

# From peace to peace(s): the impact of the local participation in the contemporary global concept of peacebuilding. Lessons from Indonesia and Mozambique\*

## De paz a paces: el impacto de la participación local en el concepto contemporáneo de construcción de paz. Lecciones desde Indonesia y Mozambique

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### Resumen:

El objetivo de este artículo es analizar la relación entre la incorporación de lo 'local' en los procesos de construcción de paz y el desarrollo de conceptos nuevos y diversos sobre la paz. En la primera parte, presentamos el concepto de paz en la disciplina de Relaciones Internacionales y cómo en el siglo XX, los estudios de paz se establecieron como una disciplina dentro de las Relaciones Internacionales. Analizamos también críticamente cómo la incorporación de lo 'local' ha influenciado el concepto

### Abstract:

The current article analyzes the relationship between the involvement of the 'locals' in peacebuilding processes and development of the new multi-concepts of peace. In the first part, we present the concept of peace in the international relations (IR) discipline and how, in the 20th century, peace studies were established as a discipline within IR until it became an independent discipline separated from IR. The current article also analyzes critically how the involvement of the 'locals' has influenced the contemporary global concept of peace and

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contemporáneo global de paz y conflicto. En la segunda parte, presentamos dos casos: por un lado el conflicto de Ambón en Indonesia y, por otro lado, la historia reciente de conflictos en Mozambique.

**Palabras clave:** Relaciones Internacionales; Paz y Conflicto; Participación Local; Indonesia; Mozambique

conflict. In the second part, we present two cases: the Ambon conflict in Indonesia and the recent history of conflicts in Mozambique.

**Keywords:** International Relations; Peace and Conflict; Local Participation; Indonesia; Mozambique.

## INTRODUCTION

To date, the idea of involving local citizens in peace building and conflict resolution is a topic of intense discussions among scholars and practitioners alike. Previously, the locals were a subject and not an actor of the peace mediation that is commonly facilitated by external parties. This has been found ineffective in Somalia, Rwanda and Bosnia (Leonardsson & Rudd, 2015). Then, there is a concept called ‘the local turn’, which means the rising prominence of local people to become an integral part of peace building and mediation in a continuing violent conflict. It is only natural that the locals have a stronger political will than the external players since they are directly affected. However, local citizens cannot be left unassisted to face violent disputes because they do not have the power and the know-hows. There has to be a middle ground between their involvement and the provision of assistance.

The ‘local turn’ concept offers a more significant potential for conflict resolution and opens up a broader spectrum of debate, especially in the field of peace studies. In its development, peace studies have evolved in several aspects, including the multi-perspective of peace and different dimensions of peace(s), so that there is not only one single truth, as described by Vicent Martínez Guzmán in his book, ‘hacer las paces’ (making peaces); and so that the local citizens are involved in the process of peacemaking as projected in the pyramid of peacebuilding by John Paul Lederach.

To illustrate this debate, we have selected two cases: the Ambon conflict in Indonesia and the history of conflicts in Mozambique. We picked them as two contemporary conflicts of the Global South, in where there has been significant participation in local actors and communities. But the two conflicts have important differences between them: the nature and causes of both conflicts, how there were recognized the local efforts and, therefore, the ways that both conflicts have been approached.

## 1. A BRIEF HISTORY OF PEACE STUDIES

Peace studies has a significant role in defining the current picture of international relations (IR) discipline, which has been an integral part of a country or international organization’s foreign policy. Over time, peace studies outgrew

IR and developed into a new discipline and received its own academic merits. Peace studies is multi-disciplinary covering, inter alia, international relations, sociology, anthropology, psychology, economics and history (Maebuta, 2010, p. 2). Pragmatically, peace studies have influenced global political agendas and prompted peace initiatives, as well as spurred career paths and job opportunities for both scholars and practitioners, in both domestic and international settings.

The question is on whether or not peace studies remain the static as it was ten years ago. This section reviews peace studies' history as a scientific discipline—including how the study and its focal point evolved—and defines its relationship with IR discipline. Also, this section will define actors in the peacebuilding field, both from an IR viewpoint and from a general perspective.

### **1.1. The birth of Peace Studies**

Peace studies was initially a sub-discipline of IR, emerging from the need to avoid wars between countries or confederations. Focusing on war prevention, the sub-discipline was referred to as conflict resolution.

Even though peace studies was not an established discipline just yet, many scholars had already pondered about this for a while. For instance, J.J. Rousseau, in 1782 with his book called *A Durable Peace*; Immanuel Kant in 1795 with *Eternal Peace*; and Johan Galtung in 1967 with *Peace Theories*. However, the underlying premise was about wars and conflicts between countries when in fact, discussing peace is inseparable from the context of IR. J.J. Rousseau, for example, argued that peace in Europe can be realized only by cooperation between countries through a federation system (Somerville et al., 1958). Immanuel Kant agreed with this, claiming that the formation of federation was a solution to the obsolete bilateral agreement (Kant & Smith, 1975).

The state is a key actor in IR, from the realists' perspective, and in deciding the concept of peace, the benchmark comes from the state's main actors. The claim is that the world order is anarchist and that there are no laws that bind states such that nations must prioritize their own protection. In this situation, the state will issue relevant policies. This mentality then leads the government to a security dilemma between strengthening the state's security or actively engaging in offences to preempt any potential attacks. As long as countries are not at war, according to realists, it is peace. They also maintain that peace is a balance of power. For example, during the Cold War between the bloc chaired by the United States of America and the Eastern bloc led by the Soviet Union, there was constant enhancement of power and influence. Both did wage some proxy wars but they were never actually at war. In another scenario, balance is when there is an assured mutual destruction; for example, both countries have nuclear weapons and war would be a death sentence for each one of them.

Meanwhile, according to the theory of liberalism, the state is not the only fundamental unit of variables influencing IR. There is an influence on the global

political agenda by state and non-state actors alike. In other words, international issues are not always about security, but can also be about economy, human rights and the environment. In this case, domestic politics often impacts the foreign policy.

In Kantian triangle, the world can achieve peace through democratic peace, economic interdependence and institutionalism. As a liberalist, Kant believes that the state must introduce a democratic structure, so that all classes' aspirations serve the people. The presumption is that the majority of people would desire peace and not war. These aspirations would permeate at the international forums through a democratic system and the world can prevent war from happening. From the economic perspective, waging a war would also make countries suffer because they are economically interdependent. Without international cooperation, the costs of economic activities would soar. Therefore, the state would rethink, considering the potential loss they would likely experience.

Some believe that the world can achieve peace if it shares the same philosophy and that the combination of democracy and a liberal economy is a solution to world peace (Aji & Indrawan, 2019). Countries with a similar system would depend on each other, so war is less likely. However, peace is relative in this case because countries could be at war with those adopting different systems. Therefore, the state must establish an international organization that binds countries to the law and order that they agree upon, such as the United Nations.

Speaking from the constructivism point of view, everything in this world is not naturally given. They are products of interactions between people and a form a social construction. People's interpretations about what is happening in the world come from their interactions with others, social practices, rules and institutions. Their interpretations are negotiated/discussed/confronted continually in a society. And if anything is a social construction, peace is no exception. Each person or community can interpret their respective peace definition; and one concept has no absolute truth since each social group has its social construction. Therefore, even if the world is an anarchist, the state is not. In fact, the state is the one that constitutes and has the ability to construct the world peace. In an ideational definition, the state has its principles and standards in directing useful and constructive actions, including in the context of peacemaking.

In 1948, at Indiana Manchester College, Gladdys Muir created the world's first peace studies program within the Department of History, with a curriculum covering philosophy, ethics and faith; and subjects including Greek tragedies, the Bhagavad Gita, Tolstoy, the teachings of Confucius and Gandhi, and American classics such as Thoreau.

Gradually, as the discussion became more complex and systematic, the research about Peace Studies evolved into a discipline distinct from the IR discipline. The debate was initially more focused on the war, then the portion of the peace discussion became more extensive. Indiana Manchester College

became one of the first institutions to deliver a peace studies program. In 1959, Johan Galtung established the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO), which was then followed by the establishment of other peace research centers.

Based on a report from the International Herald Tribune, as of 2008, there are more than 400 teaching and study programs in peace and conflict, especially those at the United World Colleges, Peace Research Institute Oslo, Universitat Jaume I in Castellón de la Plana in Spain, Malmö University of Sweden, American University, University of Bradford, Pea mandated by the United Nations. In addition to that, the Rotary Foundation and the United Nations (UN) have also been sponsoring international academic teaching and research programs in peace and conflict studies.

## 1.2. Evolution of Peace Studies

The evolution that followed stems from the principle of positive and negative harmony by Johan Galtung, which states that negative is the absence of war, while positive entails balance, normalization of relationships, and a harmonious existence. People may pursue both—on the one hand, they prevent aggression and on the other, they nurture interactions and contact for harmonious and cooperative relationships.

This theory of Galtung then influenced John Paul Lederach to see conflict more favorably from a fresh viewpoint. People should distinguish a conflict from a war since it does not necessarily end in aggression and violence. In fact, a conflict may end up fruitful and open opportunities. Better yet, a conflict can transform a person or group of people. Lederach reminds us all that conflict is a natural phenomenon that can happen every day. People should not prevent conflict. Instead, they should learn how to handle it and gain something out of it.

As such, Lederach proposed a pyramid approach to peace building, covering different society levels with various methods, emphasizing that the state and all citizens' classes are actors of peace, even those at the bottom lines i.e., the local citizens. This is a bottom-up approach and the pyramid categorizes the group in three—the top-elite, the middle-range and the grassroots. Actions that can be taken, for example, include high-level negotiations for the top-elite, problem-solving seminars at the middle-range level, and bias elimination at the grassroots level.

All in all, this warrant the rethink of the IR popular term 'Si vis pacem para Bellum'—if you want peace, prepare for war—as it is only applicable in a realist thought when peace studies is viewed from IR discipline. Now, with all the changes in the scope and perspectives, it will be more relevant to say 'Si vis Pacem cole justitiam'—Sow justice if you want peace (Kusumaningrum, 2017a).

## 1.3. International actor's domination in peacebuilding

Since peace studies is a field of study born from the IR discipline, it is consequential that international actors dominate the activities within its scope, such as peacebuilding efforts. For instance, the world peace building's contributing agencies are the United Nations and its agencies, powerful countries that actively engage in international relations, and international institutions such as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the International Crisis Group (ICG), and Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders).

In terms of study focus, peace studies have changed from only resolving conflicts between states to domestic disputes within the country. In Indonesia, violent conflicts are categorized into four—ethnic and religion, central-periphery, electoral and routine (Tadjoeddin, 2014). Conflicts between groups within the country indicate a difficulty to make peace in a society with complex identities comprising, among others, race and religion. Within a border while sharing a national identity, peacemaking is already challenging, let alone when it goes beyond borders. Therefore, frictions and conflicts may turn into Islamophobia and an anti-Chinese sentiment. When it happens, the state takes stage as the actor of peacebuilding and it remains a dominant actor in either a conflict within a country or between countries.

With such powerful position, the state can also be the one that starts violence. In the state's monopoly of violence theory by Max Weber (Dusza, 1989), the state has the ability not only to monopoly violence against citizens, but it also carries the legality in doing it. The state has all the capability to organize events, both secretly and openly. In fact, violent events with substantial casualties or that lasts for a long while usually have the state standing behind them (Heryanto, 2005).

In other words, even though the state is not the only actor, it is still the most influential. The state can foresee or avoid violence and wars (especially within the state) from happening. If the state fulfils its duties as the primary actor in the pursuit of peace, with its respective approaches and portions; consequently, other actors, including the locals, will follow suit. For example, in Indonesia, on 19 January 1999, a violent war took place on the island of Maluku between the Christian and Muslim communities. However, a significant peacebuilding was only started after the government made the conflicting parties signed an agreement on 13 February 2002<sup>1</sup>.

On a macro level, countries around the world mostly hold the 'realist' principles even though the state, to some extent, also takes the 'liberalist' and 'constructivism' views . With a constructivism view, the world agrees to bind itself to international laws under the United Nations, but at the same time, the state is also 'realist' in thinking by placing the winning countries of the second

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<sup>1</sup> The agreement was taking place in Celebes Hotel, Malino, South Sulawesi. The agreement name is after the name of the region, Malino. As previously there was also an agreement in this place, so the government named this agreement as 'Malindo II Agreement'.

world war in a higher position (with their veto power) than the remaining members. Powerful countries reflect in a ‘realist view’ by allowing only specific countries to keep nuclear weapons, while banning others. With an alibi to raid the nuclear weapons, for example, the United States invaded Iraq and overthrew President Saddam Hussein’s government before putting him on trial and executed him. Finally, the world thinks liberally by allowing the locals to have their say, being part of the peacebuilding actors, being acknowledged by the UN within the scheme of local government, local capacity and local ownership (Leonardsson & Rudd, 2015).

However, when viewed comprehensively, non-state peace actors also play significant roles in the process of reconciliation or positive peace, in particular in domestic conflicts. In particular, local or grassroots peace actors are very influential in the everyday pursuit of peace and reconciliation. They are at the forefront of the conflicts, more aware of the situation and know better ways to deal with them. That is to say, the local turn—that has begun to emerge and gone global over the last few decades—is another shift in the field of peace studies or peacebuilding that needs a serious consideration.

## 2. THE LOCAL TURN

In the analysis of peacebuilding processes, two very clear spheres have traditionally been defined: the internationals—those actors that build peace by having the knowledge, resources, and tools— and the locals—constituted by the societies that are victims of conflict and recipients of the (re)construction of their institutional, political, economic and social contexts. This traditional dichotomous conception is still present today, closely linked to the liberal peace consensus<sup>2</sup>, which began to take shape from the resurgence of the liberal internationalism in the 1970s (Heathershaw, 2008, p. 599). However, since the 1990s, this dichotomous conception has been challenged. As we will see in this section, from critical and alternative approaches, the role of the local sphere in peacebuilding processes has been theorized and questioned, seeking to claim a necessary role that, even to the present, remains invisible to a certain extent. hence, what is being sought is a way for the locals to appropriate the processes that will profoundly transform their own societies.

### 2.1. The failure of international actors in peacebuilding: towards a post-liberal peace

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<sup>2</sup> We speak of consensus, because although liberal peace has been established as a concrete model—as an “Ikea peace”—, as a discourse rather than as a form of praxis (Heathershaw, 2008, p. 602), or as a structure with its ontology and specific methodology (Richmond, 2007, p. 20), we must not lose sight of the fact that the liberal peace project is made up of a whole series of different paradigms, currents and visions of peace.

During the 1990s, the peacebuilding debate went from the academic field to being one of the main concepts in IR (Mateos Martín, 2019, p. 47), through the exponential growth of peacebuilding missions sponsored by the UN. In *A Peace Program*<sup>3</sup> and its 1995 supplement (UN, 1995), we find the best example of the main assumptions and characteristics of a liberal peace project. First, the state is emerging as the cornerstone of this entire project. Second, the project stresses the importance of more open, liberal modalities of economic policy. Third, it emphasizes the strengthening of government institutions. Fourth, it underlines the centrality of the nexus between democracy and peace (UN, 1992, pp. 3, 5, 17-18). However, also in the 1990s, the liberal peace consensus entered into a temporary crisis that would have generated two very different branches of debate about its reasons: the problem-solving literature and the critical literature of peace studies (Ruiz-Giménez, 2013, p. 21).

The problem-solving debates do not question the structure of the liberal peace project, but rather defend its discourse while emphasizing the need to improve efficiency and effectiveness, which raises technical or operational criticisms (Pérez de Armiño, 2016, p. 297). There are two main groups in these debates—those who justify failures in local dysfunctionalities, and authors such as Paris and Sisk (2011, pp. 13-14) or Francis Fukuyama (2004, p. 17). The latter consolidate the conception of peace as a governance tool through the formula of ‘institutionalization before liberalization’, which means strengthening the state and government institutions prior to liberalization (Mateos Martín, 2019, p. 56). Nevertheless, no question has been raised either for the state model intended to be built or the relationships between institutions and civil society that are established in post-conflict societies. This underlies an understanding in which the (re)construction of the state becomes the preferred formula to build peace (Íñiguez de Heredia, 2017, p. 14), which has now been widely challenged. There are authors who consider it necessary to separate these two processes, since the construction of the state is focused on the political, economic and security architecture; whereas peacebuilding focuses on the needs and rights of individuals, sustainable communities, and the requirements for a self-sustainable policy of equitable representation (Richmond and Franks, 2009, p. 182).

Faced with criticisms on the technical or operational nature, there emerged literature linked to critical debates in IR<sup>4</sup> that questions the liberal peace consensus. Thanks to these debates, the ontological, epistemological and methodological perspectives in our approach to the study the internationals

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<sup>3</sup> The report made by Boutros Boutros-Ghali in 1992 as SG of the UN.

<sup>4</sup> They emerged in the 1980s from Critical Theory, which in turn was based on the postulates of the Frankfurt School, neo-Gramscian theory, feminism and various aspects of poststructuralism (Rengger and Thirkell-White, 2007, p. 5).



expanded<sup>5</sup>. What these debates have in common is that they believe theory is not neutral, inherently biased by a perspective, and is intimately associated with interests and social practices as it is always for someone and for some purposes (Cox, 1981, p. 128). In any case, far from constituting an epistemic unit, these critical debates are a very heterogeneous space composed of various currents such as postmodernism<sup>6</sup>, poststructuralism<sup>7</sup>, postcolonial perspectives<sup>8</sup> or feminism<sup>9</sup>. The expansion of ontological, epistemological and methodological perspectives has made it possible to connect peacebuilding with other debates, such as gender, culture or identity issues (Richmond, 2008, p. 441). In sum, these questionings from the critical debates can be grouped into three large clusters: the results of the peace liberal project; based on its viability, sustainability and legitimacy; and based on its objectives, agendas and forms of power (Mateos Martín, 2019, p. 59). All these questions and proposals lead up to a post-liberal peace that, among others, advocates a different approach to look at the local dimension in peacebuilding.

## 2.2. Rising of 'local' in peace and conflict studies

The idea of involving the locals was present in the political imaginary of liberal governance even before it was articulated from theory in the form of complex, adaptive and emerging systems (Dillon and Reid, 2009, p. 38). An example of this is the colonialism in the 19th and 20th centuries, where local governments such as protectorates were established, but they had no real autonomy or decision-making over the local societies. Spaces of true autonomy are indeed not generated for local agents (Hughes and Pupavac, 2005, p. 882). On the contrary, there is a perception that the locals hinder rather than assist the design and implementation of sustainable solutions (Donais, 2011, p. 53).

Faced with this concept, the 1990s witnessed a growing emphasis on communities and local actors, which fed the idea of peace from below (Leonardsson and Rudd, 2015, p. 826). This could be linked to the concept of positive peace developed by Galtung (1964, 1996) since it allows us to address different types of violence that emerge locally—the direct, cultural and structural kind of violence. To illustrate the link between the local turn, bottom-up peace

<sup>5</sup> Linklater (1996, pp. 279-280) considers that there are four great achievements of critical studies: its consideration of knowledge as not neutral and that reflects pre-existing social purposes and interests, its opposition to the idea that existing structures are immutable, its learning and overcoming weaknesses inherent to Marxism, and its visualizations of new forms of political community that break with unjustified exclusion.

<sup>6</sup> Several authors agree that the introduction of postmodernism in IR comes from the hand of Richard Ashley and R.B.J. Walker (1990).

<sup>7</sup> For an analysis of poststructuralism in IR see Cornago (2015).

<sup>8</sup> In our opinion, Meera Sabaratnam (2011) has a very interesting postcolonial/decolonial perspective.

<sup>9</sup> See: Mendia Azkue, 2014, p. 32

and positive peace, we could look at the treatment of gender issues and peace building. With a critical local approach, it is possible to address not only sexual violence in a conflict, which is much more visible and direct, but also other types of gender violence of a cultural and structural nature, which have a continuity between conflict and post-conflict times, and between public and private spaces. Without undertaking the study of all types of violence, we will never be able to speak of a positive peace in a Galtung's sense.

One of the central figures in the local turn is John Paul Lederach, who suggests that in order to build a long-lasting sustainable peace, it is necessary to broaden the understanding of both socio-economic and socio-cultural resources. The latter considers people and their diverse cultural traditions in peace building as primary resources (Lederach, 1997, p. 87). To carry out their duties, first it is necessary to create political, economic and social spaces for these actors so that they can identify, develop and use the necessary resources to build peace (Bush, 1996, p. 86). Lederach focuses the attention on the 'mid-range actors', those who are connected to and trust both the high-level and the grassroots actors. It is necessary to recognize them as peace builders from the international community and they should also be able to identify themselves as such (Lederach, 1997, pp. 94-95). This approach us to nurture peace building<sup>10</sup> from within through strategies that are in line with the domestic realities (Tschirgi, 2004, p. 17).

The emergence of new epistemological perspectives in IR and other related disciplines put into question the state-centric paradigm that even today remains hegemonic and undermines the capacities, potential and possibilities of other actors' participation in the creation of a sustainable and emancipatory peacebuilding practice. As mentioned previously, the status quo needs to be questioned i.e., the construction, development and institutionalization of the state as the main actor in peacebuilding processes, which renders other actors, processes and realities invisible. This is even more crucial when the state to be built and strengthened is in the image and likeness of the western liberal state model. The liberal peace operations do not have a great deal of concern for pre-existing forms of government, traditional institutions, or cultural sensitivities—or a combination of the above—leading to criticism of how western-centric understandings of liberal modernity have constantly marginalized the other conceptions (Randazzo, 2016, pp. 1352-1353).

These new perspectives have drawn attention to the need to recognize—with a creative dimension—and take into account the weight that local actors have, or should have, in conflict contexts and in peacebuilding processes. Other

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<sup>10</sup> The UN endorsed local ownership as a basic principle at least since 2001 (Mateos Martín, 2011, p. 217), when Kofi Annan, then the SG of the organization, declared that sustainable development is essential to achieve peace and it only can be achieved by the local population itself (UN, 2001, p. 3). In 2008, through the so-called Capstone Doctrine, local ownership will be considered as an indicator to measure the success of a peace operation (Mateos Martín, 2011, p. 217)

fields such as development have observed such an evolution that criticizes the exclusive<sup>11</sup>, hierarchical and hegemonic practices. Thus, liberal peace consensus is an effort shared by those who adhere to the ‘local turn’ (Randazzo, 2016, p. 1351), which encourages rethinking the concept of local ownership, analysis of its elements, identification of the tensions it produces, solution to the challenges it implies, and proposal of the alternatives and solutions.

### 2.3. Local appropriation and the reconstruction of subjectivity<sup>12</sup>

In both poststructuralism and other approaches that stem from poststructuralist conceptions, such as postcolonial or feminists approaches, certain assumptions of critical theory about peace and, specifically, about the local turn have been problematized. One of the prominent authors who criticizes this from the feminist and postcolonial perspective is Meera Sabaratnam. She rose a question on how cultural, historical and epistemic factors reproduce Eurocentrism<sup>13</sup> and how they limit knowledge of the world about where to locate policies, who knows about them, and what kind of responses are acceptable (Sabaratnam, 2017, pp. 20-22)

For this group of authors, the scrutiny rests on the dualistic distinction between the locals and the internationals, or the western and the non-western (Laffey and Nadarajah, 2012, p. 404; Heathershaw, 2013, p. 280; Sabaratnam, 2013, p. 266). The association of the liberal with the internationals, and the indigenous with the locals is both reductionist and confusing (Heathershaw, 2013, p. 277). Criticisms are directed especially towards the notion of ‘hybridization’<sup>14</sup>, considering that liberal governmentality “has included both liberal and non-liberal subjects and spaces, in Europe and in its colonial extensions, generating practices and government apparatuses that are also hybrids by nature” (Laffey and Nadarajah, 2012, p. 404). Therefore, instead of the actors, what should be distinguished is the practices that through the recognition of populations as agents view conflict as political, from those that their objective is to govern the

<sup>11</sup> Mateos Martín (2011, pp. 211-212) points out that the concept of local appropriation acquired prominence between the eighties and nineties —associated with the debates on the crisis of international aid along with other concepts such as “local participation” or “Local empowerment”—, being formally recognized in 1996 in a report by the OECD Development Assistance Committee.

<sup>12</sup> The concept of ‘subjecthood’ is taken from the work of Meera Sabaratnam (2017)

<sup>13</sup> The sensibility that Europe is historically, economically, culturally and politically distinct, in a way that significantly determines the general character of global politics." (Sabaratnam, 2017, p. 20)

<sup>14</sup> The notion of hybridization implies a superposition of multiple identities and ideas without any one being dominant with respect to the others (Bhabba, 1990, p. 4). In Peace Studies, hybridization is understood as a middle way that gives rise to the concept of hybrid peace. Ultimately, hybrid peace refers to the fact that no peace can be built without taking into account both elements of the local and the international. However, we can understand the local and the international as two separate and hierarchical spheres (the international over the local), or as two interrelated spheres.

populations (Jabri, 2013, p. 6). Thus, inclusion of the local would not simply be a question of who participate in peacebuilding and conflict resolution but how participation is facilitated. Such reconstruction of subjectivity in political analysis paves a way to the reconstruction of societies and prompts appropriation of the society's own reconstruction processes (Sabaratnam, 2017, p. 39)

Such proposal is suggestive, even from the definition of subjectivity as "the property of having one's own presence, consciousness and realities engaged in the analysis of political space" (Sabaratnam, 2017, p. 39). With this, the author proposes three strategies to rebuild intervened societies: recovering past memory, involving political consciousness and investigating the material realities (Sabaratnam, 2017, pp. 39-46). The local turn and other approaches have incorporated some of these elements, but that they did so in a way that complements the Eurocentric configuration of the problem without challenging it (Sabaratnam, 2017, p. 39). Therefore, what criticality towards the local turn seeks in this proposal is the political emancipation of the intervened societies through the deconstruction of the ever-present Eurocentrism.

Therefore, the question that remains is which trajectory the 'local' extension should go and what implications of reconstructing subjectivities may have. This task will let us deepen the study of peacebuilding as a political process that allows the exercise of local agency.

### **3. Two cases of study: Indonesia and Mozambique**

#### **3.1. The religious conflict in Ambon, Indonesia (1999-2004)**

##### **3.1.1. Introduction/Chronology**

Ambon is the Maluku province's capital city, whose area extended to North Maluku before the division in 1999. Maluku island was the first land (in the current Indonesian republic) where the European settlers landed. The Portuguese expedition landed on this island first in 1511, led by Alfonso D'abquerque. Later, Spain came in 1519, led by Juan Sebastian Elcano (Gischa, 2020) but they left after signing the Zaragoza agreement with the Portuguese, which stated they agreed to divide the globe (outside the European region) into two; one for the Spaniards and the other for the Portuguese. Soon after, the Dutch company i.e., Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie (VOC) reached Indonesia, established its first government in Ambon, and appointed Pieter Both as the first general governor in 1602. With this history, Maluku has become multicultural and multi-religious. Before the Portuguese arrived, the Arab merchants had actually reached Maluku in 1486 and spread the teaching of Islam, but then the European settlers introduced Christianity extensively, especially after the Dutch came in 1602. In different areas of Maluku, these three religions spread rapidly;

and then the ‘divide et impera’ political tactic took advantage of this to dismiss the locals’ resistance.

Fast forward to the 20th century, Indonesia experienced the most intense and violent political turbulence, marked by the end of an authoritarian rule, a transition to democracy and decentralization. Considered one of the worst human tragedies in Southeast Asian countries in the 20th century, the religious conflict on the island of Maluku took many lives and destroyed the city. A quarrel between two young people of different faiths ignited conflict in the provincial capital, Ambon, just one year after the beginning of the reformation era. The Indonesian Survey Institute (LSI) recorded that the conflict over the period of 1999-2002 resulted in 8,000-9,000 deaths, 700,000 displaced people, 29,000 houses burned down, 7,046 homes damaged, and 45 mosques, 57 churches, 719 shops, 38 government buildings, and four bank offices destroyed (Ein, 2012).

In the past, soon after Indonesian gained independence, the Christians on this island held strategic government positions at both the regional and central levels. At that time, only Christians had an adequate education because the Dutch only granted the Christians the luxury of going to school. Then, as Suharto’s New Order came to power (1967-1998), the political map started to shift, and a centralistic style of leadership was introduced. The center directly decided on the regional leaders. President Suharto appointed Muslim leaders as part of his political strategy. Muslim transmigrants in Ambon were also socio-economically dominant. This condition made the Christian group of Ambonese felt powerless in their own homeland. Frictions emerged, but the New Order authoritarian, military regime swiftly dismissed the conflict and swept the problem under the rug. The tensions remained and built up like a timed bomb.

Ambon has unique local wisdom to maintain their inter-religious harmony, a legacy passed down for generations. Pela and Gandong are an unwritten agreement between villages regardless of any differences, including the religions. Villages with Pela or Gandong ties are bonded in fraternity. Among the policies is that the people from each village should be willing to help each other in building a mosque or a church, and they are not allowed to marry each other.

Each village has a ‘king’ that the people love. This leader doubles up as an elder who ensures that the social structure is functional. Unfortunately, the New Order did not respect this local wisdom. This undermining also contributed to the fatality of the 1999 conflict. Moreover, there was some suspicion that the 1999 conflict, for some reason, was orchestrated by or constituted an elite ensemble. Husain Romain, an ex-combatant from Maluku, supported this argument by saying that: “My thoughts about social life are shifting little by little. I can conclude that we, as people of Maluku, are only used as tools by people who have vested interests in this republic.” (Nuridin, 2018).

### **3.1.2. State’s role in handling the conflict**

The government was slow in handling the violent, widespread conflicts in Ambon, which consequently worsened the situation. A group of people from outside Maluku came and joined the fight as a form of solidarity for their fellow Muslims or Christians. Religious organizations took the initiative to go to Maluku and ‘supported’ their religious fellows because of the government was slow. Jafar Umar Thalib’s Laskar Jihad brought to Ambon thousands of individually trained paramilitary soldiers. This, without a doubt, had escalated the conflict to a new height.

The situation went even worse when the military and police personnel took part in the conflict under their respective religions. In this situation, Tentara Militer Indonesia (TNI, the Indonesian Military) or the police officers joined the fight as either Islam and Christian supporters. Because of this, the local council’s meeting demanded that those in charge for the conflict handling must be non-Christian and non-Muslim officials only. The government did not approve, arguing that the head of regional police was already a Hindu, yet the conflict did not subside (Pareanom, Yusi A; Sepriyossa, Darmawan; Kerlely, 1999).

Three years later, on 13 February 2002, at the Hotel and Vila Celebes, Malino, South Sulawesi, the government mediated the two parties to reach a peace agreement. The agreement, referred to as the Malino II Agreement, consists of 11 points that all parties must comply with. This agreement was not immediately effective as clashes and disagreements rose soon after the signing. For instance, a day after the signing, four bombs exploded at different locations in Maluku. After that, there were clashes between Christians and Islamic groups in mid-March. Two months after the signing, in the shopping area in the city, another homemade bomb exploded. Luckily, community and religious leaders were fast in mediating the conflict and tried to minimize the tension.

### **3.1.3. The rise of locals in struggling for peace(s)**

Pela and Gandong was local wisdom whose evidence are visible until today—such as the mosque in Batu Merah, with the pillars built by the Christians from Gandong villages, Ema and Paso. This was an effective system to build religious tolerance until Suharto’s New Order government disrupted the structure. Suharto banned all kinds of discussion about tribe, faith, race, and inter-group issues, commonly abbreviated as SARA, with a claim to preserve the national unity. However, that policy also meant ignoring differences—a phenomenon referred to as misrecognition—which pushed diversity under the surface. Any SARA friction would be quickly nipped in the bud by the government—dismissed by the authoritarian and military methods without an actual resolution. Over time, this became a fire in the husk that was ready to burn down the house even with the smallest trigger.

The transition to democracy and decentralization in Indonesia, including in Ambon, was a momentum where violent conflicts could break out of nowhere. The vulnerability was built up from multiple sources. The New Order handling mechanism was no longer in place after the collapse of the dictatorship in 1998. The local wisdom, after being suppressed by the New Order system for a long while, was left dysfunctional. To make it worse, certain groups with vested interests took advantage of the situation by aggressively provoking the people, such as Republik Maluku Selatan (RMS, Republic of South Maluku) separatist group. In other words, long before the conflict broke on 19 January 1999, the tension was so high that it was almost impossible not to explode.

In such a bad situation, it was fortunate that some local people were attempting to carry out peace initiatives. Not all Maluku people were blinded by the provocation and they could actually differentiate between religions and individuals or adherents. As such, they helped victims without seeing their religion. They were part of a volunteer community of Christians and Muslims called 'Tim Relawan Untuk Kemanusiaan' (TIRUS, Voluntary Team for Humanity). Although each side has already created their own voluntary organizations, these groups have come beyond Christian-Islamic segregation. Their activities were broader and more inclusive (Manuputty et al., 2014, p. 23). In addition to serving refugees' well-being, TIRUS also has a cross-religion information medium packed with a community of journalists from the local media. This was a crucial tool because, before being released, the reports had to be cross-checked by both parties (Islamic and Christian journalists) who were mandated to stay non-bias, such that their reporting was far from provocative. Only necessary materials that facilitated peace initiatives were published and circulated.

In addition, the locals also established women's movement party (GPP). They carried out an effective anti-violence campaign by marching on the streets, sending flowers and messages of peace, and asking women to send a message to their husbands and sons not to go to war. Public and religious leaders also utilized their position to support the peace building. For instance, the kings (village heads) gathered their people and announce that no citizens were allowed to engage in any religious-nuanced disputes. Meanwhile, Christian priests and Islamic scholars built bridges and maintained communication, and even established Lembaga Antar Iman (LAIM, Interfaith Board of Maluku).

If anything, the void left by the central government somewhat awakened the local wisdom and communities. Some of the above-mentioned independent efforts by the locals, to name a few, were a form of reaction to the inefficacy of government in handling the violent communal conflicts in Ambon. The peace efforts carried out by the local community were their instinctive reactions. It was not a structured system as the local wisdom was still dormant. In other words, government's slow response and the escalation of the conflict with many

casualties were vital factors that drove the locals' natural reaction. This situation forced the local community to act independently as they could not expect any more government support.

Three years later, in the form of the Malino II peace agreement, the government eventually came up with a concrete resolution, a formal scheme to mediate the groups. However, long before this, during the past three years, the locals had to work step by step to build the peace. Even if the government had attempted to reiterate the demarcation line between the two sides, the state apparatus would have not covered all the areas, so there could be clashes anywhere and anytime. Therefore, those local players played the most part in seeding peace on the government behalf.

In this case, the awakening of local turn is also an indirect result of the government inability to handle conflict properly. Hypothetically speaking, if the military and authoritarian strategy had prevailed at that time, there would have been no 'local turn'. There could have been fewer deaths, but the problem would have remained there, and the local group would have never risen to sovereign. As the conflict's settlement was not entirely over, there would always be a time bomb ready to explode at any time. History would repeat, and the peace would not last long.

#### **3.1.4. Ambon's reconciliation**

The reconciliation was dominated by the local communities as the vanguard of realizing positive peace. In the Malino II peace agreement, the government played a role in formalizing the peace agreement, but the local people themselves oversaw and ensured the accord operated as it should. Not just that, if the clash ever happened again, after the agreement, the local group had to do something. However, the locals kept the efforts to keep the Malino II peace agreement remained valid. And most importantly, it should be ensured that peace efforts would continue to progress. The locals were well aware of the fact that this was not easy. They know for sure that anything could happen and threaten the peace treaty's existence. However, their desire for peace and weariness for fighting was much more significant than anything that could occur before them.

Local communities in Ambon carried out three out of four kinds of reconciliation. The first was formal reconciliation, which the government started with the implementation of the Malino II peace agreement. The other three types of reconciliation were neighborhood, functional-quotidian, and narrative, and the local carried out them all (Kusumaningrum, 2017b). As for 'neighborhood,' they did it either with a particular intent to carry out reconciliation efforts or without such an intent. It is their ordinary activities that affect the reconciliation. The 'neighborhood' was an effort to reconnect because they lived side by side. This effort was essential because, after the conflict, community settlements in Ambon



were segregated based on the two religious groups. So, it would be risky to go to a village with the other religion as the majority. They would dilute this with this effort. Two individuals who wanted to meet make sure that residents and local community representatives provide their friends or neighbors with security assurances. There was a return visit after that. They came in great numbers in subsequent visits. For example, a women community group came to visit another group of women communities of different religions in the documentary film 'Beta Mau Jumpa' (I want to meet) (CRCS, 2020).

In the transition scheme, local wisdom was revitalized and improvised during the time of dispute and reconciliation. In general, at least two forms of conflict transformation had arisen in Ambon, namely strengthening existing local wisdom and, in the state of institutions and movements, the manifestation of local wisdom. Pela and Gandong were commemorated each year in 'Panas Pela,' which also invited the local government and local communities. By establishing the Pela agreement between schools of different faiths, there was also a recent creation<sup>15</sup>. It had never happened before, but they had to be innovative in some regions to create peace agendas. Following the war, reconciliation expressions, which were local wisdom inherited from the ancestors, were gradually called for and lobbied for. The term 'Ale rasa, beta rasa', for instance, means I feel what you feel; 'orang basudara' means we are brothers; 'sapotong sago dibagi dua' means let's split and share the sago. As of September 2019, there are at least 50 peace organizations in Maluku, excluding the organizations that have not been registered (Toisuta, 2019).

### 3.2. Mozambique

The Republic of Mozambique is a southern Africa's country, with more than 27 million inhabitants, a territory of about 800,000 square kilometers and almost 2,500 kilometers of coastline. These data speak of a very large country with a relatively low population density (around 30 inhabitants/square kilometers). Besides its territorial extension and low density, it is a country with a great cultural, ethnic, religious and historical diversity. The significant differences between the multiple regions of the country make the analysis of their realities a complex issue. A large number of variables must be taken into account. Amid these differences, the least we can address is the historical and political common experience.

As milestones in the most recent history of the country, it should be noted first that, after more than ten years of guerrilla warfare between the Mozambican Liberation Front (Frelimo) and the Portuguese Salazar regime, Mozambique

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<sup>15</sup> Personal communication with Director of Lembaga Antar Iman Maluku (LAIM, Interfaith Board of Maluku) on 23 July 2018

gained its independence in 1975. Secondly, between 1977 and 1992, Mozambique experienced a bloody civil war that profoundly marks the recent history of the country. Frelimo clashes with the Mozambican National Resistance (Renamo), a guerrilla group founded in 1975<sup>16</sup>. The third historical milestone is, after long and hard negotiations, the signing of the peace agreements took place in 1992, followed by a transition that led to the first democratic elections in 1994. This opened a period where elections were successively won by Frelimo for two decades, while Renamo formed a political party and established itself as the eternal opposition. The political tension between the two political movements led to a new political-military conflict in 2013. After lengthy negotiations, it finally ended with the signing of a second peace agreement in 2019.

However, since 2018 a new conflict of a different nature, involving no confrontation between the two main political movements, has been developing in the northern part of the country. Thus, we see that Mozambique, in little more than 45 years of independent history, has already experienced three significant conflicts. This analysis and reflection peace building in Mozambique is necessary, especially to see the role of the locals in the processes.

### **3.2.1. A never-end conflict. The 1992 and 2019 peace agreements**

On 4 October 1992, the President of the Republic of Mozambique and leader of the Frelimo, Joaquim Alberto Chissano, and the leader of Renamo, Afonso Dhlakama, signed the General Peace Agreement (GPA) in Rome that ended the 17 years of a hard civil war. After the signing of the agreement, a transitional period began and the country sought the institutional, political and economic normalization of the country and came in fruition as the first elections were held in 1994.

Up to 2019, the elections were held every five years in 1999, 2004, 2009 and 2014. Frelimo dominated the political area with three candidates—Alberto Chissano, Armando Guebuza and Felipe Nyussi. Behind the seemingly democratic climate shown through the regular elections, the truth was that around the electoral periods there was high political tension between Frelimo and Renamo. In 2013, it led to another armed conflict, referred to by some as a proto-war (Morier-Genoud, 2017).

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<sup>16</sup> Renamo emerged as a reaction to Frelimo, which had established itself as a single party—with an ideology linked to different branches of socialism and communism—after the independence of Mozambique. This organization is founded by certain dissident groups of Frelimo, and from the beginning it will find political, technical and financial support from the apartheid regimes of South Africa and Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). They considered a major threat the possibility that in Mozambique could triumph a communist political system who, in addition, could provide support to opposition groups of the apartheid regimes of both countries.

The leitmotif of the constant tensions was the unfulfillment (or partial fulfillment) of the GPA. Generally, there were two main issues: the demobilization, disarmament and reintegration process (DDR), and the political decentralization of the state (Darch, 2018, pp. 17-20). Regarding the first issue, on the one hand, Frelimo criticized Renamo for not completing the disarmament process and, on the other, Renamo questioned the reintegration process that allowed ex-combatants from Renamo to stay in the army structures. Since 2018, a second DDR process has been launched seeking to address this problem more effectively. Regarding the second issue, Renamo considered that the government (and, therefore, Frelimo) exercises excessive political and economic control over provincial and local political processes. The influences of the central government in the election of district offices and in the provincial governments are very large; for example, the governor in provinces where Renamo has greater support is somehow not from Renamo party. Prior to the signing of the 2019 GPA the Law No. 4/2019 was approved, and it established a new legal framework for the executive bodies of the centralized provincial governance with institutionalized the practices.

The lack of compliance to the GPA, the tension between Frelimo and Renamo (which led to an escalation of political tension and violence between individuals and parties), as well as the lack of reconciliation policies after the civil war, led to a resurgence of the conflict in 2013. Renamo leader Dhlakama went back to Gorongosa Mountains<sup>17</sup> and ended the GPA. This resurgence of the conflict demanded Frelimo and Renamo to sit down again to negotiate a new peace agreement in a negotiation process that went through different phases (Velo, 2018). A first phase took place with more open dialogues that included certain actors from civil society, important political figures and international mediators in a mixed commission. However, at the end of 2016, a second phase of dialogues began, marked by direct negotiations between the President of the Republic, the leader of Frelimo, Nyussi, and the leader of Renamo, Dhlakama. This second phase was marked by the meeting between the two leaders in August 2017 in Gorongosa, in which they agreed to cease fire and maintain peace talks among the elites (Fernando, 2019). Finally, a third phase began in May 2018 with the death of Dhlakama. The loss of Renamo leader who had ruled for almost four decades, fortunately, did not stop the peace talks. The final phase ended in August 2019, when both parties signed the Definitive Peace Agreement (DPA) in Maputo (Fernando and da Silva, 2019).

### 3.2.2. What peace and for whom?

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<sup>17</sup> Gorongosa is a region in central Mozambique, belonging to the province of Beira and which, during the civil war, was the Renamo's main center of operations.

The case of Mozambique is paradigmatic in many ways. The process that culminated in the 1992 peace agreements answered exactly to the liberal peace model that was firmly established in the 1990s and responded to four basic issues: the commitment to a negative peace, the construction of strong state institutions, economic liberalization and the regular convening of electoral processes with certain democratic guarantees. Mozambique have constituted for many years a perfect example for the international community of how a newly independent country that went through a very tough civil war was able to stop direct armed violence, to grow the economy, to institutionalize former guerrilla groups within the state framework, and to regularly hold democratic elections.

However, if the dynamics of the country are closely analyzed, we observe how there are elements that contribute to the remaining of latent (sometimes evident) conflict, and to the impossibility of a positive peace construction. In the first place, the lack of true reconciliation processes leads to the resurgence and increase of political tensions—both by individuals and by political parties—that later lead to an armed conflict (Darch, 2018, p. 24). Second, and closely linked to the lack of reconciliation processes, there is also an evident of lack of justice and remedial treatments for the victims of the conflict, which had caused war traumas to linger. This had caused building and developing the necessary social relations in any political community almost impossible, as well as made it hard to perpetuate of different types of structural violence such as sexual and gender-based violence, domestic violence, political or cultural and ethnic violence. Third, there is a worryingly lack of sustainable development plans, which is related to the emergence of new conflicts linked to land grabbing, to the indiscriminate exploitation of natural resources, to the increase in social inequalities, and greater vulnerabilities to climate change. And fourth, the absence of local ownership in emancipatory terms during the peacebuilding and post-conflict processes has had bad consequences. Citizens have not been strengthened as a political subject—to a lesser degree, by making invisible their contributions to the political and social communities' development; and in the worst-case scenario, by producing a disconnection of the local actors with the common political projects.

Given this context and in light of past and present experiences, we can determine that the stake of state and international actors was a negative peace, i.e., to ensure an absence of direct armed conflict. The objective is to be able to hold elections regularly and avoid the total collapse of the country's macroeconomic indices, especially to maintain and encourage large investments by multinational companies in the extractives sector. Clearly, it is a peace aimed at the political and economic elites, and far from being understood as a process of socio-political (re)construction of a society in a post-war situation. As peace is not built from a community through various processes of local ownership, the main challenges of the country that mostly affect its population are not being

addressed and, therefore, new conflicts emerged. The consolidation made it extremely difficult to develop a peaceful and plural society in Mozambique.

### 3.2.3. Where are the locals? Silences and invisibilities

In the peacebuilding and post-conflict processes in Mozambique, it is very interesting to reflect on the role of local actors. The ‘locals’ is certainly a very broad concept, which can range from national state actors—which in the case of Mozambique have played a fundamental role—to organizations and individuals from civil society. In this paper, we focus on this second type of local actors, considering that their inclusion in peacebuilding processes with a creative, emancipatory and transformative dimension is crucial.

In the case of Mozambique, in both peace processes, the participation of the local sphere in peacebuilding and post-conflict processes mainly took place in the informal sphere, with few examples of formal participation in the peace dialogues. The silences and invisibilities of the local dimension in both processes, as well as the consequences, is visible in the role of women and women’s organizations<sup>18</sup>.

Despite the existence of normative instruments, peace initiatives and efforts of women’s groups and organizations has a degree of gender bias (Lawyers without Borders Canada et al., 2019), and so do the reports that analyze the impact of the conflict. This absence does not allow peace building to deal with the gender-differentiated impacts of the conflict, such as the consequences of not having addressed sexual and gender-based violence during and after the conflict. This causes, on the one hand, the lack of specific justice and reparation processes for this issue and, on the other, the perpetuation of this type of violence in the post-conflict context. Another example is the lack of treatment for gender socio-economic inequalities, which ultimately makes it impossible to build a more just, equitable and peaceful society.

The absence of women and gender perspective and the invisibility in Mozambique’s peace processes is one of the most obvious examples of marginalization and invisibility of the ‘locals’ in formal peacebuilding and post-conflict processes. The consequences of this are a failure to address the structural

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<sup>18</sup> In October 2000, the Resolution 1325, which represented a turning point in the international agenda of Women, Peace and Security was approved at the United Nations. This agenda focuses on the need to encourage, develop and strengthen the participation of women in peace processes, in addressing sexual violence in conflict, and in supporting cross-cutting initiatives and policies with a gender perspective in the peace processes. In 2018, the Government of Mozambique approved the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, which objective was to adopt and implement the Resolution 1325. Along with these international and national regulatory frameworks, there are also others of a regional nature such as those created by African Union.

causes of the conflict and therefore, its perpetuation and the impossibility of (re)building these societies.

### **3.2.4. What's next?**

The construction of a negative peace negotiated between the elites—that does not take into account the local dimension—has the danger of not addressing crucial challenges for the (re)construction of a just, equitable and peaceful post-conflict society. Not addressing these crucial challenges means allowing the socio-political and economic tensions and inequalities.

Sadly, this is what we are currently witnessing in Mozambique. Since 2018, in the north of the country, a war has been breaking out as a result of an aggressive extractives policy that has been systematically violating the rights of individuals and local communities for a long time—which has also a strong extremist religious component (Cunha, 2021). Without incorporating local perspectives with a creative, emancipatory and transformative dimension, neither can in the resolution of these conflicts be achieved nor the peacebuilding and the post-conflict processes. It is difficult to imagine how to (re)construct societies who are victims of wars and armed conflicts. The incorporation of the local in the process of (re)construction towards more just, equitable and peaceful societies is fundamental. This is important so that in the future there will be capacity to resolve conflict in non-violent ways .

## **CONCLUSION**

The aim of this article is to illustrate the relationship between the 'local' involvement in peacebuilding processes and the development of new and diverse concepts of peace, which means something more than just the absence of violence. For that, in the first part we have analyzed the concept of peace in the discipline of IR. In the second half of the 20th century, peace studies were established as a specific field of study within the IR discipline. Furthermore, we have focused on analyzing critically how the incorporation of the 'locals' has influenced the contemporary global concept of peace and conflict. In the second part, we have presented two specific cases: the Ambon conflict in Indonesia and the history of conflicts in Mozambique.

The two conflicts with different context—Indonesia with its regional conflict, and for Mozambique with its national conflict—as well as the very nature of the conflicts (religious versus political), we highlight the role of local actors in each case. In both cases, we observe that the local dimension has to be taken into account in a creative, emancipatory and transformative dimension. In addition, we note that local efforts and initiatives occur primarily at the informal level of peacebuilding. However, in the case of Indonesia, we see how positive it was the formal recognition of local actors' roles in that process. In the case of Mozambique, there was not such a formal recognition of the role of local actors,

which led to a perpetuation of several structural issues that caused conflict to recur.

In conclusion, we can affirm that the inclusion of the local dimension in peace and post-conflict processes is essential to avoid a negative construction of peace, that is, a mere absence of armed conflict. Incorporating local actors has shown that a positive construction of peace is possible. This positive construction means understanding peace as a broader political process that addresses the multiple structural violence present in the conflict. It means that peace is a process through which the community develops the necessary capacities to uphold non-violent conflict resolution formulas.

Finally, a positive peace is not aimed solely at a ceasefire between the contenders or a pact of elites but has as its fundamental objective in the (re)construction of just, equitable and peaceful societies. We hope that this work contributes to the study of the incorporation of the local dimension in the processes of peacebuilding and post-conflict. This will help to imagine new ways of conceiving peace, as well as strengthen post-conflict societies in preserving the peace.

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