Social Identity of West Papuans: Reciprocity Among Immigrants and Local Communities in Wamena City

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Abstract: The clash of clans tensions have an impact on all sectors in the city of Wamena. The unresolved roots of historical problems of violence are embedded and develop into the identity of the Papuan people. The purpose of this study is to know to measure social identity of people in the city of Wamena between tribes and towards immigrants. Aligning with the cultural values of the Balim Valley people to "live together" remains essential. Using mixed methods with Social Identity theory including interviews and Likert scale. While data interpretation is qualitative. Examining the attachment of the Wamena community and polarization towards immigrants. The results of the field research found that 51.4% felt "very happy" socializing with other communities or tribes, proving the openness of local communities towards newcomers. As many as 89.2% of participants admitted that their identity as a Papuan was "very important", showing how the community compares with immigrants through their tribal traditions. Measuring ties between religions which play an important role in social categorization; identify negativity towards other groups; preferences for the church (system of belief) and government (politics); out-group favoritism; as well as identification of self-identity (individual) with the group (community) will be discussed in this paper.

Keywords: social identity, religious belief, racism, Balim Valley

Introduction

Those who would give up essential liberty to purchase a little temporary safety
deserve neither liberty nor safety" ~ Benjamin Franklin

P olarization has been embedded in every society to face all challenges
of difference. Misunderstandings often result in riots, especially in
the highland areas of Papua. Prolonged conflict tensions disturb
people in living their daily lives. The uprising of the 2019 racist conflict is
proof of the immaturity of society and the effectiveness of political
propaganda in stereotyping the people of the Melanesian race. I Ngurah
Suryawan wrote in his book "Jiwa yang Patah" a silent history of violence
and suffering of the Papuan people which is often ignored by the public. The
irony still occurs today, because if asked local Papuans on the streets about
independence, it is clear from their facial expressions.

However, Suryawan's writings in an anthropological perspective do
not provide provide from the eyes of the Papuan ethnic community. From all
that, adopting Marilyn's concept, (Strathern, 1988, p. 49) it makes us realize
and encompass that "*it matters what ideas we use to think other ideas (with)*."
Because I often see it myself through the lens of environmental ideology and
personal experience. It is difficult for Papuans to differentiate between
"individual" and "social" (community), even "culture" and "nature". This
paradigm will also look at the social identity of the Wamena community.

The colonial system that was favored by previous East Asian countries,
appears to be the pride of the Indonesian people and indigenous Papuans.
Like my experience of meeting a couple German tourist who were shopping
followed by a Papuan who carried their shopping basket.[1] Whether they
realize it or not, the dignity of life of local Papuan people, especially those

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[1] I spoke with the two tourists for several minutes, but I never once saw a Papuan participate
in the communication, respond or just give an opinion. It was as if a "*knec*" (Dutch) or babu
was silently bowing his head following his master. A bad stereotype, especially in the
Netherlands, which upholds egalitarianism - the story of Santa Claus being helped by a black
"kneck" *babu.* This story of humiliation of humanity has become a shameful and traumatic
history for the Nederlanders. Ironically in 2024 in our own country! This behavior is
romanticized with awe in the company of a Westerner; even if they don't interact directly.

without education, has been marginalized for decades after Indonesian independence.

The complexity of West Papuan politics with the Indonesian government always raises the root of the problem of political identity integration. The cloudy of historical authenticity continues to hover over the public performance. The history of 1961 and the Morning Star national identity flag are only understood by a group of Papuans and some academics. The audience is more familiar with the history of the conquest of the Netherlands and Indonesian independence, not with the conquest of West Papua by Soekarno. Not with the integration of Papua with Indonesia.[2] As well as the sensation of a politician's fame as entertainment rather than criticizing them. Considering the difficulty of speaking out about political realities in Indonesia. An international survey in 2002 by almost 2000 participants carried out in 12 districts of Papua, of 75% of Papuans totaling 60% were aware and believed in the creation of the aspirations of an independent Papuan nation (Muttaqin, 2013).

In the heart of West Papua, I started this research interacting with various groups of society. This field exploration will focus on the social identity of the Papuan people, especially in the city of Wamena, towards immigrants. Apart from that, it is related to social relations and also measures the standard of belief in a better life (Belief in Just World).

Literature Review

Roots of the problem

A pivotal factor that cannot be ignored in studying the development of the social identity of the West Papuan is the root of the problem. LIPI explained that four important problems in Papua are: 1) political integration which does not involve the community directly in Perpera (1969), 2) Human Rights violations and military violence, 3) failure of development, 4) marginalization of the local population (Anugerah, 2019; Cheuvel), which is also added to by international capitalists (Mambraku, 2015).

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[2] Reflective study from I Ngurah Suriawan who actively fought for this recognition. Suryawan, I Ngurah, (2017) *Papua Versus Papua: Perubahan dan Perpecahan Budaya*. BASABASI. Yogyakarta. See also his other book *Jiwa yang Patah*, (2019), BASABASI. Yogyakarta.

Muridan Widjojo elucidates other problems that influence the ethnonationalist construction of Papua: 1) Implementation of the Nederlands ethnonationalist education program (Syafuan & Gayatri, 2019, p. 78-83) during the "*dual-colonialism*" era.[3] Dutch differentiates indigenous Papuans (Melanesian race) from Indonesian or non-Papuan workers with the term "*amber*". Feelings of discrimination from *amber* against native people give rise to feelings of being "colonized". Meanwhile, the Nederlands was constructed as a helper[4] (Cheuvel, 2005, p. 46). 2) Racial and cultural differences. 3) Deconstruction of Historical Experience – recorded human rights violations by the Indonesian military become *memoria passionis*[5] and grow to influence social identity. 4) Papuan-Amber antagonism - the narrative of violence without reconciliation, such as the elimination of Papuan elites educated by the Netherlands who were different in politics and physical appearance, did not kill Papuan nationalism but rather fertilized it (Syafuan & Gayatri, 2019, p. 84).

Baliem Community Cultural Values

On the other hand, the honorable cultural values of the Baliem people to uphold living together. In the (Alua, 2006) book, geographical

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[3] In the period before Papua was officially incorporated into the Republic of Indonesia in 1963, " *Netherland New Guinea had a system of "dual colonialism" in which a handful of Dutch officials held the most senior positions in the administration and missionary organizations, while Indonesians held many of the middle and low-ranking positions as officials, policemen, teachers, and missionaries.* "(Cheuvel, 2005, p. 42)

[4] By positioning the Indonesian (non-Papuan) side as *the antagonist*, while the Dutch side educates, respects (not humiliates), gives positions, governs with a more humane system than the *amber workers*. (Cheuvel, 2005, p. 41-46). See also in (Kamsteeg, 2014, p. 38)quoting Kamsteeg's writing "*de vraag voorgelegd hoe zij Papua in de toekomst het liefst zouden zien. Een meerderheid van 77 procent wilde dat Nederland voorlopig zou blijven.De overigen wilden onmiddelijke onafhankelijheid aansluiting bij Papoea-Nieuw-Guinea. Slecht 0.9 percent voelde iets voor aansluiting bij Indonesia.*"

[5] Hanif Suranto. (2008). Memoria Passionis in Papua 2006. SKP Jayapura Team. Jayapura; Human Rights in West Papua 2015: The fourth of the International Coalition for Papua (ICP) covering events from April 2013 to December 2014. Co-Publish Fransiscans International A Voice at The United Nation – Human Rights and Peace for Papua ICP. Geneva; Koman, Veronica. (2020). The 2019 West Papua Uprising Protest against racism and for self-determination. TAPOL. www.tapol.org; p.19-20.

description the location of the Balim Valley determines social roles. Clans and other tribes that live side by side help each other (interdependence), for example in warfare. The groups are divided into: alliance (*O-Agum*), confederation (*Inukul-Oak*), village (*O-Ukul*), village unit (*Silimo*); which also formed religious groups, war, etc. (Alua, 2006, p. 1-6),

Every ritual activities in daily life are carried out together. Which is closely tied to the *Kaneke tradition of sacred objects*.[6] In this way, a "Good Life" can be achieved according to the ancestors (Alua, 2006, p. 17). Likewise, all problems and joys are not only felt by individuals, but problems and aspirations of a group as well. A unity in living together can be seen explicitly from the architecture of a *honai* (traditional house) and *silimo* (one village). The round shape shows openness and embraces all (Lieshout, 2019, p. 39).

Ethnocentrism

The people of West Papua pinpoints themselves as part of the Melanesian race, having their own attachments regardless of political identity or other Indonesian races. Mawikere explained the superiority of the Balim tribe as a nation that feels most unique. They were mandated by God to cultivate the earth according to tradition (Mawikere & Hura, 2021, p. 29). This can be understood as *ethnocentrism* which assumes that one's own group is the center of everything (Tajfel, 1981 , p. 322). This makes it difficult to accept other groups.

Likewise, the anarchist tradition of war (in this case retaliation for retaliation) up to now can be considered *a social fullfill condition*, to protect their social identity, in this case maintaining the dignity of other groups (Tajfel, 1981, p. 259). Tajfel touched on this "culture of honor", recognition and respect for other groups for their differences and uniqueness (Tajfel, 1981, p. 244). So it is important to resolve a problem because it causes tension that endangers other groups as well. We will discuss further the relationship between the ethnocentrism of the Papuan and the conflict that creates political identity.

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[6] The meaning of *Kaneke* is deeper than a sacred object (Lieshout, Kebudayaan Suku Hubula Lembah Balim-Papua: Sebuah Refleksi Pribadi, 2019, p. 28). Apart from being interpreted as part of *Naruekul's body*; *Kaneke* is also an ancestral symbol in each clan that unites each individual. It could said that the existence of a *Kaneke* shows their social identity.

Warfare

A characteristic of the archaic society of Highland Papuan is the tradition of war in solving problems. Wars are fought to achieve peace and balance in life. Alua explained that one of the necessities of life to gain status in Balim society is to fight (Alua, 2006, p. 84). This understanding is based on the narrative of the *Narueukul myth*, whose traditions are closely held to this day. There are various versions of the cultural narrative that is *the core culture*, but they all have the same meaning regarding the culture of war in the Balim Valley (Prasetyo, 2020, p. 90-91). Tension and conflict occur on two levels: hostility between humans and hostility between spirits (Alua, 2006, p. 81). On the other hand, the meaning of war is like blood spilled on the ground contributing to soil fertility for plants (Prasetyo, 2020, p. 81); describes warfare are not simply death, sorrow and conflict, but fertility for a balanced life in the future. This deep tradition is inseparable from life in Wamena City.

Of course, after globalization, not all cultural values are still closely held. Like the article (Mawikere & Hura, 2021) about inculturation and acculturation of the Balim people, it shows the dynamics of a culture. The author will revisit several primordial traditions as social and political friction continues to grow (Cheuvel, 2005), as well as social identity problems with immigrants.

This tension is the question and aim of this research: how does the Wamena community relate to immigrants regarding their social identity? By reflecting on the major riots of 2019 sparked by *amber racism.*[7] It will also discuss various connections from the research results, such as the "belief" that the Balim people will live well, but are aware of the reality of their decline. Quoting Richard's question (Cheuvel, 2005, p. 112) about understanding group identity, *"Why (on what basis), how (in what form), and when does group differentiation and political consciousness emerge?"*

This is how the social identity theory was chosen because of the values of community life in the Balim Valley which is *a social center*. Prioritizing a good life together is a main principle as Papuans in the Baliem

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[7]Koman, Veronica. (2020). The 2019 West Papua Uprising Protest against racism and for self-determination. TAPOL. www.tapol.org

valley (Lokobal, et al.). This collectivity mutually influences the individual's external and internal influences, which are embedded in identity (*collectivistic in nature*) (Strathern, 1988, p. 12-14). The uniqueness of alculturation that develops over time and a history full of polemics. This union culture becomes a national identity which is triggered by various social inequalities.

Social Identity

Social Identity Theory was originally based on Henri Tajfel (1919-1982). He himself was a Jewish survivor of World War II during *the Holocaust*. The crucial question that motivates Tajfel's research through his experience is how someone who lives with: friends, neighbors, colleagues can be suspected of being a threat. Provides the fact that a person's behavior sometimes acts as a member of a group rather than an independent internal acts (Ellemers & Haslam, 2012, p. 380). In the 70s he conducted experiments on in- and out-group discrimination which resulted in the concept of social categorization. The development of social identity theory was continued by his student John Turner and developed after Tajfel's death in 1982.

The interaction of an individual with society makes the results of Social Identity research important to study. The main goal of Social Identity Theory is to understand and explain how someone behaves and adopts norms from a social rather than personal identity (Ellemers & Haslam, 2012, p. 381). Tajfel (1974) defines "*part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the emotional significance attached to that membership*." For Ellemers and Haslam, social identity itself is a social psychological process in a social context that determines behavior (Ellemers & Haslam, 2012, p. 381). This psychological process is divided into three parts: social categorization, social comparison, social identification.

Social Categorization

One way to understand the social world cognitively is through categorization. Psychological processes that direct social organization to necessary information; provide understanding and examine actions (even predict actions). The salient characteristics of an object are used for categorization. Once a person or group is categorized into a group, they are taught to share the "*group-defining*" essence or style of that group (Ellemers & Haslam, 2012, p. 381). For example, the tuber group: cassava and potatoes;

labor groups: farmers and fishermen. This categorization is determined from the heuristic stimuli associated with responding (Porter & Rosner, 2021, p. 290). When a person is categorized in a group, he or she must ignore individual particularities and display the characteristics of the group; that determines his social identity. Categorizing is not only to see other groups or fellow groups, but to see the individual self, individual identity, as part of belonging.

Social Comparative

How to find out the process of identifying the strengths or weaknesses of a group is through social comparison. This psychological process cannot be separated from subjectivity. It can be said by Ellemers and Haslam (2012, p. 381) that there is no objective standard that can judge a group. So individuals and groups tend to judge by directly determining whether this is 'good' or 'bad'. This comparison of social groups by society would not be possible without the superiority (*salience*) of other groups. The superiority or uniqueness of a group according to Sydner et al. (Stangor, 2004, p. 75) belonging to a superior group has been proven to increase an individual's *self-confidence*. Likewise (Ellemers & Haslam, 2012) differences in the constellation of characteristics of different groups and how they compare to the salient characteristics of other groups; This context determines the social status or authority of the group. They further give an example: sociologists would see themselves as more "scientific" than historians, but less "scientific" than physicists.

Where you will see the specific values of a group that stand out at an event that are different from other groups. In a religious context, the comparison of Islamic and Hindu religious ritual traditions is different, as well with Christianity and Judaism. In other words, an individual's reflection of their group is a comparator for comparing out-groups, outside the group. This is included in the next section, namely identification.

Social identification

Another way to find out the different categories of an object is through the process of social identification. Ellemers & Haslam, (2012, p. 382) explain that it is impossible to compare and categorize women and men without realizing that one of these categories is "selfhood". Because "*the self*" is seen as belonging to a group. When an essence or specialty of a group is assessed in a special way, the process of social identification determines to

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reflect "*the self*" (Ellemers & Haslam, 2012, p. 382).[8] Simply put, the characteristics of a group reflect a person's identity.

Tajfel (1974) further explained that in determining everyday reality one needs to identify the dynamics of social situations (Ellemers & Haslam, 2012, p. 382). The importance of knowing how a member defines themselves positively, is done with various strategies. Through previous comparisons, an individual develops *Individual mobility skills*.[9] If a person can subtly change their identity based on the situation, what would be interesting to explore how to trigger this? And how individuals or groups holding these resentment identity in silence.[10] Arises question of how such action behind hinden voice chorus, happened all of sudden at uprising especially like 2019.

Method

Using a mix-method of qualitative *library research* and quantitative field research. With Henri Tajfel's Social Identity theory, with a measurement structure explained by Michael Hooper (Michael, 1976). Field observation process, questionnaires distributed and direct interviews with participants.[11] Measuring on a Likert scale "very happy", "happy", "moderate", not happy", very unhappy" (range 1-5).

The research sample location is the city of Wamena, with 37 participants. The origin of the participants is 81% Wamena, and 18% of other immigrants (tribes and districts) in Papua who have lived in Wamena for years. All participants race are Melanesian. Gender data is 60% female

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[8] "when specific features are associated with a social group, or when these features are valued in a certain way, the process of social identification determines how this reflects upon the self."

[9] Tajfel stated "Individual mobility is an individual-level strategy whereby people may seek to escape, avoid, or deny belonging to a devalued group, and seek instead to be included in (or attempt to "pass" as a member of) a group of higher social standing" Tajfel (1975) in (Ellemers & Haslam, 2012).

[10] Suryawan, I Ngurah. (2019). Jiwa yang Patah: Rakyat Papua, Sejarah Sunyi, dan Reflektif Antropologi. BASABASI. Yogyakarta; p.4

[11] Due to limited internet networks, most of the interviewees conducted direct interviews while filling out the questionnaire.

and 40% male. The age range was 15-60 years old: 40% in teenagers, 27% aged 21-30 years, 13% aged 31-40 years, 16% aged 41-50 years, 2% aged 51-60 years – to get opinions from various perspectives (from various generations). Education level is junior high school 10%, high school 35%, bachelor degree 32%, never on institution of education 13%,[12] non-institutional study 2%.

The major tribes in the Balim valley are: the Yali tribe in the east, the Walak tribe in the north, the Lani tribe in the west, the Hubula tribe in the valley area (Wamena city; Kurima village to Piramid village), the Mek and Nduga tribes in South and Southwest parts (Mawikere & Hura, 2021, p. 29). Most of the informants interviewed had an open mindset due to the diversity of living in a city. The professions of the participants were taken as general: students, teachers, priests, civil servants, services, small entrepreneurs. Most of the religions adhered to by participants are Christian with 92% and Catholic 8%.[13]

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[12] Most of the sources were read by researchers or conducted direct interviews.

[13] The difficulty of finding sources from Indigenous Papuans in Wamena who are Muslims, Hindus or adherents of other ethnic beliefs is a limitation of this research.

Results and Discussion

Most of the sources wer held based on interviews, and a few portion filled in the form that was sent through google forms.

	A%	B%	C%	D%	E%	F%	G%	H%	I%	J%
1	32.4	51.4	51.4	40.5	32.4	25.7	16.2	16.2	59.5	89.2
2	24.3	18.9	21.6	18.9	10.8	14.3	2.7	8.1	13.5	5.4
3	35.1	21.6	27	18.9	14.8	37.1	5.4	56.8	16.2	2.7
4	2.7	2.7	0	10.8	10.8	17.1	13.5	5.4	2.7	2.7
5	5.4	5.4	0	10.8	8.1	5.7	62.2	13.5	8.1	0
Median	**2**	**3**	**1**	**3**	**3**	**3**	**5**	**3**	**1**	**1**

Table 1.1 – Percentage of Likert Scale Research Results

A. Local communities show big differences between themselves and newcomers and immigrants, including people of the same race but different ethnicities (figure chart 1). With the question "How different are you from immigrants?"; number 1 "yes, very different" - 5 "no, not so different". Providing 56% of participants acknowledged these differences, and 35% were of the opinion that it was relative to the situation (not much different in social life, but different in race or ethnicity). The 8% who chose were no different. This ability is analyzed by Tajfel as *self-identification*. By comparing the differences between the Melanesian race (Papua, Maluku, NTT.) and the Asian Sawo-Yellow race (Sulawesi, Java, Kalimantan, Sumatra).

B. To measure individuals' openness to groups, researchers asked about their preferences and openness to other ethnicities. "Do you prefer socializing with other ethnicities?", with numbers 1 "very happy" - 5

"very unhappy". Most of the sample showed an interest in socializing with other ethnic groups or groups. With 51.4% choosing number 1 (very happy); number 2 (happy) 18.9%; number 3 (moderate) 21.6%; number 4 (unhappy) 2.7%; and number 5 (very unhappy) 5.4%. The majority said they were interested in getting to know newcomers and immigrants to share with each other. Including the interactions they carry out in various fields such as education, health, trade and transportation, most of which are managed by immigrant communities. Some do not feel happy socializing with immigrants because there is past trauma and cultural differences that make interaction difficult.

C. Religion has a very important role in the identity and culture of the Wamena people. Researcher asked participants' preferences for those of the same religion compared to those of different beliefs; with a choice of 1 "very happy" - 5 "very unhappy" The data shows 27% chose number 3 which means it relatively depends on the circumstances; or remain open to building relationships with other religions, but not as close as with fellow belief groups. As said by a mother who felt uncomfortable sharing her spiritual experiences with people of different religions. However, the mother remains open and happy to socialize in other areas of life. As many as 73% prefer to socialize with people of other religions.

D. To measure negative identification with other groups, researchers asked participants how important it would be to be in the position of immigrants or other ethnic groups. With options 1 "yes, very important" – 5 "not important". This question often leads to two interpretations: 1) considering themselves to be in a better position or culture, after comparing life with immigrants, 2) positioning themselves as immigrants in the midst of tribalism in Wamena (will feel alienated).[14] Participants answers were quite varied, but the

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[14]This question is also limited in understanding considering that not all people understand formal Indonesian. For some participants (especially the elderly) who always used their tribal language, the researcher was assisted by a translator from another party. Actually, this question is to measure the negative side (hatred) if they are on the side of another group or tribe (Michael, 1976, p. 157).

majority chose very important with 40%; which means it is important for them not to become immigrants.

E. In connection with the previous question, this question is to measure out-group favoritism, especially towards Indonesian immigrants (other races). With a measure of number 1 "they are very pleasant, and helping in development" – number 5 "they are very destructive and exploitative". Most of the native people of Wamena with 43% are positive with newcomers and immigrants; and 38% chose the number three, which means some immigrants helped and some did not help; while 19% consider immigrants a nuisance. Those who consider immigrants to be a nuisance have experienced discrimination; such as hearing about sensitive issues such as religious conversion.[15]

F. According to the participants, the situation of openness of other groups or tribes in the city of Wamena is quite open. With the question "Do you think that in Wamena, other tribes or communities are open and tolerant towards you?" 37% of participants chose number 3 (relative: partly open – partly not). With number 1 "very open" inclusif as much as 25.7%; number 2 is "open" as much as 14.3%. While 17% chose number 4 "exclusive", 5.7% "very exclusive".

G. The importance of religion in the lives of Papuan people, the researcher asked "What is the role of the church in your opinion?". Most participants with 62% chose the role of the church as "very good", and 13.5% as quite good. For 5.4%, moderate voters said that the church is good and helpful, but also not good. And 2.7% thought the role of the church was not good, and 16% was very bad.

H. "What do you think with the role of the regional or central government of the Republic of Indonesia for you?", the majority of participants' opinions regarding the government, 56.8% (choosing number 3) thought that the government sometimes helps and

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[15]Several participants admitted that they enjoyed socializing with other religions and ethnicities, but faced problems when other religions forced their religious teachings onto their children. This issue needs to be explored further regarding the objectivity of the facts that occurred.

sometimes harms. 16% found it "very helpful", 8% "helpful". And 13.5% thought it was very detrimental and 5.4% said it was quite detrimental.

I. Measuring understanding of self-identification with the question "Do you think your ethnicity/community reflects who you are?" Most participants believed that their personality was a reflection of their group or community. With 59.5% choosing "strongly agree", 13.5% "agree", 16% are relative, 3% disagree, and 8% strongly disagree.

J. Then I asked "Is it important for you to be a Papuan?" This question measures how important participants' self-identity, racial identity, and ethnicity are. Data shows that all native Papuans consider their identity as Papuan to be "important" 5.4% and 89.2% "very important", while 2% choose moderate or relatively.

Discussion - Reflection

The results of the questionnaire show that the majority of Wamena people are open to immigrants. Regardless of differences in ethnicity, race, language, politics and other cultures. Because according to participants in the city of Wamena, most people are quite open to other tribes or communities (F). They respect each other and appreciate these differences. The positive awareness is of interdependence towards immigrants, participants admit that educational staff, traders, health workers, services, transportation and other employees come from outside the region.

It is also necessary to pay attention to the results of negative identification with other groups (D), with the majority considering it important that not being in the position of immigrants. Shows the negative image presented by immigrants. Where complaints of sensitivity, dissatisfaction or implicit discrimination are hidden or not expressed on the surface. However, this result is ambiguous considering the high level of positivity towards immigrants. As well as curiosity and openness towards other ethnic groups, which shows that the majority of people accept other groups in social life.

The researchers found a unique discovery beyond questions because they were curious about the fluidity of tensions in the city of Wamena, especially the 2019 racism riots. A female participant admitted that she would follow whatever decision their group or tribe made if they had to support the

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Free Papua Movement (OPM) group.[16] Confirm this by adding "if that is God's will". Regardless of their tribal identity, there are religious beliefs that motivate and accept the situation.

Intrigued by Kamsteeg's opinion in his book about Papuans "Everyone is OPM"[17], some participants argued that only a small portion of the OPM lived in the mountains. While some admit that this statement contains truth. The participant who admitted that almost all Wamena people were OPM was referring to observers (supporters) for independence and to the Free Papua Army (TPM – who held weapons based in the forests). Exploring this in more depth regarding tribal traditions and war which are closely adhered to by the Papuan people, will be discussed below.

Embedded Chaos and Cosmos

"nothing in life is to be feared, it is only to be understood."

~Marie Curie

When a person feels afraid, because he feels out of control, he tends to vent his emotions. Uncontrolled emotions very easily result in violence.[18] This violence often leads to mass conflict. Returning to individual emotional control through education to understand and develop communication skills that benefit both parties. Unfortunately, in the midst of conditions full of violent narratives such as the city of Wamena, creative solutions using communication tools (words) to express opinions are often overlooked. So

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[16]OPM is an organization formed in 1965 which wishes to establish its own state in West Papua, and recognize its independence in 1971. (Cheuvel, 2005, p. 91)

[17]Chapter 6 " *Iedereen is OPM'er* " (Kamsteeg, 2014, p. 117).

[18]Strathern (1988, p. 53-63) in discussing *Groups: Sexual Antagonism* towards PNG Highlanders, that emotional pressure from the social structure on men requires them to behave aggressively even towards women. This behavior is the requirement for warlike behavior as a war knight. Quoting Apropos Bena Bena (1967) " *ultimately promote hostility and antagonism between the sexes* ". Thus, as defense (in the context of war), this has "*a complex of beliefs and sanctions.*" Strathern explained further, this aggressive behavior is due to men's " *insecurity* " towards women (which produces men themselves). So the behavior of possessing (*possession*) and controlling is a choice from these needs: " *in particular, men carve out their masculinity from the 'natural' identity of women, subjugating women and natural process itself to their control.* "In this case, of course violence from masculinity is not only against men, because it also often occurs among women.

that the path is clear in resolving problems (whether punishment or peace) through acts of violence. However, looking for enlightenment regarding the war traditions in the city of Wamena can be found from an ecological perspective.

Like I mention previously regarding warfare, the traditions that are embedded when viewed from a cosmological perspective value life deeply with nature, rather than capitalist and destructive urban civilization. Why war continues to occur is because of *the "memory of the death*," the dignity of a group that is held tightly; and in the case of tribal traditions in the Balim Valley, death is a natural part.[19] Donna Haraway explains in her book *Staying with The Trouble*, humans are not post-human, but compost.[20] An understanding inspired by Marilyn Strathern in her research in the Highland Papua New Guinea – that "It matters what ideas we use to think other ideas" (Haraway, 2016). Harraway draws his readers to understand life with the earth at this time to be present.[21] Which means embracing every living and non-living creature as kins, thereby avoid anthropocentrism and multinational capitalism in the land of Papua which threatens all creatures.

Even though it is difficult to accept the harsh principles of life of the traditional community in the Balim Valley. They live together with their ancestors to carry out traditions with nature to live sustainably without external influence. This provides calm and understanding that the contribution of their lives does not threaten the survival of all creatures

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[19]Adopting the concept of death rites in funerals from D. Davies "the world as a natural system within which the ongoingness of life is grounded in the successive life and death of individuals the world as a natural system within which the ongoingness of life is grounded in the successive life and death of the individual...foster an assonant authenticity as the dead are given back to 'nature'." - Davies, Douglas J. A Brief History of Death. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005, p. 86-7.

[20]"We are all compost, not post-human" D. Haraway is an anthropologist who has put forward a powerful approach to meeting the needs of the marginalized.

[21]The term he adopted was "*Chthulucene*" - the present time and place on earth living together "trouble" - "to stir up". To avoid being entangled in the Anthropocene and Capitalocene and the destruction of more dangerous problems. Therefore, a balance is needed, such as the slogan "make kin no babies" from Harraway, which means that the high population on planet Earth endangers the survival of all creatures. In this way, awareness of the impact of the occupation of nature such as *climate change* can be stopped.

globally (a radical contradiction of the division between humans and nature), but is in a sustainable order with nature.[22]

In this way, the war culture of the people in the Balim Valley is a tradition that is lived by and needs to be respected by immigrants. The stereotype that considers Highland Papua communities which full of violence and laziness of thought cannot be concluded in general. Because this has become their identity, for them harmoniously experiencing life with ancestors and nature is essential; which external parties must adapt and respect.[23] It can also be concluded that this unique and dangerous conflict is not only rooted in global or national political problems. But an identity that is still unknown end or will transform?[24]

Until now, customary law is still closely adhered to in solving problems. There are differences between criminal law in general and legal action in the Balim Valley. Legal action on individual subjects is general, while in Balim tribal custom it is collective (Prasetyo, 2020, p. 95). Apart from the system in the Balim Valley which prioritizes customary law, the question is, how does customary law and general law relate to newcomers and immigrants?[25] Is this war narrative capable of bringing cosmic peace for the next 20 years or vice versa?.[26] But what is certain is that the acceptance of

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[22] Another concept in the book of Job wisdom, raised by Carl Newsome - that Chaos "tehom" is from God, which represents chaos and God's omnipotence.

[23] It can also be reflected in the international war between Israel and Pelestina, and Ukraine and Russia which has not yet ended; so that we cannot demean an archaic nation like Highland Papua with the stigma of being uneducated or not being modern humans. In reality, conflict and war exist in every civilized human heart.

[24] According to two Papuans that I asked, tribal war was not a matter of self-identity, but rather a culture of settling a group or tribe. So not all tribes or communities justify settlement by war. In other means to solve some problem don't have to go through war. – Whatsapp questions and answers 9-10 June 2024.

[25] For example, accidental traffic accidents between immigrants and local communities - will it be processed according to customary law or state law? Another example is the theft that occurred in a migrant's house by local people, but was not followed up by the police for reasons of customary law. Does the system demonstrate justice and stability in living together for all communities?

[26] Adhering to democratic ideology, can this be ignored within the framework of the Republic of Indonesia? Despite having special regional autonomy, the majority of participants admitted that the previous 20 years were better because there were not as many

death, whether in the tradition of Christian eschatology or tribal warfare, provides resilience to face the suffering of loss.

Belief System Polemic

The religious conditions in the city of Wamena are filled with places of worship with mutual respect. What attracted the researcher's attention was the belief system with *a Belief in Just World* (BJW) perspective (Lerner, 1980), which connected with the people of Wamena. Interested in people's life satisfaction, the researcher asked "Are you happy living in Wamena?". The 91% of the sample who admitted they were happy living in Wamena, 66% chose to be very satisfied and very happy living in Wamena. Impressed with satisfaction in the midst of political-conflict situations, it is difficult to conclude that this happiness comes from the government's social system (see results in Table 1.1 – H%). In this context, researchers assume that it is the role of the church that has a big impact on people's happiness in life.

When visiting a church, a preacher (from charismatic stream) stated that the large number of churches in the city of Wamena does not mean that all of them have a spirit of life; another meaning doesn't guarantee the welfare and morality.[27] Contradicting the previous satisfaction survey (table 1.1 G%), this shows that the polarization of ecclesiastical life in Wamena is still very strong. The researcher's own experience has been hearing statements from several people that churches in Wamena are generally attended by fellow tribesmen. So it is not easy for immigrants (members of other tribes) to feel accepted by a congregation if they do not have relationships with other tribes within it.[28] However, how this contributes to happiness was mentioned previously in the context of *social salient life*.

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drunk people carrying weapons on the streets. Other data also shows that the decline in the OAP (local Papuan) population over time will lead to the extinction of the indigenous Papuan people (Syafuan & Gayatri, 2019) (Kamsteeg, 2014).

[27]It can be related to research in England, it was noted (Tajfel, 1981, p. 185), of immigrants who wrote essays about their experiences in England, especially the church: "the Church is not making the most of its opportunities and fails to provide strong moral guidance with regard to problems of prejudice and discrimination."

[28]Another irony was experienced by researchers somewhere in Papua (Sorong district) at a prospective church. Yang encourages his congregation – especially women, who survive domestic violence. Toxic positivity will only encourage patriarchal supremacy, discriminate

Connecting with Mervin Lerner's views in his book on BJW (Belief living in a Just World), he believes that people who believed in BJW are immature based on their age (Lerner, 1980). Simply not wanting to realize or denying the suffering they are experiencing.[29] "emphasis on deserving-usually through effort and self-deprivation smacks of the Protestant Ethic ideology, which views hard work and suffering as the path to righteousness" (Lerner, 1980, p.150).

The relationship of Christian ethics in the midst of society's economic downturn cannot justify the existing weaknesses in morality and criminality. B. Franklin's expression at the beginning of this article means that basic human needs are so essential that they cannot be ignored. When basic physical and spiritual needs are sacrificed, in the end individuals or groups will not get these rights. The needs in question include clothing, food and shelter, spirituality, security; By not fulfilling these needs, people are unable to think creatively and critically about the situations they experience. This awareness can be triggered by external intervention with personal or organizational interests and agendas.

It is very difficult to hope for a prosperous life amidst social pressure. A phrase often heard to leave the judgment of immorality to God (meaning: simply give up); in the midst of a situation of incompetence on the part of the security forces. It certainly disturbs the continuity of life together. Could also metion from a Christian perspective regarding blessed suffering people. In Matthew 5:5 "*Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth*" can be used as a reference for justification in one's weakness. Meier (1990, p. 284) explains that this section has a more active tone, and not a passive one waiting for the future (circumstances) to intervene. So that hearing these words can be strengthened and awakened when reflecting on God's salvation. The word "*meek*" is not weak without strength, but rather having skill and strength, a

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against women, produce a traumatic generation that is socially dysfunctional; repetition of the cycle of violence.

[29]This denial is also popular in the world of psychology as "re-framing". Unawareness or denial of these emotions from research (Lerner, 1980) has a negative impact on a person's well-being. One example is the pressure of economic comparison or status with those who are very different, which reflects self-deprecation - negative stress.

sword, a weapon but still sheathing or controlling it.[30] It can be interpreted that living in the culture in Wamena requires self-defense strength, to be able to live sustainably. Remaining silent in a dire situation without a structured plan cannot be justified by religious dogma. Or on the other hand religion becomes "*the classical opiate of the masses*" (Meier, 1990, p. 283).

This understanding can be an understanding of why almost every community in Papua hide weapons in front of their house. It's no wonder people carry weapons (small knives, swords, bows) on the streets of Wamena. However, regardless of self-defense efforts and survival (not only for individuals but for communities/tribes), this *insecurity* shows a habit of internal weakness that constantly feels afraid. Not fear from admiration for nature or God (spiritual belief), but the reality of being unable to control the social system? Or returning to the previous understanding of *chaos* and *cosmos*, does it need to be understood and tolerated as a customary things?

Returning to previous satisfaction, humans as social animals, attached to a group or tribal salience which becomes stronger when confronted with other groups. Vulnerability is what makes individuals and groups have religious status. Because the concept of having religions identity, especially Christian, provides a place for collective place to expres. Building a broad and deep-rooted community, raising the standard of living of individuals or groups (remote "*unmodernized*" tribes). Thus, to survive in the city of Wamena and to have opportunities in a community, having religious beliefs is the legitimacy of one's identity. In this way, these power relations must be recognized to be utilized for a better life; especially counteracting the egoistic interests of a group or individual.

Community Hope for a Better Life

Boelaars stated that since the 1940s, awareness of modernization has encouraged people who are enthusiastic about developing dynamically in new

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[30]Another interpretation from Dale Allison is that the meaning of "*meek*" is those who are "*poor in spirit*" who want to seek and know God more deeply. That is the humble person who avoids conflict as depicted by Christ who rides a donkey rather than a war horse (Matt.21:5). With gentleness, which looks *powerless* to the world but is powerful inside; not weakness resulting from laziness. Meanwhile, weakness in terms of *the poor* is also defined as not just "those in need", but groups who have "*historical strength, a capacity for change and a potential for evangelization*" – (Allison, Dale C. 1999. The Sermon on the mount: inspiring the moral imagination. The Crossroad Publishing Company. New York); see also (Meier, 1990, p. 284).

ways from the interior (Boelaars, 1992, p. 170-172). This desire (awareness) to develop in this era has emerged since the arrival of colonial Nederland and missionaries (Lieshout, Sejarah Gereja Katolik di Lembah Balim-Papua, 2009, p. xii).

Even though they are aware of the developments that occur in culture and acculturation, quoted from Boelaars' expression, internal customs that are incapable of *social control* seem reluctant to admit their "abuse of power and stupidity", including accepting unintentional discrimination, because of feelings of *insecurity* about the reality of their abilities (Boelaars, 1992, p. 173).

On the other hand, highlighting "living together" does not always have a positive impact. Trying to impose personal will, or denying emotions for the sake of groups, does not always have a positive impact on the mental and physical of the individual and the group as well (example: forced to join in the war).[31] Meanwhile, the regional or central government which plays a role (or as a arbitrator) is unable to control the situation, especially preventing conflicts that have occurred continuously. It looks like a parent who is irresponsible. It has been proven that the Special Autonomy (Otonomi Khusus) Program does not provide comprehensive development for the community. On the other hand, misappropriation of Special Autonomy (such as corruptions) aggravate social conditions such as family disputes (Muttaqin, 2013).[32]

Tajfel provides solutions that can be considered for individuals and groups to develop from the situation, namely *exit choice* and *voice option*. With the availability of all the basic materials for survival, as well as very strong traditions, it is difficult for an individual to leave (*exit – emigrate*). Only individuals or small groups who want to develop themselves or their regions

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[31]According to research – trauma – depression – if you continue to suppress personal characteristics. In the 2019 riots, several parts of society were forced to join in the rebellion from one party in solidarity with other races/ideologies?

[32]Quoting the writings of Azmi Muttaqin (2013; p. 12), there are various obstacles to the uneffectiveness of special autonomy: "unclear distribution of authority and flow of funds, inconsistency between the central government and the Papuan Regional Government, and conflicts of interest and power among local Papuan elites, which ultimately resulted in its decline Papuan people's beliefs.";

dare to leave, such as studying or looking for work. Ironically, coming from the Melanesian race in the 21st century, we still struggle with racist stereotypes. The case of racism against Papuans students in 2019 was the trigger for the biggest wave of *uprising* throughout Indonesia, involving various international parties.

Based on a sample of interview participants conducted by researchers, 54% of people have never lived or traveled outside the Balim Valley. This movement ultimately needs to take into consideration the level of local community closeness "community attachment"; namely with *the voice option.* In his theory, Hirschman's provides various options when a group or individual wants to change their status or situation. Namely *the exit option* to leave the group and *the voice option*, to express an opinion to change the group (Tajfel, 1981, p. 288-289).[33]

Delusions of Reality – Spilled Gold in the Past

As mentioned in the introduction, why does a spontaneous group feel the same, in other words more salient, so that it has a powerful determinant of behavior for social action? How does a group form and want to change the culture or situation at that time?

The major changes that occur in international politics can act as a catalyst for social change – allowing for the evaluation of ideals and status (Tajfel, 1981, p. 260). To what extent does Tajfel say that these social comparisons exceed the "phantasy level" which produces powerful determinants of behavior and social action? The answer I quote from Durkheim - to achieve social order is to convince the public that their needs are satisfied. "But what is needed for them to be content, is not that they have more or less but that they be convinced that they have no right to more" (Tajfel, 1981, p. 265).

Feelings of exclusion from racism, as well as support for global emancipation which has positive and negative sides; On the negative side, it reflects discrimination from people in fellow countries. Driven by increasing respect for the rights of ethnic communities throughout the world. In the

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[33] This can be seen from OPM's actions which are outside the ideology frame of the Republic of Indonesia and the people who often choose the silent option as the third option from Hirschman's theory. Where he explained

book (Syafuan & Gayatri, 2019, p. 9-21), he explains various reasons why primordial tribal identity emerges in a group or nation, because "the solidarity of alienated people in order to fight against the hegemony and repression of the ruling group." This is very visible from population data which shows the dominance of immigrants in various sectors: education, health, politics (Romdiati, Surtiari, & Katherina, 2019; Syafuan & Gayatri, 2019, p. 102).

The reality shown by the experience of the Wamena people 10 to 20 years ago cannot be ignored. From participants shows that 77% think that Papua in the past was better than today. What kind of events, imaginations and expectations in the past made people happier than they are today?; What did the previous generation do that was not realized so that it becomes a regret today? Maybe this is related to the *Papuan Spring moment* and *the memoria passionis* that followed.

Bagaimana menurut Anda Papua pada 10-20 tahun yang lalu?
35 responses

- Lebih baik
- Tidak tahu
- Kurang baik
- Sama saja dengan sekarang

8.6%
11.4%
77.1%
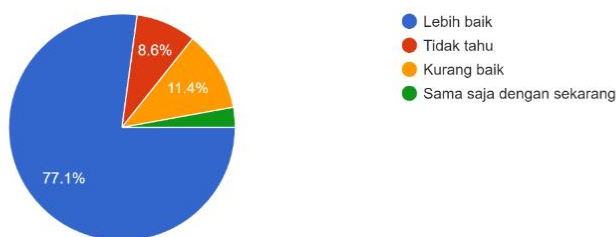
(Chart 1 image)

Conclusion

Social identity theory clearly proves the difference between the Wamena people and immigrants. The research results show that the Wamena people are open to immigrants, but still strongly believe in the saliency of tribal traditions. Will the tradition of warfare in highland Papua survive as the scientific drive for ecological balance contradicts the universal humanitarian ethic of war and anarchism?. The social identity polemic that continues to develop in Papua is difficult to predict. The presentation of the data and results of this research does not definitely provide a clear difference between Melanesian traditions (Papuan culture) compared to other Indonesian Malay

communities. And it becomes critical for religious communities and society with the social injustice that still occurs in Highland West Papua. Hopefully this can provide awareness to Indonesian and other people to learn and respect the culture of the highland Papua. Eliminating the stigma of racism to build a new culture along with changes of era and advanced knowledge.

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Limitations in research:

- Initially discussing research, especially personal or collective identity, which is very sensitive for the people of highland Papua.[34]
- Not all respondents were so open to answering or conducting interviews.
- This research was carried out by *Amber* (non-Papuan) face to face, probably they would give a different perspective if they were Papuans or even fellow tribesmen.
- The focus of this research is more on the singular aspect of individual identity responding to the behavior of a different group (mostly not a group perspective). Although a small number of meetings are often conducted in group interviews.

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