trust in the process.

Dialogue – The need for dialogue between the Papuan people and the Indonesian government was a common theme among all participants and all agreed that this was an important part of a future peace process. However, most agreed that there is not a common definition of dialogue and that it means different things to different people. Several people expressed concern that a dialogue is seen as the answer to everything when it should only be a step on a longer process. Others said that what Papuans mean by dialogue is actually a negotiation. Several participants suggested that Papuans need to have a process themselves to decide on what the best form of dialogue would be and to build unity. There was a clear sense of trepidation from all participants that Papuans could be taken advantage of in such a process without a third party facilitating. Also that a dialogue alone which does not lead to anything would be useless. As one participant put it *'We shouldn't have a dialogue that would bring us peace without justice as the system is still on the side of the oppressor. We could make peace but the forest will still be exploited. We will still be a minority. Is this peace?'*

Other ideas – A very clear thread that came out from discussions was the need for Papuans to dialogue among themselves, build unity and develop objectives together for the future. Other processes that were highlighted were: building relationships with the youth of Indonesia and raising awareness through books, networks, social media; increased

international advocacy; awareness and advocacy from churches; increasing non-violent struggle and improving strategy and widening networks to make them more inclusive; and increasing awareness about importance of non-violence.

4.5 Distinct aspects of Papuan identity that are important for peacebuilding

The participants on the whole felt that Papuan identity and culture are vital in finding solutions for the future and building peace. There is clear agreement that the foundation of a peace process has to be recognition of Papuan identity due to the history of racism although at the same time most participants felt that this would be very difficult. One participant made the suggestion that a people to people approach is very important especially between churches and this would be a way to build solidarity with other Christians in Indonesia. Culture and art were mentioned by the majority of participants. Cultural recognition from Indonesia is important and especially should avoid any appropriation of local customs. The importance of the land and the environment to Papuan identity was highlighted by most of the participants and this would need to be understood.

What does a peaceful Papua look like? – There were differences in how this was envisioned between respondents. Some felt that peace was something that was linked to freedom from colonialism. As one participant put it *“we will only experience peace and justice when we have no more colonialism. Then we can work on our problems ourselves”*. Other respondents described it as a situation that would happen once there has been healing. One participant commented *“we will feel peace when hurt and trauma have been healed and perpetrators have been brought to justice”*. Several participants described peace as a state of complete well-being where there is no more suffering and violence and when all people can live together in harmony with each other and with the land. One participant mentioned the biblical concept of ‘shalom’ and others used the Papuan word for freedom ‘Merdeka’.

Indonesian perspective of peace - All participants felt that the Indonesian perspective of peace is very different to the Papuans. One Indonesian participant suggested that Indonesians actually do not understand the Papuan perspective on peace as Indonesian society is very militaristic. The participant said that *“migrants stated that they also want*

peace but their perspective on peace is different. They still feel they can manage the land better than indigenous Papuans and their attitude is racist”.

A church leader said that Indonesia does not realise how much hurt they have caused and they don't try to understand why Papuans are feeling pain. He said *“they should take the approach of a doctor and ask good questions - this will help healing. Ask what medicines you need, where does it hurt...this will help. But the state ignores the sickness and hurt and even tries to suppress it.”*

Traditional forms of conflict resolution - There are various traditional methods of conflict resolution that participants identified that could be used for peacebuilding. These are further elaborated on in Chapter Five. The most frequently mentioned was the stone burning ceremony or pig feast which is mainly a highland tradition to bring resolution, celebrate, join clans and mourn. A clear concern from several participants is that this ceremony has in the past been taken advantage of by security forces to create fake reconciliation processes and co-opt Papuans.

4.6 The gaps in process

Several participants said that the church needed to increase its prophetic role, speaking out on injustice. Other responses included: Papuans need to work more on strategy and unity and a revival of Papuan identity, culture and language; the peace movement needs to be people focused. Several respondents stated the importance of inclusion of all actors in a peace process or dialogue including armed groups. Several other themes which came out of discussions were: environmental justice including land rights where Indonesians and Papuans could work together; capacity building of non-violence movement and civil society groups; funding for local dialogues and awareness raising. A different perspective from a small number of participants was that in any peace process the TPN-PB should be the ones leading the process and they would define who would take part in any process.

4.7 Challenges for movement towards peace

All participants felt that there were serious challenges for moving forward with a formal peace process. The issues raised which were common among participants included: lack of

respect and understanding from government; lack of funding and interest from international community; no willingness to compromise, as this is seen as failure rather than a step forward; increasing repressive behaviour by security forces; fear of separatism from Jakarta; very little trust from Papuans to Jakarta; Papuan elites who have been compromised and are working against the interests of Papuans; misuse of power; widespread trauma in the Papuan population. Solutions suggested to overcome these challenges include: strengthening unity, peaceful mobilisations, improved messaging, encouraging a vision of hope, strengthening civil society capacity, increasing theological reflections and teaching on justice and peace, trauma healing processes.

4.8 What conditions need to be in place in order for progress to be made?

Five common issues were raised by participants: dialogue on history needs to start so that there can be more understanding about how each party perceives the past; truth recovery processes should be funded and carried out; historic human rights cases should be processed; there needs to be more international pressure; Papuan political leaders should be more vocal on the situation. Some participants also identified the need for creation of clear milestones including the withdrawal of military from conflict zones.

4.9 Women's participation

Opinions differed on the role of women in a peace process. Some participants felt strongly that it should only be leaders of TPNPB and possibly other pro-independence groups that take part in negotiations. They said women can support the process from behind. However, others felt strongly that women need to play a much stronger role in peacebuilding. One participant said that *"what is visible in most of the peace activities is the absence of women"*. Another argued that *"we can't talk about peace without including women"*. Various perspectives were shared including that new approaches were needed to hear the stories of women such as storytelling, women need to form wider networks to work together to ensure that their perspective is heard. The majority of women interviewed said that shifts in theology and cultural perspectives on women were needed so that Papuan society could move towards more equal participation and recognition of the role of women.

5. West Papua – Divergent perspectives

5.1 What Lies beyond the violence?

There has been much debate and many opinions regarding the nature and severity of the conflict in West Papua including those who question whether it is a conflict at all. This includes academic debate but also state narratives versus indigenous Papuan narratives. Based on academic research and results from interviews and focus group discussions this section will look at the various ways that the West Papuan conflict has been framed, the impact that this has on understanding how Papuans are experiencing violence and conflict and therefore how actors then engage with building peace. The key question is regarding how the situation of violence and conflict is analysed and understood. Is West Papua a place where human rights abuses from the State are taking place occasionally and affecting limited locations, causing sporadic tension and violence? Or is West Papua the location of an 50 year complex conflict between the Indonesian State and the Papuan people which is characterised by deep levels of oppression and structural violence? Kivimäki, (2006) confirms the importance of this distinction in his report on initiating a Peace Process in Papua and the role of the International Community. He argues that the nature of a peace process depends on “*whether it can be seen that Papua is a special case or is just the norm across Indonesia*” and “*whether key abuses are seen as a characteristic of Indonesian government or Papua centric*” (Kivimaki, 2006). Depending on whether West Papua is understood as the location of violence as typical of the Indonesian security forces or the location of a deeper protracted conflict will affect how peacebuilding is designed and who will get involved.

All those who took part in interviews and focus group discussions argue that there is an intentional effort to marginalise indigenous Papuans, and ‘*silence them*’. 50% of respondents used the term ‘*slow genocide*’ or intention to ‘*destroy and remove us from our land*’ when asked to describe the situation in West Papua. They are aware that data to back this up is lacking but this is how they experience and understand the situation. The issue of whether the increasingly low percentage of Indigenous Papuans compared to migrants (described in Chapter 2) is intentional, is the subject of academic debate. Anderson and Morel (2018) argue that based on an analysis of Indonesia’s National Violence Monitoring

system (NVMS)⁹, the problem in Papua is the absence of the state in terms of service provision and that violence is mostly being caused by crime. On the other hand authors such as Elmslie and Webb Gannon (2013), and a study from Yale University (Brundige et al., 2004) suggest that there is a case for slow motion genocide or intentionality in reduction of the Indigenous population. An in-depth study carried out by ICTJ and Elsham (ICTJ & ELSHAM Papua, 2012) on historic violence based on extensive witness testimonies, indicates that there is evidence of significant levels of violence which continues to traumatise victims and their families. Based on information from research participants and the authors ongoing experience in Papua, both of these ways of framing the situation miss the mark to some level and do not help frame the direction of peacebuilding. The experience of the conflict by indigenous Papuans cannot be defined only by incidences of violent deaths or as sporadic violence, underpinned by poverty and corruption. In order to move towards strategies for peacebuilding it is very important that the wider and deeper context, historic and current events and especially the lived experience of Indigenous Papuans is understood, otherwise there is serious risk that actors wanting to help improve the situation and build peace continue to reinforce unhelpful narratives.

The experience of Indigenous Papuans that came out from interviews and focus groups can be framed better under Galtung's definition of violence which bring together a web of direct, structural and cultural violence, intertwined and feeding each other in a never ending cycle, creating a traumatised population with ever increasing levels of horizontal violence and increasingly devastating effects of direct violence (Galtung, 1969). Anderson and Morel (2018) acknowledge that the violence in Papua whether it is from crime, rebels, domestic violence, tribal conflicts or other, when it is combined with failing health, low levels of education, high levels of natural resource exploitation and high levels of inequality all serve as "*strings in the cats cradle of Johann Galtung's structural violence*" (Anderson & Morel, 2018). However, they do not take into account the wider historical context or the impacts of structural violence on the population. Braithwaite *et al* (2010) put forward the case that if the West Papua case is only assessed with quantitative research through coding then it would cross the threshold into civil war only for brief periods in every decade. However, based on their analysis of the wider context and history they conclude that West

⁹ Last date of available data is 2014

Papua has experienced no positive peace¹⁰ for almost 60 years (Braithwaite *et al.*, 2010).

The concept of structural violence can change how we see the impact of the conflict on the Papuan People. Deaths would no longer be only counted as a result of human rights abuses but would also include deaths due to negligence and lost opportunities to lead healthy lives. The emphasis on avoidable harm is at the heart of structural violence. This concept raises issues of social responsibility and challenges the view that Papuans' problems can be solved by economic solutions. The concept that structural and cultural violence are built right into the nature of social, cultural and economic institutions helps locate dysfunctional health and education systems in West Papua as part of the overall conflict (Barash & Webel, 2018). Galtung states that when people are starving or dying when this is objectively avoidable, then violence is committed regardless whether there is a clear subject action object relation (Galtung, 1969). Research has shown that structural violence causes more deaths than direct violence (Kholer and Alcock, 1976). This is seen played out in the crisis in Asmat Regency of Papua where a measles and malnutrition crisis killed at least 72 people who were mostly children in early 2018 (BBC, 2018). Other epidemics and famines over the last 40 years due to lack of immunisation and no presence of the State have most likely killed tens of thousands (YASUMAT, 2016). Within normal political discourse in Indonesia this type of occurrence is normally seen as a system failure but Galtung helps us understand this as actual violence which helps relate these types of incidents and situations of poor health and education in Papua as part of a structural violence rather than as some separate unrelated incident.

Anderson argues that misuse of funding, flawed human resource management and misunderstandings about education have combined to break the system in both health and education (Anderson, 2015). The State has consequently left hundreds of thousands of people without a voice and allowed local elites to reign without any accountability. This situation then causes direct horizontal violence between communities, tribes and families causing further deaths. IPAC suggests that the government may have made a deliberate

¹⁰ Positive Peace is defined here as commitment to peace and commitment to the legitimacy of the governance arrangements for guaranteeing peace and justice (Braithwaite *et al.*, 2010). It requires the motivational posture of commitment among combatants not just capitulation.

political calculation to turn a blind eye to this situation (IPAC, 2017).

Hernawan (2017) confirms the perspectives of Papuan research participants by including the historic dimension of the conflict and its impact on society in analysis. He argues that the Papuan space is '*colonised*' and is '*governed by complex networks of domination that have evolved since Papuans first contacts with outsiders*'. Oppression, torture and racism has become a form of governance whereby individual incidences are experienced and felt by the wider community. Those interviewed told stories of torture and rape that had happened to family members in the past but it was as if the experience had personally happened to them, as it has been recounted and accepted as part of the communities collective experience. Hernawan (2017) concludes that torture has been carried out as a public spectacle so that although the victims are individuals, its public nature has the result of traumatising wider society. Meanwhile, the Indonesian State carries out a layered pretence of conflict resolution while still claiming space and increasing power. He asks the very important question of "*how can the structures of oppression and structural violence that have been built in at levels into the system be dismantled in order to build peace?*" He suggests that the structural movement of violence needs to be exposed by an opposite movement of peace that reveals the illegality and immorality of the phenomena (Hernawan, 2017).

The Indonesian government's public narrative of what is happening in West Papua is drastically different to the experience of Indigenous Papuans. According to Anderson, the territory has become, a "*sacred place in the national imagining*" (Anderson, 2006 in Macleod, 2015). Many Indonesians still perceive Indonesia as the liberator of Papua. However, once Indonesia had secured its claim over Papua, it acquired an ambiguous character. Papua was important as long as it supported the formation of the nation state of Indonesia. It was constituted and located at the margins of the nation state to sustain the core character and existence of Indonesia (Hernawan, 2017). The government views any resistance in Papua as 'separatism' and explains any violence as actions by 'separatists' who have now been labelled (or as Papuan leaders describe it as 'stigmatised') as 'terrorists' and

‘criminal gangs’¹¹. The description of West Papua as a ‘self-determination’ conflict is not used as this would potentially link Papuan grievances to international law.

Based on the analysis in this section it can be concluded that when we only focus on data, meaning the numbers of incidents of violence by the state or conflicts with rebels and other human rights abuses, this can lead to an underestimation of what long term militarisation, discrimination and violence does to a population and this therefore will affect how we define strategies for conflict transformation. However, when local peoples experience are put at the centre of conflict analysis a much deeper picture of the effect of violence and the nature of the conflict on society becomes visible. Designing peacebuilding interventions without this local insight would mean that impacts would be severely limited.

5.2 What lies beneath the conflict?

Analysis of root causes has been seen as a key approach to understanding a conflict and is a generally accepted and widely promoted step in designing peacebuilding approaches (Brusset *et al*, 2016). On the other hand new paradigms of adaptive peacebuilding recognise that we can’t totally rely on this analysis as being complete. De Coning suggests that our ability to fully know complex systems is inherently limited and that the implication of this is that tools such as conflict analysis can never generate a fully accurate understanding of a conflict affected system (De Coning, 2018). This thinking fits well with the action research approach and responses from participants which suggests that static conflict analysis or analysis from only one source cannot be relied on to effectively input into the design of a West Papuan peacebuilding strategy. Analysis needs to be carried out regularly, especially in a conflict such as West Papua where conflict drivers and actors and their motivations are constantly shifting.

As with the framing of the conflict, the understanding and narrative on causes of the conflict are polarised between the two sides. For example, Papuans view the act of free choice as

¹¹ This labelling gives security forces legitimacy to deploy and set up militarised zones which would not normally be permitted if the violence was only a law and order issue. Based on international law the rebel group TPNPB is categorised as a ‘combatant’. However, the army considers them ‘armed separatists’ to allow the launching of ‘military operations other than war’ (YLBHI *et al.*, 2021)

fraudulent and a violation of their rights. Their exclusion from processes and forced manipulation is viewed as being dehumanising, particularly in a culture that values talking, exchange and participation (Macleod, 2007). Whereas Indonesia felt that they were the liberators of Papua from colonialism and that justice was done, Papua felt that a travesty had taken place.

LIPI (Indonesian Institute of Sciences) carried out significant research from 2006-2008 on root causes of the conflict with is documented in 'Road Map to Peace in West Papua'¹². They identified that causes fell into four clusters of issues (Widjojo *et al.*, 2008). These have now become generally accepted as root causes of the conflict and are still widely cited by civil society. These are: marginalisation and discrimination of indigenous Papuans; failure of development; differing interpretations of history and identity; and justice and accountability for past violence by agencies of the Indonesian state against Papuans (Widjojo *et al.*, 2008). Similar root causes have been identified by other international and Papuan authors (Scott & Tebay, 2005; MacLeod, 2015) .

In interviews and discussion groups most participants referred to these root causes but emphasised them and classified them in different ways. Those interviewed who are part of groups that specifically campaign for self-determination as well as members of armed groups (TPN-PB) stated that the core cause of the conflict was the '*forced annexation of Papua by Indonesia*'. They identified the other issues as consequences of the historical injustice root cause. Several participants identified racism specifically but also colonialism as the core root cause which allowed for the annexation to take place and argued that the other root causes that LIPI identifies are effects of the core root causes as well as being conflict drivers. Identification of racism as the central root cause is fairly new in academic work on West Papua as it has previously been identified as a conflict driver. It was recently highlighted as a root cause in a study by Tudor (2021). She states "*the racist structures of liberal peacebuilding and the international order which facilitated the international personnel (in the UN administration of West Papua) reallocated patterns of authority and suppressed local activists in order to maintain stability on the ground and preserve nation-state hierarchies with the international order*". By infantilising the population, and despite

¹² This process will be analysed further in Chapter 7

their knowledge of widespread political agency across the territory, representatives of the UN legitimised the removal of self-determination from the population. As well as being a root cause racism continues to be a driver of the conflict. Papuans have more recently been able to express their grievances through the momentum behind the 'Black Lives Matter Movement' locally known as 'Papuan Lives Matter'. As outlined by those interviewed the inequitable and discriminatory social, economic and political structures in West Papua are further reinforced, legitimised and justified by the cultural violence of racism.

One of the main challenges for conflict transformation in self-determination conflicts is that states tend to equate self-determination claims with secession (Accord, 2020). This makes them wary of encounters that might legitimise the claims and give recognition. It is also common that even if claims are not framed as self-determination the state may interpret them as such. This situation is reflected in the Indonesian Government's narrative that the main cause of problems in West Papua is 'separatism' followed by the lack of development, underdevelopment, ignorance and poverty. They see all expressions of resistance or protest on injustice issues as "separatist" and therefore "enemy". This has led to a security approach combined with half-hearted attempts to promote economic development with very little Papuan participation (ICP, 2021). Other aspects of the conflict including marginalisation, corruption, illegal security forces business, and land grabbing are inadequately addressed because of this fixation on separatism. The deployment of additional troops aggravates the circle of violence and adds to the list of unresolved human rights abuses. In the end this understanding of the conflict and the approach to resolving it is having the opposite impact to what is desired and is actually strengthening and mobilising more Papuans in political movements for self-determination.

There are many drivers of the conflict in Papua and they constantly change, often changing the actors involved as well as locations. Visible presence and the growth of security forces was one of the main conflict drivers mentioned by all those interviewed. They are accused of supporting militias, engaging in illegal business activities, human rights abuses, providing arms to rebel groups, threats, and manipulation of events through the setting up of fake incidents that shift blame on rebels for violent incidences. A second principle driver is the exclusion of Papuans from many of the decision making processes that effect their daily lives and particularly laws or policies that they have rejected. The third main driver

mentioned is the issue that migrants have gained the upper hand in most sectors and Papuans feel that they cannot compete which causes marginalisation. This contributes to a collective sense that their existence as leaders in their own land is under threat.

The research results underlined the importance of carrying out detailed analysis of actors involved and their motivations in order to ensure appropriate inclusion in conflict transformation and peacebuilding processes. During the research process participants discussed relationships between actors, their motivations and analysed power dynamics. This process sparked off very fruitful discussions on gaps in analysis and helped focus where energy should be invested. Many authors have gone into detailed analysis of actors and their motivations elsewhere (Kivimäki, 2006; Widjojo *et al.*, 2008; ICP, 2021; YLBHI *et al.*, 2021) and therefore this document will not go into this in detail. Chapter 8 on proposals for peace will draw on interviews and previous research.

It can be seen from discussions in this Chapter that it is important for conflict analysis to be ongoing and an integrated part of a peace process with the objective of constantly engaging people to analyse the context around them, their role and how the movement towards change can be initiated or improved. This research process has identified various aspects of the experience and dynamics of the conflict, that would impact the design of conflict transformation initiatives as well as a more formal peace process. The learning that took place from carrying out analysis with participants inspired new thinking, shifts in mindset and promoted action. Carrying out the analysis with various groups who had different perspectives also helped build bridges and build expertise rather than groups only operating within their own silos.

Reflecting back on De Conings Adaptive Peacebuilding theory (2018), we can conclude that planning and programming for peace that are done on the basis of analysis and assessments need to take into account that the available knowledge at the time is not final. The dynamic and evolving behaviour of complex social systems, can sometimes change in unpredictable ways. Participants in the research all stressed that this type of conflict analysis should be taking place constantly and with many different groups. It cannot be just one step in a predefined process.

6. Papuan perspectives and practices for achieving peace

This section will look at indigenous Papuan concepts of peace as well as discuss indigenous methods of conflict resolution that came out of interviews and discussions. The purpose of this section is to centre Papuan thought and practice in the design of peacebuilding processes.

6.1 Concepts of peace

In interviews and discussions it was clear that Papuans have a clear view of how they view and imagine peace. The concept of peace is linked to healing, justice, harmony in relationships, freedom from suffering and oppression and liberation. For many this is connected to freeing themselves from the structures of colonialism and linked closely to the concept of 'Merdeka' which means freedom in Indonesian¹³. According to MacLeod, the Papuan understanding of 'Merdeka' is not necessarily linked to independence (although for Papuan Nationalists this is definitely part of what is meant). It is a concept which is far more nuanced as is confirmed by the participants of this research. MacLeod (2011) suggests that Papuan understandings of 'Merdeka' represent an ongoing individual and collective struggle for liberation that encompass various different meanings. These meanings which confirm the results of the current research include: 1. Merdeka as an independent and sovereign state¹⁴; 2. 'Merdeka' or Peace as '*Hai*' which is described by Papuan anthropologist and theologian Benny Giay as the irrepressible hope of an oppressed people for a future that is peaceful, just and prosperous (Giay, 2000)¹⁵; 3. Merdeka as a Papuan liberation theology where a desire for a world of human dignity and divine justice is finally manifest; 4. Merdeka as a restoration of culture and identity which means being able to control their own lives, resources and identities; 5. Merdeka as *Mobu* which implies a sense

¹³ The meaning of Merdeka is very different for Indonesian nationalists who associate the word with their liberation struggle against colonial Dutch rule in the 1940s. Merdeka was the "battle cry with which the citizenry was summoned to support the cause, the salute with which revolutionaries would greet each other, the cry of solidarity at every mass rally, and the signature at the end of every republican document." (Reid, 1998)

¹⁴ It is also pointed out by Kirksy (2002) that this does not necessarily imply that the end point of their struggle is the State but more like – "new systems of governance based on indigenous modes of authority" that transcend the state.

¹⁵ Giay (2000) also notes that *Hai* movements can sometimes inspire unrealistic expectations of what 'merdeka' will bring.

of material and spiritual satisfaction where no one need suffer from hunger, poverty or disease (van den Broek, 1998) and; 6. Merdeka as restoration of human dignity.

Another very important framing of the Papuan understanding of Peace comes from work done by Van Den Brock and colleagues (SKP Jayapura, 2002), who brought together reflections on the concept of '*Papua Land of Peace*' during their deliberations in Jayapura in 2001¹⁶. Forty organisations representing almost all sectors of Papuan Civil Society, government and the private sector explored the philosophy of Papua Land of Peace before formulating a broad concept of peace and freedom which is defined as '*the desire to liberate themselves from all forms of oppression*' (SKP, 2002). This concept agrees with the perspectives of research participants and illustrates that the philosophy and vision comes from a deep understanding of context which then helped develop a vision of peace that is a social condition not just a geographical area which is free from violence within a war zone. This vision and conceptualisation of peace provides an alternative to the structure of violence. The 9 elements of Papua Land of Peace are summarised in Figure 2 and detailed in Appendix 4.

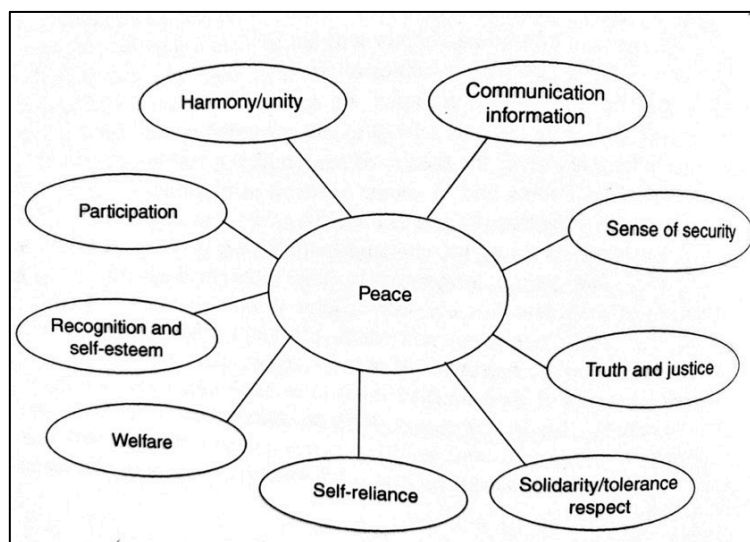


Figure 2 - Architecture of Papua Land of Peace (van den Broek & Kambayong, 2004)

¹⁶ The framework was developed in a meeting after the 1998 tragedy in Biak where a small protest involving the raising of the Morning Star Flag resulted in the military attacking the protesters. Many people disappeared, were arbitrarily detained, tortured and killed and their bodies dumped in the Pacific Ocean. Those who tried to flee were shot dead and others brought to ships and never returned (ICTJ and ELSHAM Papua, 2012). This incident had the opposite intended objective of creating terror and rather incited Papuans to revive the movement for resistance.

Another model for a future vision of Papua was developed by (Giay, 2000) where he lists ten elements that would constitute a '*New Papua*'. These are: recognition-access; freedom to take initiatives; protection of the land and nation of Papua; priority given to Papuans to rehabilitate their identity; back to Papuan history and celebrating Papuan identity symbols; reconciliation and collective trauma healing; reclaiming agency and self-reliance; demilitarization; multiculturalism; development based on ethical and human rights standards. Papuans' experience of violence and the structural conflict has affected how they imagine peace and also how they can achieve it. Their visions of peace are very similar to the concept of positive peace as described by Galtung (1969) but more utopian in that they do not only want freedom as a nation, but also freedom from all structural and systematic oppressions (Elizabeth, 2015). This vision comes from a deep desire to move out of the situation of negative peace and violence that they have lived with for so long.

Taking MacLeod's work, the Papua Land of Peace Framework, Giay's work as well as the results from interviews and discussions it is clear that there is deep and shared understandings of peace among indigenous Papuans. Their vision is clear, well developed and embedded in Papuan culture. This makes it a valid and important perspective which should be taken into account in the design of any peacebuilding processes. However, over many years the Indonesian government has continued to misunderstand and interpret the Papuan vision of Peace or freedom as a narrow vision of a sovereign state. By doing this, legitimate concerns from Papuans regarding equality, racism, history, natural resource destruction and violence are marginalized and stigmatized. Those who speak out on these issues are labelled as separatists, traitors or even terrorists. This deep divide in the understanding of peace for Papua has led to ever increasing worsening cycles of violence and vastly different approaches on how to stop it and bring about peace. This in turn has caused a total breakdown in trust and now few Papuans believe that their vision can be met within the framework of the Indonesian State. Brigham Golden suggests that the only way forward for conflict resolution in Papua is for the Indonesian Government to truly address the moral aspirations of 'Merdeka' and Papuan visions of peace (Golden, 2003).

Some authors suggest that the Papuan vision of Peace or the vision for a New Papua is utopian (Braithwaite *et al.*, 2010; Hernawan, 2017). Hernawan argues that the Papuan understanding of peace can be 'monolithic', a situation free from all forms of oppression

that suffers from ‘absolutism and romanticism’, in that freedom is perceived as absolute, static and pure – in reality however, he says such a reality rarely exists. However, the action research process showed that the understanding of peace put forward by indigenous Papuans is complex and multi-faceted and the majority of Papuans are very aware that the achievement of peace requires long term processes. They have a clear vision of what they want their society to look like and the challenge now is how they start building on current efforts to create structures, movements and processes that can start to build the society that they want.

6.2 Indigenous conflict resolution and dialogue practices

It was clear from the experiences and reflections shared during the research process that there are many Papuan expressions and practices of conflict resolution and dialogue. This section will explain the conflict resolution processes that were highlighted by research participants. However, it is clear that this process has only just touched the surface of the richness of knowledge and experience on this topic.

There were many experiences shared, but there were two that the various people present knew about and had been part of. These were the practices of *Yewam* and *Yabu*. *Yewam* brings sides together after a murder or death¹⁷ and *Yabu* is the process that happens when people come together to resolve a problem or a difference of opinion. In *Yabu*, there is one facilitator or leader that will gather people who will hear various groups positions on their own before bringing parties together. Everyone has to share what is on their heart and they need to listen to others and not interrupt even if they are angry or offended by what is being said. The process is respected and seen as a way to solve intractable problems as cultural pressure to listen to each other and for communities to move forward is for the good of all.

¹⁷ *Yewam* brings together the families of the one who has been killed and the family of the perpetrator. Everyone will get an opportunity to talk and express emotions and the all have to listen to each other. There will be at least one person but normally several people that will convene and manage the process (mainly uncles from both sides). *Yewam* should finish in a solution that all are happy with and is concluded by the killing and eating of pig together.

Yabu is most often located in the traditional ‘honai’, which is the men’s hut in most tribes where all issues and topics are discussed. It is also the process and place where history is ‘straightened out’ and the location where the ‘how and why’ something has happened is explored and where ‘our identity’ is discovered. This includes working out what Clan someone belongs to. Several people used the phrase ‘*the rules of Yabu*,’ which would suggest that it is a process that is embedded deep in culture.

One of the main points that resulted from discussions, was the importance of the person guiding the process. Without this person or third party it was felt that the difference would not be resolved. Another aspect was the importance of listening. *Yabu* is not a discussion but a space to express experiences and perspectives and there is emphasis placed on the difficult experience of listening to others that may be from an enemy group or the opposite side of a problem or dispute. One person said that “*we understand that even if I don’t like them, I need to hear them for my own benefit and so that I can contribute to community peace*”.

Other processes mentioned but not discussed in detail included the processes of the ‘*bakar batu*’ or stone cooking ceremonies, where pig and vegetables are cooked in pits of hot stones. This ceremony is carried out for many purposes including to bring resolution to a conflict, to celebrate, join clans together and to mourn. The processes described have much in common with other Melanesian conflict resolution styles and approaches. According to Ondawame (in CHD & LIPI, 2011) Melanesians employ a consultative approach to resolve conflict. It is a process that compiles opinions about solutions and all members of the community must be approached and listened to so that they feel a sense of ownership and their view is considered in decision making.

The dialogue experiment brought out strongly the fact that Papuan experiences of dialogue follow various academic theories. Firstly, similarities can be seen with the practical approach and stages of dialogue as proposed and practiced by Isaacs, (2017). The Papuan *Yabu* takes place within a cultural ‘container’ where only certain people will be invited, principles will be followed, and there has been a process leading up to the dialogue, preparing those who take part. There is also no rush on proceedings and ‘*it will take as long as it will take*’ (dialogue participant). Facilitation plays a key role even though the facilitator

of the Papuan *Yabu* or *Yewam* plays a more influential role on the outcome than Isaacs had in mind.

Another aspect of Papuan *Yabu* and *Yewam* is that they naturally embrace divisiveness, which is also part of the dialogue theory and practice Isaacs puts forward (Isaacs, 2017) and Ramsbotham's radical disagreement theory (Ramsbotham, 2010). The Papuan processes can be used to resolve deep conflict as the main purpose behind the processes is to bring the world back into balance. The Papuan *Yabu* could also be seen as having some aspects of Bohemian dialogue with its very lofty aims of peace and harmony¹⁸ and the importance placed on collective thought (Bohm, et al, 1991).

Based on the practices shared in this Chapter, it is clear that there is a deep understanding of concepts of peace from Indigenous Papuans, which closely align with concepts of positive peace. These concepts are embedded within the indigenous movements to build peace and are also undergirded by traditional forms of conflict resolution and dialogue. It is very important that both the understandings and visions for Papua Land of Peace as well as traditions of conflict resolution, peacebuilding and dialogue that are already part of daily life are central to processes to resolve the conflict and build peace in Papua.

¹⁸ In local dialect of participants Waa (Walak) or Lioliti (Yali)

7. Analysis of peacebuilding initiatives and proposals for West Papua

This section will carry out an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the main peacebuilding initiatives that have taken place, those that are ongoing and those that are currently under discussion. This analysis will focus on indigenous Papuan experiences and perspectives and compare these with academic opinions and theories where relevant. Although there have been many initiatives and proposals over the years, this section will focus on the ones identified as most important by participants in the research. These are the Papua Road Map, the Papua Peace Network, and the ongoing Papuan non-violent movements for peace. Then the discussion will look at the initiatives that are currently being discussed by civil society, which are dialogue, truth recovery and reconciliation. The purpose of this section is to analyse what has worked, what hasn't worked and why and what this means for future peace process.

7.1 Papua Road Map and the Papua Peace Network

Following on from 2005 peace negotiations in Aceh, a group of scholars from the Indonesian Academy of Sciences (LIPI) began a series of consultations that led to one of the most comprehensive evaluations of why special autonomy had failed to resolve the conflict and how a new approach might be conceived. The result was the Papua Road Map, a guide to understanding the Papua conflict that is still used as a basis for explaining root causes and its recommendations continue to be promoted (Widjojo *et al.*, 2008).

LIPI identified 4 policy agendas based on their analysis of the conflict which are shown in Figure 3¹⁹. Unfortunately the road map never became a basis for policy-making as many had hoped. It had some support from actors within the government for moving forward

¹⁹ This was not the first time that these agendas were recommended but it was the first time that they have been comprehensively analysed and put together. Dialogue has been raised consistently by Papuans over many years (see section 7.4). The issue of reconciliation and human rights courts have also been discussed by Kontras (Commission for the Disappeared and Victims of Violence), Imparsial, ELSAM (Institute for Social Study and Advocacy), ALDP (Alliance for Democracy for Papua) and the Justice and Peace Secretariat of the Diocese of Jayapura (SKP Jayapura, 2002).

with dialogue, but overall it did not gain support and there were some sectors that saw the Road Map as a threat to Indonesian territorial integrity²⁰.

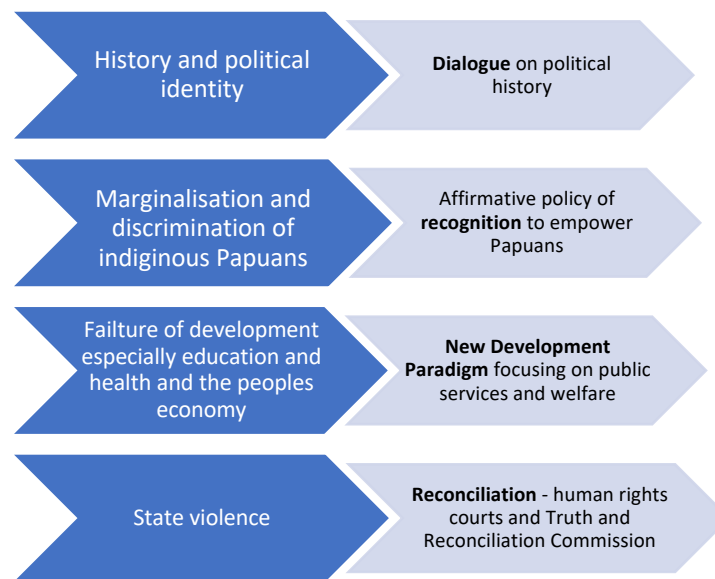


Figure 3 - Root causes of Papuan conflict with corresponding policy agenda recommendations identified by LIPI in Papua Road Map Document

The Road Map led to the emergence of a civil society group called the Papua Peace Network (Jaringan Damai Papua, JDP) committed to taking forward the agenda of dialogue with the central government²¹. This suggested that dialogue be held under the ‘Papua Land of Peace’ umbrella (CHD and LIPI, 2011). JDP made a promising start at producing a common Papuan agenda through local dialogues between actors but since then lost its relevance.

In focus group discussions, participants discussed strengths and weaknesses of the Road Map process. One of the strengths was that it was the first process to really analyse root causes of the conflict and identify the political history as a key factor. This shifted academic

²⁰ The national unity directorate of the home affairs ministry funded a counter-booklet to the road map called *Integration is Final (Integrasi Telah Selesai)* (ICG, 2010)

²¹ JDP was founded in 2010 to prepare for Jakarta-Papua Dialogue. The network prepared facilitators representing various parts of the community with regional coordinators. They carried out various public consultations to collect aspirations and promote the idea of dialogue. In 2011, LIPI and JDP organised the Papuan Peace Conference where they looked at obstacles to build Papua Land of Peace. The conference also produced 17 criteria for negotiators to represent sides. Based on this Papuans appointed five negotiators to represent them – all of whom were diaspora. There was a political declaration made at the end of conference which was not planned by organisers – and this caused much scrutiny and Government condemned the move and requests.(Elisabeth et al., 2017). After this the Government took a harder stance against JDP and the idea of dialogue.

debate within Indonesia and provided a strong academic basis for activists. Another positive aspect identified by those interviewed is that it elevated the role of dialogue as part of a future peace process even though details were not identified. A weakness identified was that the process leading to the analysis was not as inclusive as the participants would have liked. Even though it did include some leaders it left out youth and grass roots leaders. This was highlighted by youth participants and their perspective is confirmed by LIPI in their Updated Road Map Document (Elisabeth et al., 2017). It was also felt that there was overall a lack of Papuan participation in the process and also in how it was socialised once released.

One of the most significant concerns from those interviewed was that as the Road Map was prepared by a State institution, the recommended peace process was intrinsically biased. Research participants felt the Road Map was designed with the end result already confirmed, which is for Papuans to accept that West Papua should be part of Indonesia. According to participants this weakened the legitimacy of the process itself. However, on the other hand, as a state institution LIPI was able to raise awareness within the government and win over some elements towards dialogue which would not have been possible with a non-government organisation.

This lack of legitimacy of the Road Map also affected perceptions towards the JDP. Research participants felt that there was a lack of inclusion in the process and the dialogues held did not include youth representatives and activists. The dialogues remained at an upper level of society and the majority of the population did not understand or feel ownership of the process. This then had the result of alienating many groups who felt that the agenda of the dialogues was not clear and that it was not acting on behalf of the Papuan people. Overall there was a sense of despondency that Papuan leaders were not including those that had a different perspective or that represented a wider variety of stakeholders. A different perspective is provided by organisers of the JDP and other writers who have put forward the case that the JDP was able to operationalise the *Papua Land of Peace Framework* (see Chapter 6) into a platform to consolidate a wide range of actors and ideologies under a shared commitment to transformative dialogue (Tebay, 2009; Macleod, 2011; Hernawan, 2017). The CHD (2011) holds a similar view and suggests that the model set out by the JDP²²

²² This is laid out in the book by Neles Tebay – dialog Jakarta-Papua. Sebuah Perspektif Papua (Tebay, 2009)

can be a blueprint for a framework that brings both sides away from their maximalist positions. It can be seen from both responses from research participants and various academic analysis that there are many challenges to setting up a peace process that has legitimacy from all parties. From a Papuan perspective the main issue is the importance of inclusion and ownership. This needs to be improved for future initiatives to get traction and acceptance from the Papuan population.

7.2 Current Papuan movements for peace and justice

There are many Papuan organisations working for peace and justice but according to research participants these can be grouped into two general groups or movements. These are the Papuan non-violence movement and the faith based movement for peace and justice coming out of the Protestant and Catholic churches.

The Papuan non-violent civil resistance movement is a long term evolving movement with the objective of achieving self-determination and bringing about peace and justice in West Papua. For the research participants this movement is the principle peace movement for all West Papuans. It comprises many organisations but the principle ones are KNPB (National Committee of West Papua) and the Papuan Peoples Petition (PPP). There are also various student organisations, cultural organisations and representative groups. The civil resistance movement has been criticised in the past by various analysts as being too radical (ICG, 2010), for holding unrealistic positions (Widjojo et al., 2008; Anderson, 2018) and not being able to have any real impact due to lack of unity (ICG, 2010). However, the United Liberation Movement for West Papua (ULMWP) which was established in 2014, has been successful in bringing about a consolidation of Papuan movements. It has also been very successful in promoting the cause of Papua at international level.

The civil resistance movement has had many successes and has grown in size and support over the last few years. One of the main strengths of the movement is its agility and imagination and that it is rooted in the majority of regions in West Papua. Gradually over the last few years it has expanded beyond a limited understanding of civil resistance mostly being direct protests. The movement now also occupies and creates spaces for change through direct protests, music, art, promotion of cultural identity, advocacy, poetry and

‘Papuanising’ spaces. In response to this there have been severe reprisals from police and military with a significant increase in crackdowns of protests and criminalisation of activists (ICP, 2021). Challenges to the movement identified by research participants are lack of funding, poor communication, severe repression by state forces, lack of free speech, internet shut downs, lack of strategic planning and stigmatisation. Most of those involved feel that the movement needs support, accompaniment and training. There is very little material support from international organisations although there is some coordination on advocacy and especially on human rights issues.

A very important factor to come out of this research process is the vital importance of the growing involvement of both Catholic and Protestant churches in speaking out on injustice and increasing collaboration between student movements and the churches. All those interviewed believed that this is the most important shift in the civil resistance movement in the last few years. A growing grass roots movement drawing on liberation theology and the struggles of the oppressed has mobilized the church to prophetic action putting themselves on the front lines²³. Reverend Benny Giay reflects that even the memories that Papuans have are subversive and as churches talk about these memories of suffering, they are stigmatized and criminalized (Giay, 2021, Interview).

One of the main topics in the focus groups discussion revolved around how the civil resistance movement can create the conditions necessary for dialogue or negotiations to take place and all agreed that the civil resistance movement also does not involve the wider Papuan community and this needs to change. The role of women also needs to be prioritised at all levels. The movement also needs to be more open and accessible to the wider Papuan population so that all Papuans can have a role. MacLeod (2015) in his research on non-violent movements agrees with most of these challenges and puts forward the importance of ‘a grand strategy for change’ for the West Papuan movement, which would enable them to be more effective. This includes increased movement participation,

²³ This has been evidenced in practice by the formation of the West Papuan Council of Churches and their joining of the Pacific council of Churches, bypassing the Indonesian Council of Churches. Also the formation of the West Papuan Christian Youth Forum on Peace and Justice. Church leaders have been able to have increasing access to speak at various international and UN forums and use global networks to raise awareness. In recent months the Protestant and Catholic churches have started to work together to engage in direct actions to protest against militarisation, division of Papua and violence.

enhanced strategic skilfulness, greater unity, ability to attract greater support within Indonesia, internationalization of the struggle and taking advantage of political opportunities (McLeod, 2015).

Research by Chenoweth and Stephan (2012) supports the opinions of research participants that civil resistance against authoritarian rule is more effective than armed struggle. However, the results of their research on anti-occupation struggles (this is what West Papua was classified as) showed the success rates are much more challenging, with 28% success rates for non-violent struggles and 25% for violent struggles. The concern that the movement for self-determination has very little hope is echoed by the majority of writers on West Papua, due to the power imbalance and international politics (ICG, 2006; Widjojo et al., 2008; Braithwaite et al., 2010; CHD and LIPI, 2011; Anderson, 2015). However despite this and all the challenges that they are facing, when confronted with increased repression and conflict, the West Papuan civil resistance movement including the faith based movement has consistently shown that it can respond with spontaneity and imagination continuously moving forward to try and create opportunities for peace. Lederach, (2005) suggests that often the answer to break through deep rooted conflict does not lie in technical skills and professional peacebuilding but needs what he calls the '*moral imagination*'. He defines this as '*the capacity to imagine something rooted in the challenges of the real world yet capable of giving birth to that which does not yet exist*' (Lederach, 2005). The Papuans have shown that the construction of domination and marginalization is not absolute. The persistent pursuit of their vision and identity with a wide range of strategies from non-violence resistance, political action, cultural activities, faith based narratives and prophetic action is allowing them to reclaim their dominated space and penetrate through the violence. The Papuan movement to build on webs of interdependent relationships, grow and constantly adapt in order to resist to the overwhelming power of the State is vital in centring Papuan experience, perspectives and hopes for the future. It is very important that these Papuan peacebuilders are listened to and supported by the International community as well as wider civil society in Indonesia. If they are left out of any future peacebuilding process it is almost certain that the process will not succeed.

7.3 Special Autonomy –conflict resolution from the state

The original 2001 Special Autonomy Law²⁴, jointly drafted by teams in Jakarta and Papua, was felt by many in Jakarta to offer enough significant autonomy concessions to dampen Papuan demands for self-determination and resolve the ongoing conflict²⁵. ICTJ (2012) argues that the intentions behind special autonomy initially were as a conflict resolution process and it had '*positive implications for transitional justice*' and set up structures towards positive peace²⁶. However, despite this the majority of Papuans and most observers agree that Special Autonomy has failed (Anderson, 2015a; Elisabeth et al., 2017; Hernawan, 2017; IPAC, 2020; ICP, 2021). Now, the recent approval of Special Autonomy II has become a new driver in the conflict as the Government is implementing it against the wishes of the Papuan people and without their involvement²⁷.

Participants in the research agreed with this perspective and argued that Special Autonomy as a mechanism to resolve conflict has failed and additionally has deepened mistrust and worsened the conflict. The majority argued that not one thing that had been promised or requested from Papuans had been carried out and that immediately after the laws approval, the Government went about destroying it and with it, the hopes of the Papuan people²⁸.

²⁴ Law 21/2001 on Special Autonomy in Papua was signed into law by President Megawati Sukarnoputri.

²⁵ In its preface the Law accepted: 'That the administration and development of the Papua Province has yet to fulfil the feeling of justice, has yet to achieve prosperity for all people, has yet to uphold the rule of law and has yet to respect human rights in the Papua Province, in particular the Papuan community'.

²⁶ Building on broader guarantees of justice in the constitution and in national legislation, the law included articles obligating both the central and provincial governments, and the population to "protect, promote and respect Human Rights throughout Papua Province." The law states that the provincial government should achieve these goals through three mechanisms: 1) A Human Rights Court, which would make a contribution to judicial accountability for past violations of human rights; 2) A Papua Truth and Reconciliation Commission to clarify and establish the history of Papua and formulate and determine reconciliation measures; 3) A Papua branch of the National Human Rights Commission, a body that has both a truth-seeking and a judicial accountability function. The law also established special measures for institutional reform to ensure the rights of indigenous Papuans to employment and to be elected to strategic positions in government and recognition of traditional customs. There was also a law to establish a Papuan People's Council and Article 43 acknowledges and protects customary land rights and requires consultation with traditional landowners. The law also provides for the establishment of local parties and the establishment of a flag and song as 'a cultural symbol'.

²⁷ The MRP (Papuan Peoples Assembly) challenged the final version of the law in the Constitutional Court on the grounds that both the process and the substance of the new law violate constitutional rights of indigenous Papuans. It's challenge also took issue with several amendments, most notably with the clause authorizing the central government to create new administrative units without consulting with MRP or the provincial government (IPAC, 2021).

²⁸ Three weeks after the law was passed, the popular independence leader They's Eluay was killed by Indonesian special forces. The assassins were called heroes by the army chief of staff.

The transitional justice mechanisms which were of most importance to Papuans were never created²⁹ and then the government divided the Province in two against the wishes of the majority³⁰. The division was a divide-and-rule move designed to weaken the independence movement, but the result was outrage that is still felt today³¹. Other efforts focused almost entirely on economic development and infrastructure, which most Papuans felt was against their interests.

It is challenging to find any strengths of the Special Autonomy process that have contributed to peace. Participants in the research did not identify any and all were very adamant that the 20 years of special autonomy has only served to convince more Papuans that they want independence. They said that Autonomy had increased suffering, division, dependency and violence as well as opened up space for the destruction of their natural resources. Several interviewees said that the only strength was the concept of autonomy itself but as this was never implemented as designed, this is not relevant. The weaknesses include: no legitimacy due to lack of inclusion of Papuans especially the pro-independence groups; poor implementation; lack of capacity and backing from central government in implementation; and no effort to listen and understand what was important to Papuans. Barter and Wangge (2021) concur with this view and emphasise lack of inclusion is the main reason for failure in Papua. They compared autonomy outcomes in Aceh and Papua and concluded that in Aceh autonomy helped overcome conflict and can be regarded as mostly successful while in Papua autonomy failed. They suggest that the reason for this is to do with the process of establishing special autonomy rather than the content. In Aceh, rebels laid down arms and joined regional governments, achieving a meaningful form of self-rule. The power granted

²⁹ A Truth and Reconciliation Commission was never created for Papua, because the Constitutional Court struck down the National Truth and Reconciliation Commission Law (Law No. 27 of 2004) in December 2006. A legal challenge was brought on the basis that some provisions of the law required victims to forgive perpetrators of crimes against them in order to receive reparations and provided for amnesty for perpetrators of serious human rights violations. However, instead of addressing the unconstitutional provisions, the court rejected the entire law, a severe setback to human rights defenders' efforts to pursue truth, justice, and national reconciliation for past crimes. The annulment of Law No. 27 became a convenient justification for not establishing local truth commissions for Papua or Aceh, even though they were specified in the Special Autonomy Laws for both regions.

³⁰ In 2003, the government of Megawati Soekarno-putri destroyed the middle ground in Papua by a decision that divided the province in three (later into two, Papua and Papua Barat, as the third – "Central Irian Jaya" – proved unworkable)

³¹ For background on the politics of the division, see International Crisis Group, "Papua: The Dangers of Shutting Down Dialogue," Asia Briefing No.47, 23 March 2006. The 2001 law was amended in 2008 to extend Special Autonomy to the new province of Papua Barat.

was similar, but in Aceh the process was negotiated and included rebels and activists. In Papua the processes was very much imposed and only included actors from central government and Papuan elites. The process did not include any rebel groups or pro self-determination groups or even civil society representatives.

Hernawan (2017) concurs with the research results and states that Special Autonomy was designed to build trust between Jakarta and Papua but it then turned into a '*new technology to control Papuans*'. Many forces in Jakarta saw it as giving into separatism and also encouraging it, which then led to a lack of seriousness in implementation (CHD, 2011). At provincial and district levels, politicians and bureaucrats used Special Autonomy funds to increase power and gain access to funds. However, most funds have not reached Papuans effectively which added to the erosion of trust (Anderson, 2015). CHD (2011) agree with the opinions of the research participants that the central government turns a blind eye and allows corruption, to ensure politicians continue to support central government policies. Therefore, there is little incentive for Papuan leaders to successfully implement Special Autonomy, which then undermines support for it. Rev. Benny Giay refers to the government policy of development as a form of domination, in which outside influence and actors intervene in the traditional structures of Papuans in the form of violence and colonialization to enforce change. Papuans now see development and therefore Special Autonomy as an instrument of justification of all extortion, expropriation and killing (Giay, 2000)³².

Overall it is clear that special autonomy has failed as a conflict resolution mechanism from the state to reduce violence and actually has succeeded in deepening the conflict and growing the movement for self-determination.

7.4 The demand for dialogue, truth and reconciliation

Various solutions and recommendations have been put forward over the last number of years as part of a renewed push towards resolution of the conflict. The main proposal being put forward from the Papuan side is dialogue. Alongside this, there have been consistent

³² According to Hernawan (2017) the Indonesian concept of development puts strong emphasis on growth and physical indicators of success.

calls for dealing with human rights abuses and state violence from national and international actors. During discussions with research participants, a very important question was raised - *'how do we deal with the past, when the past is part of our present and the violence continues?'*.

Civil society, academics and international observers have, at various stages called for the Indonesian Government to dialogue with the Papuan people (Kivimäki & East-West Center Washington., 2006; Widjojo et al., 2008; ICG, 2010; ICTJ & ELSHAM Papua, 2012; Elisabeth et al., 2017; Anderson, 2018; ICP, 2021) . The term 'Dialogue' has lots of different connotations and tends to be pejorative due to previous experiences in West Papua (Widjojo *et al.*, 2008). The principle position of the Papuan movement for self-determination has been the desire for a comprehensive political dialogue with the Indonesian Government, mediated by an international third party. There are also some pro-independence groups, especially the Free West Papua Army, that have, in the past, been very sceptical about the value or purpose of dialogue. However, a spokesperson in the research interviews stated that they would only support dialogue if the UN was acting as a third party, making their demands almost impossible to be met. Various Presidents have stated at different times that they would be open to 'dialogue' with Papuans. However, many within the government are against this and fear dialogue, as they believe that agreeing to dialogue is acknowledging that both parties have equal standing. They also see the Papuan demand for dialogue as identical to a demand for freedom (CHD *et al*, 2011)³³. The more pragmatic Papuans do not see dialogue as the end point but as the beginning of a search for solutions. Despite opposition from the extremes on both sides, the common call for dialogue across groups can be seen as positive. On the other hand, discussions and interviews show there is a lack of understanding about what is meant by dialogue (as a political solution or approach), what it would look like and also significant disagreement regarding the purpose of the dialogue or the motivations behind it.

³³ According to CHD (2011) even the term "dialogue" is sensitive as it raises fears about the disintegration of Indonesia. Their fear is that dialogue will lead to the contestation of the New York Agreement of 1962 and of the Act of Free Choice of 1969 which would question the very basis of sovereignty in Papua. Also that acknowledging human rights abuses committed by the government could tarnish Indonesia's image.

The findings of the discussions on dialogue also highlight the question of whether national level dialogue is possible within a context of oppression where one side has more power than the other. According to Friere, (1972) a positive outcome of such a process would not be possible, would result in 'a culture of silence' due to unequal relationships and would bring no change. According to Tebay, dialogue is urgent in order to stop the culture of violence (Tebay, 2009). He suggested that it is a way to bridge the unbridgeable between the state and indigenous Papuans. He says *"until the end of the world, the Papuan conflict will not be solved peacefully. Jakarta-Papua dialogue will not happen. The non-negotiable attitude will only cause death for both sides whereas we want to hold dialogue because we respect the value of life"* (Tebay, 2009). He also suggests four conditions of dialogue which are peacefulness, comprehensiveness, respect and concreteness. These are critical to rehabilitate relationships which have been characterized by asymmetric power relations, domination and abjection (Hernawan, 2017).

It has been argued that dialogue can play a function in resolving conflicts and fostering understanding that can in turn lead to wider societal change (Reiker & Thune, 2015; Pruitt & Thomas, 2007). As a result of changes that take place in people during dialogue people look at the world through a different lens (Bohm *et al*, 1991). This new perspective can have significant effects on their relationships to others, on their behaviour and on the impact they have in the world, individually and collectively. However, the enthusiastic use of dialogues for conflict resolution has also been criticized. Ropers, (2004) asks the question about what good does dialogue do if it only brings moderate representatives of parties around the table? Others have observed that many dialogues do not translate into impacts beyond the individual level with often unproven or anecdotal assumptions that the personal impacts on participants will affect the dynamics of a conflict (Anderson and Olson, 2003; Ropers, 2004). People in the middle of deep and protracted conflict such as West Papua need to feel that their participation and sacrifice is worthwhile. They want a dialogue to bring concrete tangible changes in a conflict and if it is not doing this, then there would be a danger of 'dialogue fatigue' (Pruitt and Thomas, 2007) and of people abandoning the process.

It is certain that dialogue would be very challenging and most of those interviewed found it difficult to imagine how it would work. ICG agrees that dialogue in Papua would be much more difficult and complex than on Aceh (ICG, 2010). The main challenges at present are that as pro-independence groups are open to dialogue – this increases suspicions among officials – that the hidden agenda is independence, while on the Papuan side, there is a fear that dialogue would be just a public relations exercise without any substantive issues being resolved (ICG, 2010).

The proposals for reconciliation and truth telling to deal with human rights abuses and violence that were initially included and then dropped from Special Autonomy were also recommended by the Papua Road Map as solutions to the conflict. This includes recommendations for human rights courts and a truth and reconciliation commission (TRC)³⁴. But neither have happened. In the absence of a TRC for Papua, there have been several initiatives to start to document human rights abuses over the years but much work still needs to be done (ICTJ & ELSHAM Papua, 2012). In 2011, ICTJ & ELSHAM Papua documented stories of victims and witnesses going as far back as the 1960s. In recent years more work has been done by women's and church groups however, none of this has been brought together in any formal database. This research process supports other academic studies that show that victims and witnesses are still experiencing unresolved emotional trauma and acute memories of violence. ICTJ & ELSHAM concluded that the level of reconciliation required for sustainable peace and stability is unlikely without acknowledging and addressing the serious violations that continue to play a major part in the conflict and deepening divisions and mistrust (ICTJ & ELSHAM Papua, 2012). However, there is no current consensus on the best way to move forward on this.

There are two options being discussed and both remain extremely challenging. The first is to go by the route of prosecutions, which assumes there would be enough proof to justify going to court. This would not allow for the examination of the context and the risk would be that no punishment would be secured for the perpetrators. According to Braithwaite et al., (2010) Indonesia has not changed its approach to truth and is not likely to in the near future. They state that *“the patter of impunity and denial to bring the history of past*

³⁴ See note 29

injustice into the public consciousness has little changed". The ad hoc tribunal for Timor – Leste failed to establish justice and so did the Indonesian human rights for the 2000 Abepura case³⁵. In both cases all those indicted were acquitted (ICTJ and ELSHAM Papua, 2012) President Jokowi Widodo recently rejected a proposal to offer an State apology for the 1965 massacre³⁶. This suggests that the Indonesian State is not yet prepared to review its meta-narrative to incorporate peoples' narratives. Those interviewed confirmed this perspective and felt also that this is not possible under current circumstances as many of the perpetrators or senior security services personnel involved are part of the current government. A second official option would be a truth commission which would be able to look more at context and focus on victims. According to Widjojo et al., (2008), a TRC would have the possibility to restore dignity and bring closure. On the other hand, in the opinion of research participants this would not be possible under current circumstances and it would only be possible to have a TRC once the violence had ended and there was increased trust between Papuans and the Indonesian State. So although the majority agree a truth recovery process is very necessary for healing and reconciliation, most Papuans feel that if there is going to be a process to recover truth and investigate the past, this is something they need to do themselves rather than wait on government permission or a formal commission which would have no legitimacy.

It can be concluded from this discussion that peacebuilding initiatives have not succeeded mainly due to the lack of legitimacy from Indigenous Papuans. Another key factor in failure especially regarding government efforts is the lack of understanding of the root causes and

³⁵ The only case that has been tried in a Human Rights Course was that of alleged violations that took place in Abepura in 2000. The court was set up in Makassar in 1999. According to investigations conducted by the National Human Rights Commission, in the early morning of December 7, 2000, unknown people attacked a police post in Abepura, killing two officers and a security guard and setting fire to several shops. In response, police raided student dormitories, taking more than 100 students into custody. The abuses they suffered as prisoners led to numerous serious injuries and three deaths. The commission found that torture, summary executions, and assault had occurred, and recommended the prosecution of 25 police officers: 21 for their direct role in the violence and four for command responsibility. The commission sent the investigation to the Attorney General's Office, which eventually charged two senior officers two years later. Almost 100 witnesses provided evidence of systematic arrests and beatings including high-level involvement in these crimes. The court acquitted both officers and dismissed the victims' claims for compensation (ICTJ and ELSHAM Papua, 2012).

³⁶ The 1965 massacres were large-scale killings and civil unrest that occurred in Indonesia over several months, targeting Communist Party of Indonesia (PKI) party members, communist sympathisers, ethnic Chinese and other groups, often at the instigation of the armed forces and government.

overall impact of the conflict on society. All processes as well as the current discussions on dialogue and the setting up of a TRC for the most part fail to include Papuan perspectives and capacities. However, there is a strong movement and desire from Indigenous Papuans for Dialogue as well as some form of truth recovery process. If these are to be successful it will be very important to ensure widespread participation in every stage of the process. Finally, as the conflict is still ongoing and the government is not yet willing to engage the majority of Papuans have reached the conclusion that they need to start these processes themselves.

8. A way forward - Building spaces for peace amongst violence

8.1 Lessons Learnt

This chapter will take learning from the previous chapters including understandings and experiences of root causes, Papuan perspectives and visions of peace, traditional conflict resolution practices, learning from previous peacebuilding initiatives and current proposals to examine possibilities about the future of peacebuilding in Papua. The principle learning point from this research lies in the process of the research itself and the importance of participation and inclusion of local perspectives. The process of action research has enabled not just the input of unique ideas, perspectives and analysis from Indigenous Papuans but has also enabled the development of those ideas into the basis for a way forward. The following learning and proposals are a summary of what has come out of the research and it is hoped that in the future there will be opportunity to develop them further. Seven learning points have been identified:

1. In order to achieve a complete understanding of the conflict, it was *vital to include Papuan experiences and perspectives instead of only data and outside analysis*. The conflict has been shown to be one of direct and structural violence, which has traumatised the population for over five decades leading to marginalisation, loss of identity and increases in horizontal violence.
2. *Solutions to a complex and ever changing conflict need to be multi-layered, long term, and structural. Peace processes need to embed societal transformation, healing and reconciliation*. None of this could be achieved with any of the simplistic solutions put forward or tried so far. While root causes are definitely important they are not the only factor that needs to be taken into account.
3. To ensure ownership of any peacebuilding process *inclusion of Indigenous Papuans at all stages and at all levels is vital*, otherwise there will be no legitimacy. Processes should be led by Papuans as they are the ones with the most to lose and the most to gain.
4. Root causes need to be identified through widespread analysis and this analysis needs to be ongoing as suggested by de Conning (2018). Who does this analysis is key and will define whether the root causes are really understood. Root causes and

drivers are not static. Some may not change but others will and affect how successful interventions may be. This analysis is also important to identify the non-negotiable root causes such as the political issue or racism in the Papuan context.

5. Local *capacities to imagine alternatives to violence and oppression can be transformative in how to strategize for peace* rather than only thinking through a logical problem to solution process.
6. There is *significant local capacity, tradition and knowledge in conflict resolution and dialogue methods* that are used for many different processes all over Papua. This research only uncovered a few. The potential for these remains untapped but a Papuan led dialogue and peacebuilding process could look at integrating these traditions.
7. Indigenous Papuan non-violence movements have the ability to build spaces of peace in the midst of the violence.

Based on this learning from previous chapters and discussions on these with research participants, the next sections will look at proposals on possible ways forward to build peace both in the midst of violence and oppression and then for more formal peacebuilding processes. As put forward by Lederach (1997) peacebuilding should not be understood as a static and monolithic condition of a society. It is a layered and dynamic process which is characterized by fragility and discontinuity. This is definitely true of the process in West Papua.

8.2 Building peace amidst the violence

The realities of the conflict and situation of ongoing domination and oppression means that the possibilities of a structured peacebuilding process that involves both sides as equals and supported by international community, is not going to be possible in the near future. State peacebuilding has not worked and has only caused more conflict. Braithwaite calls this ‘redundancy in peacebuilding strategy’ and suggests that weaknesses or non-existence of peacebuilding strategies can be compensated by the strengths of other strategies (Braithwaite *et al*, 2010). Therefore, peacebuilding needs to be focused on local indigenous peacebuilding. Based on learning and discussions It is proposed that gradual spaces for peace and justice can be built irrespective of the violence. The action research process with

participants has come to the conclusion that it is up to Papuans to shift and transform their context in the middle of violence. A framework for peace is needed that will transform the situation of domination, structural violence, trauma and division and as the State is not ready to engage – Papuans need to start themselves. Those interviewed stressed that as the whole of Papuan society is targeted whole layers of society must be reformed.

It is proposed that the situation of violence and oppression needs to be transformed through implementing the Papuan vision for peace (outlined in Chapter 6) and turning it into a strategy for peace. For the purpose of this document it will be called the *Indigenous Papuan Strategy for Peace*. This vision and strategy for peace needs to be further consulted on and defined but it is hoped that it will provide a good start to discussions on what a peace process might look like. The strategy is summarised in *Figure 4 and in the points that follow*. It is based on a grouping of the various elements of Papuan peace outlined in Chapter 6 and results of discussions and interviews from this process.

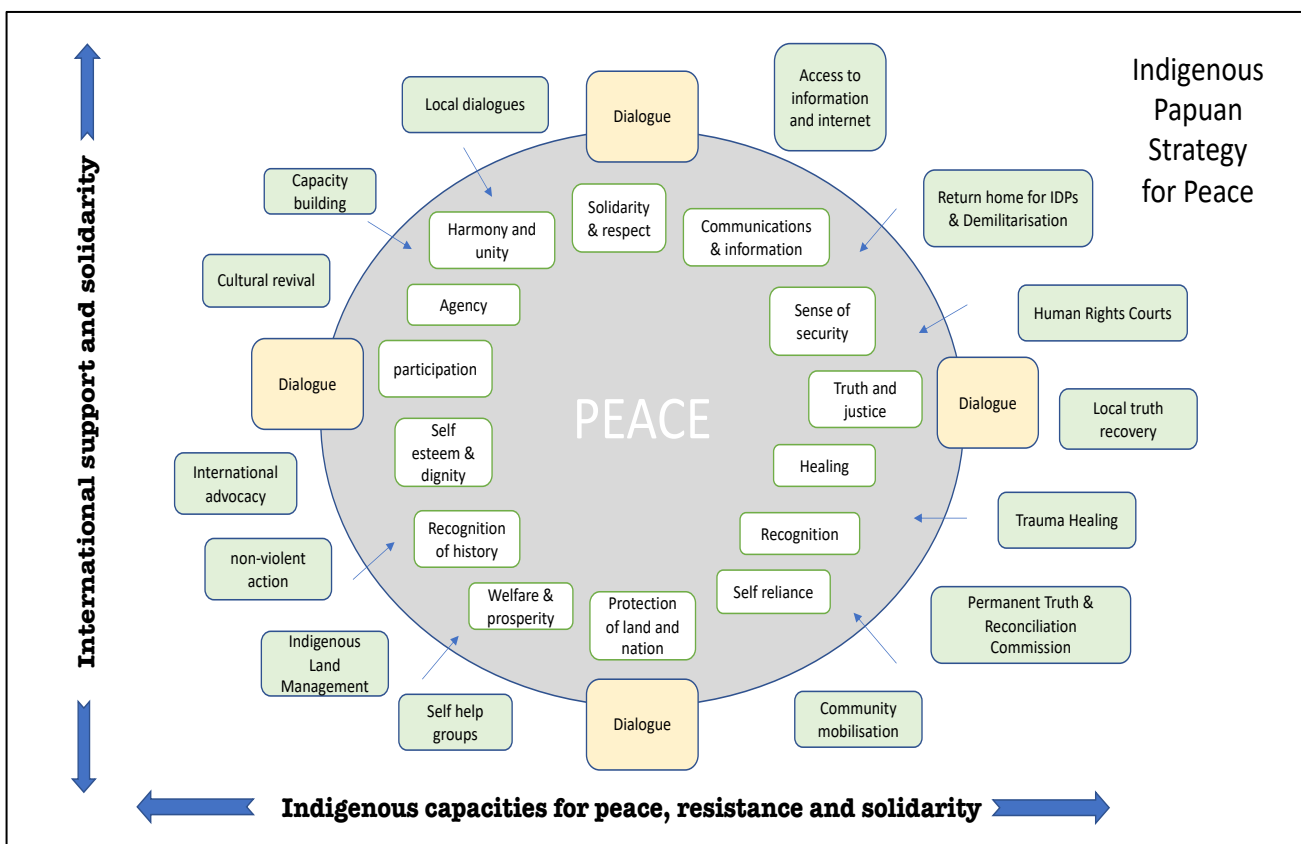


Figure 4: Indigenous Papuan Strategy for Peace (developed based on research discussions)

The main components in the *Indigenous strategy for Peace* can be summarised in the following points:

- *Strengthen and grow the non-violence civil resistance movement* – In order for the strategy to be enacted, there is a need to build capacity in conflict analysis and peacebuilding, tactics, communications and strategy within the non-violence movement. According to Accord (2020) there should be increased focus on non-violent movements as ‘peace-drivers’ in conflict analysis and increased advocacy to engage them in dialogue processes. The civil resistance movement should ensure expansion beyond the core activist organisations, student and self-determination groups to faith based organisations, NGOs community and cultural groups. There is a need for more coherence in strategy, improved links and coordination with international community. Currently there is growing unity between these groups and this should be supported and built on.
- *Increasing agency of community and faith based groups for mobilisation for self-reliance and peace* – NGOs, Churches and other community movements should build on experiences of Church and Community Mobilisation processes, which are increasing self-reliance, building unity and supporting community action on social issues and conflict. This should focus on processes for developing contextual theologies for communities to respond to violence, and increasing capacity of faith communities to advocate to speak on injustices.
- *Protection of Indigenous land, cultural identity and restoring self-esteem* – NGOs, faith based networks and community groups should work in coordinated ways to ensure protection of indigenous lands and resources and link this to wider environmental campaigning. Community organisations and faith groups should focus on cultural identity, languages, art, traditions and other cultural strengths and elevate their importance in daily life and community processes. Traditional forms of dialogue and conflict resolution should be shared and used widely. Where these have been lost they need to be brought back.
- *Truth recovery and Trauma Healing* - Religious institutions and a few NGOs have done some work in informal truth recovery, collecting testimonies on past violations and experiences. This should be expanded and coordinated and information compiled in a

consolidated form. Community storytelling and trauma facilitators should be trained and processes carried out throughout Papua. This can also be recorded and shared to for collective healing.

- *Local dialogues held to build unity, solidarity and common vision* – These can be held by trained facilitators as originally envisioned by the Papua Peace Network and should also draw on traditional practices such as Yabu and Yewam. r This can be focused locally and be carried out to build on conflict analysis, actor mapping and joint visions of peace and actions to build peace and transform conflict. This will build capacity locally and start to build a collective vision of the future as well as start to develop a more detailed agenda for any future more formal dialogue. This will need time and support.
- *Intentional Inclusion* – it is vital to ensure participation of all groups at all levels especially those who are normally marginalised such as women and youth. It is at these early stages that peace dialogues are often done in secret and dominated by men which sets up low inclusion thresholds for any future peace process. It is very important that all actors are included as it is at these early stages that agendas are shaped.
- *Implications for international community* – All of the above should affect the international communities interactions with Indonesia and support to Indigenous Papuans and their efforts to build peace. If the international community is serious about seeing a peaceful resolution in West Papua they need to shift their approach significantly. Donors should stop funding welfare programs through the State which are driving conflict. They should also increase diplomatic pressure on Indonesia for action on demilitarisation, mediated dialogue, as well as a proper truth and justice process. In order to intentionally support local peace efforts it is recommended that the international donor community do the following:
 - Invest in the West Papuan non-violent social-political movements and local peace capacity. At the moment this is controversial for donors when it actually should be seen as key to building foundations for peace process. In order to create more conducive environments in which sustainable peace initiatives can grow it is vital to invest in inclusive spaces for dialogue among non-violent groups and pathways for peaceful change.
 - Capacity building - Support civil society to prepare for peace talks – they need assistance to prepare for early phases of peace processes, to gain confidence and

technical skills. This also responds to the challenge of ‘shallow inclusion’ – where those who have gained access early on have legitimacy through an inclusion mechanism but remain marginalised due to lack of experience so cannot exert influence.

All of these actions above would start to create the conditions where Papuans would be more prepared for a political dialogue between Papuans and the Indonesian State as well as build pressure to bring the Government to the negotiating table through increased effective non-violent action, advocacy and international pressure. These proposed actions from research participants show that local peacebuilders understand the importance of ‘perpetual peacebuilding’ as put forward by Paffenholz (2021). These actions have the potential to shift the narrative from one of oppression to one of hope and healing and would lay the ground for future more formal peacebuilding. It would start to shift the mindsets of Papuans from being victims to being agents of change with shared visions of the future. The next section outlines proposals for setting up a more formal peacebuilding process which would be built on the local knowledge and traditions outlined in this research.

8.3 Setting the foundations for Dialogue

As the conflict in West Papua is ongoing and escalating, it is important to consider whether the proposals of dialogue or a formal truth process are realistic and under what conditions they could work. Even though a dialogue is being called for as an approach to resolving the conflict, it might be dangerous to Papuan interests if they are not ready, not united and do not have the proper support. There is significant risk that security forces and Government will narrow the space for discourse on dialogue as well as promote their own definitions of it to limit its impact. However, despite the risks outlined in this research, dialogue continues to be seen by research participants as a very important step. The following points are proposals to prepare the ground for a successful dialogue and also proposals for a more formal truth and justice process. These are based on learning from the research process, inputs from participants as well as other studies on dialogue and truth recovery processes.

Inclusion and legitimacy

“Rarely is inclusion understood by the formal negotiating parties to be about the society in whose name peace is apparently being negotiated” (Accord, 2020).

According to (Anderson and Olson, 2003) ‘who’ participates in a dialogue is vital to ensuring whether the impact stays at a personal level or moves to effect socio-political change. They ask a key question: “do you involve key people or more people?” They suggest that it is easy to find people who are willing to come together but it is more important to work out who those people should be. Retolaza, (2019) suggests that inclusion is a minimum condition for dialogue that can effect change. It needs to integrate all voices, all memories and all experiences. This has the impact that results of the dialogue can be used to affect the views and behaviour of the wider public. In the West Papuan context, it is fundamental that all groups are represented and this is not an easy task, as support from leaders does not necessarily guarantee the support of the rest of the Papuan community and tribes. Constituencies are confined to narrow tribal and religious communities and no single leader will command Papua wide support. If earlier work has been done through faith and civil society movements, an organisational structure should be established which will hopefully be representative. Consultations can be held throughout West Papua to select participants who would then be represented and report back to their constituencies. Clear communication processes should be set up to ensure accountability and legitimacy and feedback on what is being discussed. As well as carrying out actor mapping to ensure all groups are represented, it is essential to consider how the following groups are included:

- *Women* need to be included right from the start of any dialogue process and supported to be active participants in negotiations.
- It is also vital to include representation of *Armed resistance groups* who if not included would not support the process. The proscription of armed groups as terrorists harms the possibilities for peace (Accord, 2020) as it makes pre-negotiations harder, with third parties and NGOs more vulnerable and exposed to accusations of bias and proximity to armed groups. However it is also important to work with these groups so that they understand that other stakeholders are also important. Armed actors often still

understand inclusion in terms of which of them will be included rather than wider societal inclusion.

- Inclusion of *Self Determination movements and The Papuan diaspora* especially ULMWP who are the umbrella group representing most of the other Papuan movements.

Third Party Facilitation – It is very important that any dialogues be facilitated by a third party as was done in Aceh. This is mainly due to the unequal balance of power that would be present. It would need very careful balance and if not managed well could cause the failure of the dialogue or at the very least extremely limit its wider impact. The third party would need a mandate from the government and also be accepted by the West Papuans. They could initially be tasked with the establishment of a consultative mechanism to develop terms of reference for a dialogue and to also help negotiate conditions with either party. The presence of experienced third parties in the background has been key in other conflicts such as Northern Ireland and South Africa, helping facilitate behind the scenes contacts and relationships to gradually build trust (Accord,2020)

Government involvement –The Government should appoint a team of experts that can be accepted by Papuans as negotiators and have the capacity to build trust with the Papuan representatives as well as work with a third party. CHD (2011) suggests that in order to ensure good coordination from the Indonesian Government and to keep all actors on board, Parliament could form a special committee that a Government team would keep in the loop during negotiations and a similar group could be established to represent various groups in Papua. It will be vital during a process like this to ensure coordination with potential spoilers from within the Government and security services.

Focus and Approach to Dialogue - If the dialogue never addresses core issues it will not be able to affect change at the socio political level (Anderson and Olson, 2003; Kilmurray, 2019). Therefore, content of the process is very important. There are those that suggest that Papuans should consider taking the issue of political history and self-determination off the table to show that they can make a concession and to ensure that Indonesia will feel comfortable. However, research participants put forward that as the issue of political integration is one of the main roots of the conflict, to ignore this is to ignore the basic

principles of the peacebuilding process and would not bring resolution. It is important for the Government and Indonesians to gain better understanding of Papuan insights into history and how they have experienced the conflict that was caused by historical events. Accepting to talk about divisive issues doesn't mean that the parties will agree but not talking about it at all would ensure that the conflict will continue.

The process of how the agenda is defined is very important and there will be a need to establish ownership of agenda on both sides. Negotiation can ensure that more difficult issues such as historical integration are considered later based on other milestones reached. Dialogue should also include issues of racism, marginalisation, development, visions of peace and justice and human rights among others. The issues can be defined through analysis and using the *Papuan Vision of Peace*.

Evidence suggests that an extended time frame is necessary to ensure trust is built and that there is a transfer from personal impacts of the dialogue to a socio/political level (Saunders, 2003; Ropers, 2004; Pruitt and Thomas, 2007). Accord (2020) also agrees that time is needed to build trust for the promotion of the dialogue and to work towards negotiated solutions. Structuring a political dialogue with a longer time frame and as a series of smaller dialogues and negotiations over time rather than the one off dialogue or negotiation that is sometimes imagined by Papuans should enable wider change and shifts in thinking. Approaches to structuring the space for dialogue and process should endeavour to draw on traditional Papuan dialogue processes where possible, at least at the lower levels which will enable the process to be better understood and the results to become more accepted.

8.4 Building institutions for truth and reconciliation

Once demilitarisation has been achieved and there is more trust between the State and the Papuan people through ongoing dialogue, a very important step towards reconciliation would be the establishment of more permanent institutions for truth recovery and justice in order to deal with the history of human rights violation and structural violence. This would only be possible and accepted if some milestones towards the Papuan vision of peace had been achieved, there was trust that it was a serious proposition and there was commitment to justice and accountability. To have a truth and reconciliation commission too early or one

that would not be managed in a serious way would be very damaging to any peace process. In order to deal with the weight of the past and the time and trust that would be needed, Hernawan (2017) puts forward the idea of a permanent truth and reconciliation commission (PTRC) that would keep its doors open for a long period of time. By establishing a permanent TRC, reconciliation processes would not be limited to a short period and may be more suitable to such deep structural and oppressive societies such as West Papua which may take generations to heal. A PTRC would provide unlimited space and time for survivors to come and share their stories when they are ready and provide education to wider society. The PTRC could have the role of broadening the narrative on Papua in Indonesia by breaking silence and allowing the oppressed to speak, giving them a wider audience and building understanding and solidarity. A PTRC could also continue to promote a number of core values of the Papuan Vision for Peace – including self-reliance, recognition and self-esteem and sense of security. It could broaden the network of peacebuilding by empowering local peacebuilding initiatives. If peacebuilding is considered a process, then the PTRC would be a logical part of this process and not just a one off event.

To ensure accountability, the PTRC should be run in conjunction with a commission on human rights and a human rights court. The PTRC could help institutionalise the *history of suffering of the Papuan people and* translate it into a language that the nation can understand. Ideally (and maybe idealistically), such a commission would be State sanctioned – in this way it could influence decision making processes at various levels of Government and overturn State narratives on the past and on the future of the relationship between West Papua and Indonesia.

This chapter has brought together learning from the action research processes in order to put forward proposals for informal and formal peacebuilding. This is encapsulated in the *Indigenous Strategy for Peacebuilding*. As can be seen from the strategy the majority of the peacebuilding initiatives depend totally on local capacities. It is clear from the perspectives shared during the research processes that peacebuilding will not succeed if local people are not involved. However, the role of the international community to facilitate and support this process is also very important and should focus on funding, training, solidarity and facilitation of dialogue and then possibly monitoring of outcomes of more formal processes.

9. Conclusions

This research process started off with the aim of answering the question ‘*Why can’t West Papua achieve peace?*’ In order to answer the question the paper presented the understandings of conflict and experiences of violence and its impact on society from the perspectives of the different actors. It then went on to discuss Indigenous visions for peace and local capacities for peacebuilding and conflict resolution. After that it presented the results from discussions and analysis on past peacebuilding efforts, and an examination from a Papuan perspective on current proposals for dialogue and truth recovery. Finally the paper brought the learning together in proposals for next steps in peacebuilding for West Papua.

The action research process has been able to answer the research question very clearly. No efforts at peacebuilding and conflict resolution, starting from UN involvement in the 1960s to the present, have seriously recognised or included the perspectives, capacity and visions of the Indigenous Papuan people. There has been very little progress in building peace from the government as efforts have failed to understand the nature of the conflict, its deeply political nature and its effect on how society lives and interacts in the midst of violence today. Therefore peace initiatives have had no legitimacy. The research processes has also highlighted the importance of local capacities and imaginations for peace and peacebuilding in West Papua and has showed the potential of efforts when civil society is involved in analysis and planning. The effectiveness, capacity and imagination for peace from Papuan civil society continues to build spaces for peace outside of other formal processes and in the midst of violence. These results confirm de Coning’s theory on adaptive peacebuilding that peacebuilding is essentially local and political rather than technical (de Coning, 2018). Societies and communities that are intended to benefit from a peacebuilding intervention need to be fully involved in all aspects of the process. It also shows that peacebuilding in West Papua is ‘perpetual’ as proposed by Paffenholz (2021). It is not a one off initiative once violence ceases but a continuous meandering, ever changing processes which, faces changes, setbacks, opportunities and continuously adapts amidst a context of violence.

It is important to note that an unexpected result of the action research process - of which the author was also a participant –was that through discussions, feedback and strategizing together the understanding of the participants shifted. They moved from a position of uncertainty to a position of awareness and then to a place of activism. The majority of participants felt empowered by the process and are already using the proposals from the final chapter. This shows how powerful and transformative action research for peacebuilding in the midst of violence can be. This also confirms the effectiveness of an aspect of perpetual peacebuilding theory outlined at the beginning of the paper which puts the role of the researcher or outsider as the one who facilitates the envisioning of the society which people want to build and help them adapt their approaches rather than only providing solutions.

Finally, it can be concluded that peace will never be achieved in West Papua until local people are involved in the building of their own future. This research is just the beginning of our understanding of the nature, the logic, the technologies and the implications of state oppression upon one of the most neglected indigenous communities in the world. Further research needs to be done to explore how spaces for peace can be built in self-determination conflicts and situations of oppression and structural violence. The implications of the current situation for Papuans is for them to continue with their non-violent struggle and to hold firm to their vision of Peace. Their peacebuilding is perpetual and has to continue to move forward amidst the violence. They have no choice if they want to build peace and justice on their land. The situation does however, have implications about how the international community, supports peacebuilding in West Papua and other similar conflicts. If the international community is serious about human rights and localisation in peacebuilding and seeing a peaceful West Papua, their focus must move away from appeasing Indonesia and the actors that continue to drive conflict. According to de Coning (2018) *'Societies are unlikely to change their patterns of power and privilege unless forced to do so. Social systems only start to adapt when the cost of maintaining the current system becomes too high'*. The international community should start to stand in solidarity and support of Indigenous visions for peace and focus on identifying and supporting the political and social capacities that build and sustain peace in the long term.

This approach will be challenging and risky but is the only way that the Indigenous Papuans will be able to achieve peace on their land.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Questions for Semi-structured Interviews

Carried out in Indonesian

1. In your experience what are the root causes of the conflict?
2. What would a solution/way forward look like for each of these root causes? (based on answer to question 1)
3. What is your opinion (pros/cons) on the various efforts and proposals to bring resolution to the conflict in Papua?
 - a. Road Map to Peace Process
 - b. Papua Peace Network (Dialogues)
 - c. Government Welfare solution/Special Autonomy
 - d. Civil Society Non Violence movement
 - e. Armed Response

Current Specific Proposals (from Road map and others) – majority not carried out yet

 - a. Pro Papuan Development
 - b. Cultural/recognition – symbols, language, identity
 - c. Truth commission
 - d. Dialogue (to resolve the above and discuss contradictory view of history)
 - e. Other
4. What are the distinct aspects of Papuan identity/culture that need to be taken into account in peacebuilding?
5. What does a peaceful Papua look like from a Papuan perspective and Indonesian perspective?
6. What traditional forms/practices of conflict resolution/transformation exist and/or practised in Papua?
7. How could these be used as part of the process to resolve the current conflict?
8. What is missing/what are the gaps in the efforts for conflict resolution/peacebuilding?
9. What are the main obstacles/challenges for a movement towards conflict resolution?
10. How can we deal with these obstacles?
11. What conditions would need to be in place/what needs to shift/happen in order for progress to be made?
12. What is the role of women in peace efforts in West Papua? How can this be improved?

Appendix 2 – List of Action Research Participants

The participants in the table below include those who took part in several activities as part of the action research process:

1. Direct interviews – 8 people
2. Focus group discussion – 20 people
3. Online course – 11 people
4. Dialogue exercise – 10 people

Background/Affiliation of Participants	Number
Women leaders	5
Youth Activists	12
KNPB (West Papuan National Committee)	3
Activists from Other Self Determination organisation	4
Church Leaders	5
Armed Groups	1
Papuan Academics	5
Indonesian Academics (non Indigenous Papuans)	1
NGO leaders	7
Community members/leaders	5
Total	49

Appendix 3 – Key Historic Events in West Papua

Time Line of Key events in the West Papuan Conflict – identified by Papuan activists in online discussions and PCC (2021).

1545 (13 June)	Ynigo Ortiz de Retez sailed to, landed and took possession of the Northern coast of the island of New Guinea for the Spanish Crown
1898	Papua formally colonised by the Netherlands
1949	Indonesia became an independent state. Netherlands agreed to recognise Indonesia's East Indies territories with exception of Papua
1950's	The Dutch government began preparing the territory of independence introducing legislation and training of those that would make up West Papua's civil service.
1960	US investors interest in Papua's natural wealth arose after exploratory surveys predicting the presence of the largest above-ground copper deposit in the world at that time
April 1961	Dutch set up New Guinea Council
1961 (December)	West Papua held a congress declaring West Papua's independence, raising their new flag – the Morning Star and released a manifesto on the new independent state.
1962	Sukarno announced his Peoples Command (TriKora) to liberate Papuans and prevent the establishment of a 'State of Papua'. Conflict broke out between the Netherlands, Indonesia and the Papuans with the Indonesian army dropping 1500 paratroopers in Papua as a show of strength.
1962	After Indonesia showed signs of turning to Soviet Russia for assistance the United States intervened by engineering the New York Agreement . This required the Dutch to leave Papua. It handed control of West Papua to the United Nations under UNTEA – for 6 years until vote/referendum could be held on Papua's preference. New York agreement affirmed the 'eligibility of all adults, male and female, not foreign nationals, to participate in the act of self-determination to be carried out in accordance with international practice. The UN would then assist the government of Indonesia to administer a referendum by 1969 that would provide the Papuans with an opportunity to decide their future through a free and fair vote. One year after New York agreement signed the UN transferred control to Indonesia. The Papuans were never consulted.
1963	UNTEA transferred authority over territory to Indonesia.
1965	Set up of Papuan Liberation Organisation due to non-inclusion and frustration with process
	UN Secretary-General appointed a special representative "to advise, assist and participate in arrangements which were the responsibility of Indonesia for the act of free choice on retaining or severing ties with Indonesia" (UNSF)
	Military forces begin suppressing political activities in Papua. For weeks before the scheduled vote, Papuan leaders were arrested, imprisoned and exiled. During this time the UN received 156 complaints from various elements of Papuan society. 35 mentioned 'political prisoners, repression of freedom of expression, torture and even bombing committed by the Indonesian Military. The number complaints suggests that the atmosphere was not peaceful and free. Reports of British embassy in Jakarta refer to the use of bombardment in 1967

	resulting in many casualties (Saltford, 2003:78-79). Impact of military oppression was also reflected from the increasing number of Papuan refugees to the territory of PNG (TPNG) from 1963 (Saltford 2003). In the first three months of 1967 the TPNG administration listed 527 person crossing border and asking for refugee status. This situation remained the same following the Act of Free Choice in 1969.
1969	<p>Indonesia was mandated to administer a UN supervised referendum on the future of West Papua. Indonesia authorities selected only 1,206 tribal leaders, to vote. Those selected were put in special internment and isolation from any contact with the outside world, even with their own families. They were guarded by the army and had to go through rigorous drills to learn by heart their wishes to integrate with Indonesia (Drooglever, 2009)</p> <p>The result of the Act of Free Choice (Penentuan Pendapat Rakyat or Pepera) was unanimously in favour of integration with Indonesia. Indonesia argued that that difficult geography and Indonesian political culture of forging consensus by mutual deliberation (musyawarah) meant that it was justified in holding a vote by representatives. Papuans were also considered “too simple” and ‘Too primitive’ to vote. Papuans describe the consultation as an ‘Act of No Choice’.</p> <p>Papua was changed from West New Guinea to West Irian.</p>
	UN resolution 2504 – which endorses the transfer of sovereignty of Papua to Indonesia
1970	OPM begins low level war against Indonesia
1973	Official incorporation into Indonesia - Name changed to Irian Jaya and was declared a Military Operation Zone. New Guinea Council was disbanded and Flag and singing of Papuan anthem forbidden.
	Indonesian Government initiated agreement with Freeport McMoran (US Based mining company) to mine the world’s largest deposit of copper near Timika. Transmigration program started where settlers from Java and other highly populated areas moved to Papua.
1977-1978	During this period there were a number of atrocities committed by the Indonesian government in the Central and Eastern Highlands including places like, Wamena, Pyramid, Kurulu, kelila, Bokdondini, Kobakma and Baliem valley resulting in an estimated 21,000 deaths.
July 1998	Massacre of civilians in Biak after raising of the Morning Star Flag
1999	Irian Jaya renamed as Papua by President Wahid
2000	2 nd Papuan Congress Public congress held with hundreds of delegates from tribes all across Papua. The congress rejected the result of the 1969 Act of Free Choice and reaffirmed West Papua as an Independent nation.
2001	President of the Papuan Presidium Council Theys Eluay was assassinated by Indonesian soldiers
6 th December 2014	Declaration of Unity between NRFPB (Federal Republic of West Papua) ³⁷ , and WPNCL to form the ULMWP (United Liberation Movement for West Papua) in Port Villa

³⁷ NRFPB itself is a Papua Movement Organization formed during the Papuan Congress III in Jayapura on October 17-19, 2011. This Congress set forth NRFPB’s Constitution and elected Chairman of the Papua Customary Council, Forkorus Yaboisembut, as its President and Edison Waromi as the Prime Minister. According to the Basic Handbook of NRFPB (2012, p.2-3), NRFPB claims that the basis of this Congress was the PDP recommendation on June 10, 2010, recommendations from People’s Consultative Assembly (MRP)

2016	ULMWP applies to join Melanesian Spearhead group
August 2019	Student protests over race attacks is met with violent retaliation from Indonesian forces.
2021	Special Autonomy Law renewed by Indonesian government

and Papuan People in 2010, the 10th Plenary of Papua Customary Council in Biak, 2011 as well as a need to respond to the Peace Conference of Papua in July 2011. The Congress was held to consolidate the Papuan political movement and filled the vacuum of political leadership in the land of Papua since 2001 (Elisabeth *et al.*, 2017)

Appendix 4 - Explanation of Papua Land of Peace Framework

(Hernawan, 2017)

Participation	Taking an active role in the public sphere 'to build the world around us'. The emphasis of being an agent for one's own history resonates with the narrative of agent under the theatre of torture.
Harmony/unity	Highlights the importance of protecting the environment for the future sustainability of human life. Concern drives from long-term experience with extractive industries such as Freeport Indonesia which have caused widespread environmental and social damage
Communication and information	Interrelated elements concerning access to reliable sources of information and the freedom to communicate given that the Papuan social and political landscape is often coloured by misleading information which often leads to over expectation
Sense of security	Living peacefully and enjoying safety as a basic right for Papuans. Given that Papua has been heavily militarised, this element aims at drawing the distinction between human security and state security affairs.
Truth and justice	Clarifying Papuan political history to establish the historical truth of the territory. This element constitutes a major unresolved dispute between the Indonesian state and Papuans in that Papuans demand a review of the history of its integration into Indonesia whereas the Indonesian state claims that there is no need to conduct such a thing because the history is final.
Solidarity/tolerance/respect	This refers to an embrace of togetherness and differences that mark the nature of the Papuan community. Solidarity becomes the basis for tolerance and respect in that these attitudes provide 'a basic tool for reconciliation and permanent mutual acceptance in the community'
Self Reliance	Being in charge of ones own life. This element stems from the phenomenon of Papuan dependence of Indonesian government aid and projects which has greatly undermined the capacity of Papuans to craft their own future
Welfare	Material and spiritual satisfaction where no one needs to suffer from hunger poverty or disease.
Recognition and self - esteem	Restoring Papuan dignity which has been suppressed for half a century. "it is clear that self-esteem of the Papuan people has been suppressed to the point that it has almost ceased to exist. Many

	Papuans have begun to feel inferior because they are regarded as ignorant and primitive” (van den Broek et al, 2005).
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