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(Chapters 1-2, 5-7)

Reconciliation and Architectures of Commitment

Sequencing peace in Bougainville

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E P R E S S

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7. The cost of the conflict

The politics of numbers of deaths and the politics of humility

Thus far in Peacebuilding Compared we have encountered conflicts in which the most widely quoted estimates of lives lost from the conflict are considerable underestimates as a result of the state concerned keeping out the international media and non-compliant national journalists or issuing official counts that are underestimates intended to downplay the crisis. These are accepted by lazy journalists as good enough and become the dominant estimates. West Kalimantan (Braithwaite et al. 2010) is an example of such a case. In other cases, international advocates with an interest in exposing such cover-ups of killings counter the cover-ups by producing exaggerated estimates of their own. West Papua in Indonesia is such a case where inflated estimates have become widespread (Braithwaite et al. 2010). Bougainville is in the latter group.

What happened was that the international community woke up one day in the 1990s and realised that what had been occurring in Bougainville for years was not just a 'crisis' or a 'rebellion', but a civil war. In Australia in particular, there was some embarrassment that Australian mining and colonial policy played a big part in the causation of the conflict, that the war was being fought with weapons supplied by Australia and that our media and our leaders had downplayed it. Indeed, the Labor governments of Bob Hawke and Paul Keating had worked with the PNG Government to do so. While the Government of the Solomon Islands allowed the BRA access to their internationally uninfluential media on many occasions to get the terrible story of Bougainville out, on the rare occasions when the BRA leaders got to Australia for peace talks, they were kept away from the media. On at least one occasion, it was an explicit condition of Joseph Kabui's visa that he not speak to the media while in Australia.

The intriguing biography of Alexander Downer in Bougainville

Australia was an ineffective peacemaker in Bougainville during the Hawke and Keating governments because, unlike New Zealand, its policy was to not talk to the BRA. Australia believed the secession of Bougainville would be bad for both

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Cover image: *Children of Resistance and Bougainville Revolutionary Army sides of the conflict arrive at the signing of the Bougainville Ceasefire Agreement in Arawa wearing traditional upi headdresses.* Photo: AAP/AFP Torsten Blackwood

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1. Peacebuilding Compared and the Bougainville conflict

The story in brief

Bougainville suffered a terrible civil war for a decade from 1988 that pitted separatist forces of the Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA) against the national military and police of Papua New Guinea. The fighting evolved to set Bougainville factions against one another in the worst killing. This book argues that peacebuilding in Bougainville was shaped by bottom-up traditional and Christian reconciliation practices and a carefully crafted top-down political settlement. These two processes operated in symbiotic fashion, each making space for, and reinforcing, the other. There are important lessons in how each was designed and how one was connected to the other. For the student of peacebuilding, there is much to learn from the genius of this symbiosis between a top-down architecture of credible commitment and bottom-up reconciliation.

It has been a peace that has progressively become more resilient since 1998. The sequential sustaining of the peace has been patient—what Volker Boege (2006) has called a slow-food approach to peacebuilding. One wave of bottom-up reconciliation has built on previous waves, expanding the geographical reach of the peace and the breadth and depth of forgiveness across the society. The architecture of the top-down peace settlement has also been sequenced, with linkages that require one side to meet a commitment before the other side will deliver their next undertaking in an agreed sequence (Regan 2008; Wolfers 2006a). In this architecture, international peacekeepers played an exemplary role in securing the credible commitments. While peacekeepers were rarely hands-on mediators of the indigenous reconciliation, one of their greatest contributions was to initiate conversations between local enemies who were afraid of each other, allowing initial meetings to occur under the peacekeepers' security umbrella.

The conclusion of the book is that the very top-down architecture of the peace agreement that has been such a strength is also potentially its greatest weakness. This is because it is far from clear whether there is credible commitment of the PNG Parliament and of regional powers to the final crunch of the peace deal. If Bougainville votes in a referendum for independence in the course of this second decade of the twenty-first century—as provided for in the peace

deal—and Papua New Guinea refuses to honour the wishes expressed in that vote, young men will be motivated to return to arms to vindicate the blood of their fathers. The sequence of credible commitments so honourably completed in the peace process to date could tragically heighten a sense of betrayal if the will of the people in the agreed referendum is dishonoured. Political leadership is needed in Port Moresby and regional preventive diplomacy is required to grasp the nettle of that final commitment. This can be delivered alongside an honourable and open political campaign to persuade the people of Bougainville that they could be better off if they vote for autonomous provincial government integrated within the state of Papua New Guinea.

In the next chapter, we place the conflict in the context of the colonial history, the history of mining exploitation and the identity politics of Bougainville. Subsequent chapters describe the unfolding of the violence itself and then of 11 peace processes that failed. The sequence of failed agreements nevertheless laid foundations for a final deal that has stuck for more than a decade. A fascinating feature of the final deal is that it was catalysed by a desperate attempt by Papua New Guinea's leadership to prevail militarily by contracting the private military corporation Sandline. When the international media, led by journalist Mary-Louise O'Callaghan, exposed the plan to deploy mercenaries, the plan collapsed, and ultimately Sandline collapsed.¹ As it raged, the Bougainville war seemed geopolitically obscure and more minor than it in fact was in scale. But in retrospect, many in the corridors of the United Nations see Bougainville as a success story of a sophisticated UN-backed peace architecture—a success that has reinvigorated the international norm against the use of mercenaries (Percy 2007) that was deeply endangered in the mid 1990s, and a peace that shows the potential of indigenous restorative justice in peacebuilding. The concluding two chapters of this book interpret more lessons from the conflict in comparative perspective.

1 Peace journalism is of neglected importance in the peacebuilding literature. In our first volume, we found peace journalism important in ending the major Indonesian conflicts of the past decade, and rumour-mongering, sensationalist journalism to be a contributor to the onset of some of those armed conflicts (Braithwaite et al. 2010). Mary-Louise O'Callaghan deserves to be honoured for breaking a story that revived the anti-mercenary norm internationally and connected Sandline in Bougainville to a wider politics of exposing the 'blood diamonds' trade in Africa and a nefarious mining company politics of interference in civil war through proxies such as Sandline. O'Callaghan was also an important player in our next volume on the Solomon Islands peace. A key Australian government strategic policymaker, Hugh White, tells the story of his old friend, Mary-Louise, calling him in 2000 to urge him to support a peacekeeping intervention in the Solomons. White recounts with some embarrassment, because he thinks it a pity in retrospect that O'Callaghan's advice was not followed at the time—his reply being that such a military intervention 'would not fit our paradigm' in the Pacific. O'Callaghan's retort, abruptly ending the conversation, was 'Well change your ***** paradigm'. Australia did change its paradigm, leading a regional peacekeeping intervention in the Solomon Islands in 2003 that so far has restored peace, with Hugh White a critical catalyst of the policy shift. During the intervening years, O'Callaghan had campaigned for that intervention in her columns in *The Australian* newspaper and other media.

The present chapter outlines the ambitions—methodological and substantive—of the Peacebuilding Compared project, of which this is the second volume. Readers who have read the first chapter of our first volume (Braithwaite et al. 2010) can skip to Chapter 2 without missing much.

Comparing conflict, comparing peacebuilding

The Peacebuilding Compared project adopts a broad conception of peacebuilding that is not distinguished from preventive diplomacy before conflict, peacemaking to end it or peacekeeping to monitor a peace agreement. Rather it is conceived here to incorporate all of these things, not wanting to separate peacebuilding after one conflict from preventive diplomacy to prevent a future one. Peacebuilding is therefore conceived here as tapping into a broad interpretation of peacebuilding as 'creation of a new environment' conducive to peace, in the words of former UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali (1995). The animating question for the project is what changes to an environment contribute most to enduring peace? We do not wish to close off by definition whether that contribution comes from this or that modality or phase of a peace process.

Peacebuilding Compared hopes over more than 20 years to code 670 variables in relation to the major armed conflicts that have raged across the world since 1990. The first large volume covered six different Indonesian armed conflicts (Braithwaite et al. 2010). It is hoped the third and fourth volumes will appear in quick succession to cover the Solomon Islands and then Timor-Leste. The project started with the region around the home country of the senior authors simply because it was easier to learn how to do it in the region with which the research team was most familiar.² As it happens, this region experienced a great deal of armed conflict during the 1990s. It was popularly referred to as 'the arc of instability' around Australia. As we enter the second decade of the twenty-first century, this arc is a much more stable, though vulnerable, region.

Peacebuilding Compared started in 2005. During the first five years of the project, the senior author managed to do some serious fieldwork across each of the sites in the four nations where these first 11 conflicts occurred.³ In some

2 The senior author had dabbled at the beginning of the decade in some writing on peacebuilding in Indonesia after several trips there in the 1990s before and after the fall of President Suharto (Braithwaite 2002:Ch. 6), and spent time as an anthropology student living in a village in Bougainville at the end of the 1960s.

3 John Braithwaite was present for about 90 per cent of these interviews and he typed up the fieldwork notes or used voice-recognition software to record almost 90 per cent of them. The most common reason for not creating an electronic copy of fieldwork notes was that culpability for war crimes was discussed in the interview or other information was provided that might conceivably put someone in danger. The second most common reason was that there seemed so little that was truthful or valuable in them! Handwritten notes taken

cases, he was joined by co-authors for that case with far greater knowledge of that site and its languages. Joint is better, more reflexive and reliable than solitary fieldwork, but often is not logistically possible. Thankfully in the Bougainville case, most of the authors were able to spend many weeks together in the field with co-authors. We encourage a participatory approach to the research and invite readers to check out the Peacebuilding Compared web site at <<http://peacebuilding.anu.edu.au>>, where more information can be found. Please feel encouraged to post ideas and information to at any time throughout the 20-year life of the project.

For the project in general so far, we have been surprised by the level of access won to key players such as presidents, state and insurgent military commanders, foreign ministers, peace agreement negotiators and peacekeeping commanders. Yet, as is clear in the appendix to this volume, in comparison with the appendices in our first volume that summarised the types of players in the conflict who were interviewed, there was always uneven coverage in the types of stakeholders accessed. In every case, there were regional specialists in the study of this conflict who had secured broader access to the key players and who had talked many times to decision makers we did not manage to tap. This means it is always more important to attend to the published fruits of the fieldwork of others than to one's own fieldwork notes.

Yet this raises the question of what added value there could be in research of inferior coverage led by researchers with an inferior background in the regions of conflict. One added value is that sometimes inferior researchers whose fieldwork engagement is thin are nevertheless lucky enough to get superior access to some significant bits of information. So there is some value from our research in adding a little to the superior body of data and insights accumulated by the very best experts in these conflicts. Yet this is not the main contribution of comparative research. Its main added value is in the comparison and in the different ways of seeing that a comparative lens opens up. In each case study of Peacebuilding Compared, there tends to be a few scholars who have done the most insightful or thorough research on that case. The frequent citation of the work of these scholars makes it clear who they are. We are deeply grateful to them. Their work remains the scholarship to read on that case; but we do hope that by standing on their books, we might be able to peer over their shoulders to begin to see more clearly a comparative landscape of patterns of conflict across the globe.

during such interviews were still kept, in case a changed view of their truthfulness and value emerged later. No interviews were taped. Co-researchers had often done extensive fieldwork of their own for quite separate research projects—for example, associated with Peter Reddy's PhD thesis. The latter fieldwork is not included in the interview statistics summarised in the appendix at the end of this book.

Peacebuilding Compared offers a different kind of comparativism than the dominant kind that is based on quantitative analysis of statistical information from databases maintained by organisations such as the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the US Central Intelligence Agency and national statistics bureaus. Peacebuilding Compared uses these databases as well to code one-third of its 670 variables in relation to each conflict. Most codes, however, are of things not available in these databases, such as whether insurgents received training from a foreign power or whether significant numbers of the combatants were female, based on our interviews (and published fieldwork of others). Good examples of the kind of variable never coded in the leading quantitative research are the dynamics and shape of reconciliation processes post-conflict. This is a particularly important neglect according to some of the theoretical frameworks we address in this volume.

We also attempt to deal with two fundamental problems in the quantitative literature. One is that statisticians are often interested only in data coded at the national level. The study of 'civil wars' dominated by the disciplines of political science and international relations is often, moreover, interested only in armed conflicts in which one of the combatants is a state.⁴ Peacebuilding Compared seeks to maximise coding at the local or provincial level. Hence the way a variable is coded for the separatist conflict in Aceh might be quite different from how it is coded for the separatist conflict in Papua at the other end of Indonesia. Another difference is that Peacebuilding Compared is content to code conflicts that are many things at once. For example, Peacebuilding Compared codes Aceh and Papua as both separatist and ethnic conflicts. This is different from the approach in the quantitative literature, which tends to force conflicts into one category or another. Third, as is clear from the summary in Table 9.1, we also enter certain codes as 'consensus' codes among scholars and other expert commentators on the case, and others as 'contested but credible'.

A difference from the ethnographic/qualitative literature is that Peacebuilding Compared is much less engaged with adjudicating the most contested debates about the case. We just code them as contested interpretations and we report the

4 Peacebuilding Compared studies armed conflicts in which one armed group with a command structure—even if its organisational auspices were episodic or non-institutionalised—engaged in group attacks with weapons on another armed group with a command structure. This means a clash of two warlord armies or two armed gangs can count as an armed conflict for Peacebuilding Compared if it passes certain other threshold conditions. For the moment, these are that two of the following three conditions are met: that at least 200 people were killed in the fighting within three years, at least 30 000 people were driven from their homes by the fighting and an internationally sanctioned peacekeeping mission was sent to make peace in the war-torn region. Including the last condition prevents us from excluding from consideration serious armed conflicts that started but were prevented from escalating into mass slaughter by peacekeepers (for example, the arrival of UN peacekeepers in Timor-Leste in 2006). This, however, is just a starting definition for our armed conflicts that could change as new wars occur. It sets a threshold that excludes a lot of conflicts that one might want to include. Bougainville is a civil war that clearly exceeds all three provisional thresholds we have set for inclusion.

nature of the contestation in our narrative. What we are interested in doing is ruling out non-credible interpretations. Conflict zones are teeming with them: wild unsubstantiated rumours, ridiculous theories propagated by people who spread lies to protect their culpability, clever pieces of misinformation planted by double agents, imagined histories concocted by supposed combatants with grandiose visions of their self-importance to saving their nation. A significant level of fieldwork on the ground and in the capitals of combatant and peacekeeping states (or at UN headquarters) is needed. The intent is not to get the research team to the point where it can settle the most contested debates among the experts, but to the point where it can rule out most (hopefully all) the myriad non-credible interpretations.

A distinctive comparativism

This renders Peacebuilding Compared a distinctive form of comparativism. The approach was motivated by reading most of the best research as falling into one of two camps. The first includes a large number of wonderful studies of particular conflicts—or comparing a couple—written by scholars who have deep knowledge and long experience of that region. The second is the more recent quantitative tradition led by outstanding comparativists such as Ted Gurr, Jack Goldstone, Paul Collier, Anke Hoeffler, Virginia Page Fortna, James Fearon, David Laitin, Michael Doyle and Nicholas Sambanis, among others cited in the references. In choosing a method that aspires to significant fieldwork engagement that is inferior to the best ethnographic work, and is on a smaller number of cases than the best quantitative work, we are simply filling a methodological niche that has been under-exploited in the literature. We do not have the view that it is necessarily a superior method to the dominant two.⁵

5 One battleground between large-n quantitative methods and single case studies arises from the qualitative critique that quantitative methods freeze (into one code) dynamic phenomena that are one thing at one point in time, another thing at another point in an unfolding conflict. This means that case studies of single conflicts do not in fact have an n of 1. Rather, they are studies of many separate episodes of violence, some of which might be more ethnic, others more religious or involving attacks by different ethnic groups than the first episode. Hence, combining the results of X qualitative analyses of protracted conflicts is more like a qualitative meta-analysis than it is like combining X cases each with an n of 1. What we are attempting in Peacebuilding Compared is a unique kind of meta-analytical hybrid. John Braithwaite deploys his knowledge of the narratives of the set of episodes of violence that makes up a particular case to code most variables as 'high', 'average' or 'low' on that variable. If there is some doubt about how to code (a common occurrence), it is coded 'average'. So, 'average' is given the broad meaning of 'the range on this variable where most cases of armed conflict in Peacebuilding Compared lie'. If there is both doubt and thinness of data that make it very hard to code, it is also coded as 'hard to code'. Imagine coding two variables on the extent to which greed and grievance are motivations for fighting. The first point to make is that they can both be high or both low, or they can have different values. The second is that if greed is highly prominent in some episodes, moderately present in most and totally absent in some, the greed variable will be coded 'average'. So these three-point codes are in fact crude summaries from a sometimes large number of data points within the single case. For some variables, such as the number of combatants on various sides and the number of refugees, we code a real number (or estimate a midpoint of a best-guess range). But we code both a maximum number (the

One of its demands is that it requires one person to read very extensively on each case and to be in the room or under the tree for most of the fieldwork. Otherwise it would be impossible to code the 670 variables consistently across cases. Otherwise the thematic unity of narrative volumes such as this might offer no advance on an edited collection of haphazard comparisons—insightful though such casual comparativism can be.

By 2030, we hope that some sort of cluster analysis or fuzzy set analysis to the best quantitative standards of that time will reveal something new about types of conflicts. We would also hope to define which might be the most important of probably a long list of risk factors that conduce to the persistence of armed conflict—and which are the most important protective factors for preserving peace. Narrative and analytical books such as this lay an important foundation for this future quantitative work. They discover new variables that are worth coding for all cases and new complexities in the dynamics among these variables that might ultimately account for why certain quantitative models will not explain much and why others might do so.

A final part of the method was to invite the people who seemed to be producing some of the best insights and writing the best books on the case to be members of an advisory panel. Our thanks to Sinclair Dinnen for this idea. We asked the advisory panel to suggest important people to interview, to read our first draft, comment on erroneous insights within it and on research and lines of inquiry that needed to be pursued before the next draft. Many were internationally distinguished scholars. Others were PhD students, including a number from The Australian National University, who had the luxury of recently spending long periods in the field, which senior scholars sometimes cannot manage.

Our ethical obligations under The Australian National University's Research Ethics Committee approval were explained to all participants. These included an obligation to report quotes and insights from each informant without identifying them unless they specifically indicated that they wanted to be quoted as the source of an insight. Wherever a quote appears without a citation to some other source in the literature, it is an anonymous quote from an informant interviewed for Peacebuilding Compared.

high-water mark of the number of combatants or refugees across all episodes of the conflict) and a separate variable, which is an estimated average number across the various episodes of the conflict. All this is perhaps only slightly less crude than a purported single quantitative estimate for a single conflict (as in the extant quantitative literature). However crude, it is an attempt to quantitatively summarise from qualitative cases that are more than narratives of an n of 1. This is exemplified by the discussion in the last two pages of Chapter 9 of why there are 12 data points in the Bougainville history relevant to confirming Barbara Walter's (2002) hypothesis that reciprocity in step-by-step demobilisation is needed for peace. Moreover, this approach to aggregating from a multiple- n sensibility for each conflict is combined with actually writing an episodic, dynamic narrative for that conflict. This is what we are doing in this book. The hope is that new kinds of insights will ultimately come from the interplay between multiple case-study narratives and quantitative analysis of the codes with this multiple- n sensibility.

2. Historical background to the conflict

Papua New Guinea is a nation of six million people that has regional geopolitical significance, sharing a long border with Indonesia. Bougainville is a large island (surrounded by smaller islands, the largest of which is Buka separated by a narrow strait from Bougainville Island) north-east of the island of New Guinea and north-west of the Solomon Islands. Ferocious fighting between Japanese and Australian and US forces took place in Bougainville during World War II. This resulted in a decline of the indigenous population of perhaps 25 per cent, the flight of Europeans and Chinese from Bougainville and cost the lives of 42 000 foreign soldiers (Nelson 2005:194–6). Papua New Guinea gained independence from its Australian colonial masters in 1975. In the years before independence, there had been agitation for Bougainville not to become part of Papua New Guinea. Most people of Bougainville saw themselves (with the blackest skin in the Pacific) connected racially, culturally and by historical trading relationships much more with the Solomon Islands than with Papua New Guinea. Over time, an independent nation of Bougainville, rather than integration with the Solomon Islands, became a rallying cause. A civil war that for many was aimed at independence broke out in 1988, continuing to 1997. After years of negotiations, in 2005 an Autonomous Bougainville Government (ABG) was established within Papua New Guinea.

International support for Bougainville's independence was almost non-existent. The general reaction was that Papua New Guinea was struggling to be viable as a nation, so what chance would an island of 160 000 people (just before the war) have? Today the population is probably more than 200 000. Bougainvilleans themselves looked around and saw a Pacific of island micro-states separated from other island states by vast expanses of ocean. Like most of them, Bougainville was diverse, with Polynesian enclaves as well as the dominant Melanesian population. Sixteen Austronesian and nine non-Austronesian (Papuan) languages are spoken on Bougainville (Tryon 2005).

Early history

We know humans have occupied Bougainville for more than 29 000 years (Spriggs 2005), but we know little about the dates of their arrival and from where they travelled. There were extensive trading relationships with islands

to the north and south. The southern trade with what are now the Solomon Islands imported shell money (which was ceremonially central in Bougainville), lime and fish in exchange for pigs, vegetables, pottery and decorated weapons (Oliver 1973:20).

Europeans first paid attention to the large island when two French ships commanded by Louis de Bougainville anchored there in 1768. Between 1820 and 1860, British, French and American whaling vessels became more frequent visitors and took on some Bougainvillean crew. After 1870, large numbers of Bougainvilleans were forced or volunteered to work as indentured labourers on plantations in Queensland, Fiji, Samoa and New Britain (Oliver 1973:23). In 1902, the Catholic Society of Mary (the Marists) established a mission on Bougainville. From the 1880s, the territories later to form Papua New Guinea were administered by Britain (then from 1906, Australia) and Germany. The German Colonial Administration in Rabaul annexed Bougainville in 1884 and opened a post at Kieta in 1905. Germany and Britain agreed to split the Solomon Islands, with the most northerly islands (mainly Bougainville Island) going to Germany. A few European planters and traders began to settle on the coast about the turn of the twentieth century. Before 1905, the most commercially important German copra plantation firm, the Neuguinea-Kompagnie, provided the nearest thing to an administration in Bougainville. German rule ended in 1914 when an Australian expeditionary force arrived. After World War I, the League of Nations granted Australia a mandate to govern the German territory in New Guinea, including Bougainville, and after World War II the entire territory became part of the United Nations' international trusteeship system, administered by Australia until independence in 1975.

The Europeans found societies that lived well off the land, growing taro,¹ green vegetables, tropical fruits, coconut, breadfruit, almonds and sago, fishing and eating occasional meat from pigs and possum. Large villages of hundreds of people were common on the coast. Most Bougainvilleans, however, lived in multi-household hamlets of a grandmother's family, her daughters' families and her granddaughters' families. Each household comprised a husband and a wife or wives and their children. Marriage did not occur within a matrilineage, so men would move to live in another matrilineal hamlet on marriage. Cultural exceptions are Buin, Siwai, Nissan Island and the outlying Polynesian Islands, which are patrilineal (Saovana-Spriggs 2007:8). Among the matrilineal Nasioi, marriages do occur within the same clan (Ogan 1972:14). While cultural differences across Bougainville are considerable, across the whole island similar clans recur, often with the same totem and origin myth of the clan.² People can therefore travel to unfamiliar parts of the island and experience some sense of

1 Shifting to sweet potato after World War II.

2 In some places, clans are divided into two exogamous moieties.

parts or portions of a clan which
marry outside themselves
(i.e. members of one moiety marry the
other moiety... maybe?) within

spiritual and ritual unity with others from their clan who live there. I can ask for and receive help from people of my clan whom I have never met and who do not speak my language. The Catholic Church, and to a lesser extent smaller Protestant churches, has become another unifying spiritual influence. A final integrative force spread by the Catholic education system, but initiated by the indentured labour system for plantation production by workers from different language groups, was the gradual spread of Tok Pisin (Pidgin), which is now the *lingua franca*.

Groups of residential hamlets formed fighting units of variable composition depending on male leadership contingencies. In some regions (Buin, Buka, some of North Bougainville), leadership is hereditary, but mostly it is based on feats of leadership such as giving feasts for large aggregations of people. Warfare seems to have been common across Bougainville in pre-European times (Oliver 1973:72)—though see Oliver's (1955:412–18) own doubts based on interviews with older men on how many battles they had in fact experienced. In Buka and the far north of Bougainville, victors engaged in cannibalism, while headhunting was common in the south. Warfare was, however, regulated by sophisticated peacemaking practices, such that while warfare was frequent, loss of life was almost always modest. One reason why there is so much to learn from peacebuilding in Bougainville is that Bougainvilleans have such vast cultural experience as brokers of war and brokers of peace. The Catholic Church led a process of religiously justified pacification that was effective in ending intertribal warfare and wiping out cannibalism and headhunting. When anthropology student John Braithwaite spoke to old men who had eaten human flesh in Bougainville in 1969, they spoke with a certain shame of practices that predated their enlightenment by the word of God. Pacification also depended on the German and then Australian colonial authorities demonstrating superior firepower. This was accomplished by very small numbers of colonial police training and arming local 'police boys'. It is impossible to say how much of the credit for pacification rests with these guns or with the sermons of the missionaries or with deaths from European diseases. But as has been conjectured with Dutch pacification in Eastern Indonesia, Howley (2002:22) notes that pacification occurred so quickly and easily in Bougainville that both the Bible and the gun could have been little more than excuses for indigenous peacemakers to grasp a permanent peace with their neighbours that they had long wanted.

Pacification also proceeded through indirect rule by coopting big-men—respected leaders renowned for giving large feasts—and appointing them as *luluai* (the word for chief in one New Britain language). These men were given a badge, hat and silver-headed stick and could retain 10 per cent of the colonial taxes they collected. The essentials of the *luluai* (renamed *kukerai* or hatmen

after their police hats) system were retained under Australian colonialism. For much of Australian colonial history in Bougainville, the province was ruled indirectly by just four very junior subdistrict *kiaps*.

As talk of independence for Papua New Guinea began to get serious in the 1960s, there were leaders in Bougainville who wanted to go it alone, or with the Solomon Islands. Great impetus was given to this movement by the discovery of mineral wealth, which secessionists believed might underwrite independence, but particularly by the way the mine was established—as discussed in the next section. In 1968, a group of Bougainvillean students, civil servants and politicians living in Port Moresby formed the Mungkas (a Buin word for black) Society. It became a crucible of secessionist thought and activism. Back in central Bougainville in 1969, a secessionist social movement, Napidakoe Navitu, quickly gained a large following.

The mine

In 1964, a huge copper and gold deposit was discovered near the centre of Bougainville. By the standards of the time, Bougainville Copper Limited (BCL), whose principal investor was Conzinc Riotinto Australia (CRA), had a comparatively advanced sense of corporate social responsibility. This was based on an enlightened self-interest whereby management advised shareholders that unless they treated the emerging nation of Papua New Guinea and its citizens well through the economic opportunities it created, a future leadership of the independent nation might nationalise such a large asset. BCL funded tertiary scholarships for indigenous students without requiring eventual company employment. It funded agricultural extension. It provided capital for Bougainvillean business start-ups through the Panguna Development Foundation. BCL agreed with government demands that it, rather than the government, pay for nearly all the infrastructure the mine needed: roads, electricity, water, telecommunications, ports, airstrips, housing.

The PNG Territory Administration exercised an option to acquire 20 per cent of the equity in the mine and also received a royalty of 1.25 per cent on the value of its revenue from copper-concentrate sales for the 42-year term of the lease. A large number of shares were reserved for purchase by indigenous individuals and groups and many were purchased by church organisations, for example, though we do not know how many individual Bougainvilleans benefited. There were, however, 9000 PNG resident shareholders (Griffin 2005:295). The company agreed to comparatively high territorial taxes on its profits, starting with a three-year tax holiday (terminated 15 months early), then a 50 per cent company tax rate (rather than the normal 25 per cent [Regan 2003]), increasing

over the years to a maximum rate of 66 per cent (Oliver 1973:158). Michael Somare's PNG coalition government in 1974 responded to criticism that the mine was exploitative by renegotiating upwards the government's share of earnings. We will see that by contemporary standards, the BCL deal was a very good one for the PNG state, but miserly to local landowners. It was the offer to local landowners that was a major proximate cause of the war.

A deal struck the year the Bougainville war started granted landowners in Porgera more than 20 times the share in the earnings of the mine in royalties compared with what the Panguna landowners received (Matthew 2000:736). This was part of a general shift among mining companies in Papua New Guinea and beyond as a result of what were seen as the mistakes of Bougainville 'from paying resource rents to the state for technocratic distribution in the national interest towards paying resource rents to landowners in the immediate vicinity of their operations' (Claxton 1998:96). Claxton (1998:97) goes on to criticise this strategy as 'hastening the retreat or even capitulation of the state before the power of multinational companies and local interests'. Anthony Regan pointed out in commenting on this paragraph that the same sort of deal was indeed being offered in Bougainville that year.

PNG leader Somare also in 1974 sought to counter the growing threat of Bougainville secession by negotiations that led to an Interim Provincial Government and by passing all the royalties from the mine (as opposed to the larger tax revenues) through to the province (apart from the 5 per cent of the 1.25 per cent royalty that went to landowners). In September 1975, the Interim Provincial Government of Bougainville nevertheless declared independence unilaterally. The PNG National Parliament suspended it the next month and anti-PNG Government riots ensued in Bougainville. During 1976, Somare settled this conflict by agreeing to a permanent provincial government with some credible powers and resources: the North Solomon Islands Provincial Government. There were also undertakings to further devolve powers to the province over time, though these were mostly not honoured (Momis 2005:315).

The mine was a massive, complex operation in exceptionally rugged terrain that required a great deal of expatriate engineering and mining expertise. Nevertheless, the company had a commitment to create indigenous employment and to train locals to take over from expatriates. At the peak of construction in 1971—much of it by non-BCL employees—there were 3861 expatriate and 6328 PNG employees.³ There were basic problems with BCL's corporate responsibility analysis. Its enlightened self-interest was driven by fear of expropriation by Port

³ This fell to a workforce of about 4000 for much of the 1980s, about one-third of whom were Bougainvillean. Another 4000—about half Bougainvillean—were employed in businesses dependent on BCL (Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade 2005:18).

Moresby politicians or by what Anthony Regan called a PNG administrative state characterised by limited mobilisation around political identities until the approach of independence, so BCL royalties, taxes and reserved shares were designed mainly to impress elites in the capital and its affirmative-action policies measured success in creating employment opportunities for citizens of all Papua New Guinea. This is not to say it did not also try hard to create opportunities for Bougainvilleans; about half the apprentices and half of the highest paid Papua New Guineans were local Nasioi.⁴ Its success in creating opportunities for imported workers—especially from the New Guinea Highlands—was, however, one of the factors that led to civil war. Second, BCL's corporate responsibility analysis—in a manner typical in the 1960s—was focused on creating economic opportunities for a poor nation to the neglect of environmental impacts. The colonial administration also embedded dysfunctional regulatory arrangements in the Bougainville Copper Agreement such that the PNG Minister for the Environment in 1988 could complain that his department was prevented from taking action against pollution by the mine because the agreement vested that authority in the Department of Minerals and Energy (Gillespie 1999:13). BCL was probably a comparatively environmentally concerned miner for its time, yet the environmental impacts turned out to be huge. And their effects were concentrated on large communities around Panguna and in the river valleys between the mine and the coast. Within these deeply aggrieved communities—indeed communities that were grieving for their lands—the conflict began. The mine was a large physical scar on the land, but a deeper spiritual one for communities whose landscape was intensely implicated in their spiritual life.

Most fundamentally, BCL's attempts to be a responsible corporate citizen were to no avail simply because the mine was so big—far bigger than any mine in Australia. Some 150 000 tonnes of rock waste and tailings were discharged every day from the mine area (Brown 1974:19). It could not be dug without formidable displacement of villages and displacement of soil that washed down steep mountain valleys into rivers that became dead zones. It could not be built without thousands of men with white and brown skin (or 'redskins', as the locals called the New Guineans) who could not but dominate the local space, who consumed too much alcohol, harassed local women and created a deep sense of dread that the local culture, laws and identity were being crushed. The outside workers also brought problems of public drunkenness and prostitution that were new to the area and scandalised church elders. Paul Lapun put it this way in 1988: 'You didn't tell me what would happen to my environment...

4 But in 1971 the total of Nasioi BCL employees was only 241 (Denoon 2000:168). So while BCL was trying to husband the best skill-development opportunities for Nasioi, most of the 20 000 Nasioi did not get jobs in the mine and there was still a feeling of having their land overwhelmed by massive numbers of immigrant workers in Panguna and Arawa. Nasioi people were more unskilled in vocational terms than people from many other parts of Papua New Guinea.



When I was young they fooled me and now I am old and still alive to see the result of my decision I weep. Who cares for a copper mine if it kills us' (Denoon 2000:200).

These grievances also created opportunities for locals motivated by greed. Some we interviewed thought the founder of the BRA, Francis Ona, was one of those men. Most considered he was not, but that there were others who promoted the war to advance interests in controlling the mine, controlling Bougainville, capturing the Panguna Landowners' Association, and so on. So the sheer size of the physical and economic impacts of the mine made for both huge grievances and huge opportunities for greed.

BCL got off to a bad start by prospecting the land without the permission of landowners and with some unsophisticated and offensive analysis to the effect that the Panguna Valley was uninhabited and sparsely utilised. There was incompetence in failing to come to grips with the complexities of shared tenure for land and a crude imposition of colonial land and mining laws over the top of this complexity. There was a failure to grasp the spiritual, cultural and social dimensions of land; it was not simply the commodity that BCL negotiators treated it as being. Minister for Territories, Charles (Ceb) Barnes, was not listening when he visited Bougainville in 1969. His interpreter told us that women from the mine site sang a song for Barnes about how sacred the land was for them and about their incomprehension of why it was being taken away: 'In matrilineal society, when women wail and confront something, it's a big signal.' Barnes did not hear it and rambled about the nation's minerals belonging to the whole nation.

Some of the brightest and best Australian lawyers of that generation—Anthony Mason advising the Commonwealth as Solicitor-General and Ninian Stephen as counsel for BCL—were offering advice on how to fend off any Australian High Court challenge that might enforce a more sensitive engagement with the indigenous land-tenure issues. Ultimately, the High Court did hear the matter and decided in 1969 that Australia had the power to take land in Commonwealth territories without the obligations to provide just compensation (*Teori Tau vs The Commonwealth*, [1969] CLR 564; Havini 1999:8). Beneath all of that failure to come to grips with the complexity of the land BCL devastated, there was a simple conflict that was more irresolvable between the principle of the national development of a poor nation and a pre-modern, local understanding of shared ownership: 'The principle that royalties paid on the treasure from one's own land would be used for the Territory as a whole, and not for the land's owners, or even for Bougainvilleans in general, was considered by some Bougainvilleans to be insanely alien, or transparently deceitful' (Oliver 1973:164).

Bougainville's House of Assembly member, Paul Lapun, struggled for years to eventually rally colleagues from across Papua New Guinea to roll the colonial administration and allocate 5 per cent of the 1.25 per cent copper royalty to the Panguna landowners. Sadly, though, fighting over that modest pot became another factor contributing to the conflict. Because the politics of land rights had delayed a lucrative flow of profits, when distributions to local landowners began, there was 'more haste than planning' (Denoon 2000:169). Crude, inaccurate procedures were implemented for calculating who was entitled to what share; 'the view from Canberra overlooked such difficulties' (Denoon 2000:169). The interest in Canberra was in announcements of the aggregate dollars paid out to indigenes. These dollar amounts were unprecedented in the Pacific and sounded impressive, but they were in fact little compensation for removing the homes, the lands, the livelihoods, the spiritual lives and the entire way of life of people.

Resistance to the mine became a major regional news story in 1969 when Australian media covered the physical resistance of women and men in Rorovana, where BCL built a port for the mine. The footage was shocking: bare-breasted women putting their bodies in the path of Australian bulldozers, resisting passively and being attacked by helmeted riot police with batons. The newspaper headlines—'Australia's shame', 'Australia's bullies' (Denoon 2000:2)—did indeed outrage many Australians. They added to the impetus in the Australian labour movement to push for early independence for Papua New Guinea. The international coverage did raise some questions of how different the meaning of land was to Bougainvilleans compared with white Australians. Three young Bougainvilleans—one of them Theodore Miriung, who in 1996 was to be assassinated as Premier of the Bougainville Transitional Government—said 'land is our physical life—food and sustenance. Land is our social life; it is marriage; it is status; it is politics; in fact, it is our only world' (Dove et al. 1974:29). Donald Denoon's (2000:127) account of why the story had little traction beyond the South Pacific is revealing, as in the words of one agency journalist, 'the violence itself was quite a good little spot news story but the real story about background and motives is too complicated for overseas readers, it would take too long to explain'.

The Rorovana incidents sent a warning signal that should have triggered more nuanced analysis towards preventive diplomacy by the social democrats Gough Whitlam⁵ and Michael Somare, who were surging relentlessly towards leadership of their nations. Whitlam and Somare—like the conservative

5 Edward Wolfers made the interesting comment on our draft that 'Gough Whitlam, in particular, was always clear that the decision for Papua New Guinea's independence was at least as much concerned with the future of Australia (Australia's international reputation, and the effects that continued colonial rule might have on Australian society) as of Papua New Guinea.'

minister Barnes,⁶ the senior bureaucrats in Port Moresby and the leadership of BCL—proved incapable of preventing the war by re-examining the social justice of the mine through the lens of the local landowners. Having BCL contribute even more to the national development of Papua New Guinea seemed to them all the appropriate social democratic paradigm of responsiveness required.⁷ Investigative journalists and university experts did not excel at analysing and communicating to political, business and administrative elites the complexity of the responsiveness that was needed. Instead of constructive international engagement with preventive diplomacy, the Rorovana warning signal simply produced self-righteous vilification of an exploitative multinational, of overzealous policing and of a callous colonial administration. Independence for Papua New Guinea and tougher rents and taxation of BCL would fix that in the eyes of an Australian democratic left that was at its zenith of community support as the opening of the mine approached.

BCL was getting much more sophisticated advice from a fine anthropologist in Douglas Oliver of Harvard University. While Oliver saw many of the flaws in the way BCL was managing the land-compensation issues, and spoke out against them, he did not allow these to shake his ultimate advice that 'opposition would be limited, and that people would be reconciled to the mine eventually' (Denoon 2000:201). Social science is useful in diagnosing the problems a particular course of action might cause and even in making probabilistic predictions of what is more and less likely across a large n of cases. It is not useful for predicting what will happen in an n of 1. Douglas Oliver made an n-of-1 prediction in the section of his 1968 report to CRA headed 'Some predictions regarding external relations between CRA and Bougainville natives' (Denoon 2000:217). This rosy 'it will blow over' analysis was one of the obstacles to the preventive diplomacy needed to head off the war.

In 1978, landowners became more organised, uniting to form the Panguna Landowners' Association to lobby over their many grievances. BCL hoped the landowners would give up if it kept delaying and fobbing them off; however, BCL negotiated a new compensation package supplementary to the major agreement with the PNG Government after frustrated landowners looted the Panguna supermarket. This established a Road Mine Tailings Leases Trust Fund that invested in local plantations and in the Panguna Development Foundation. The new fund was designed to provide some basic services to landowners in education, health care, water supply, transportation and scholarships for

6 The senior author had conversations with Whitlam and his successor as Labor leader, Bill Hayden, in Bougainville when they visited in 1969. He also ineffectively raised concerns with Ceb Barnes in this period in the context of helping set up public meetings in which Barnes and Hayden spoke on the mine.

7 Anthony Regan, in commenting on this paragraph, added that Bougainvillean political leaders in the 1970s were focused more on securing limited resources from the mine revenue for their new Interim Provincial Government than on securing substantial redistribution to landowners.

students in higher education (Okole 1990). Many landowners, however, came to view the fund as operating for the personal gain of board members of the Panguna Landowners' Association.

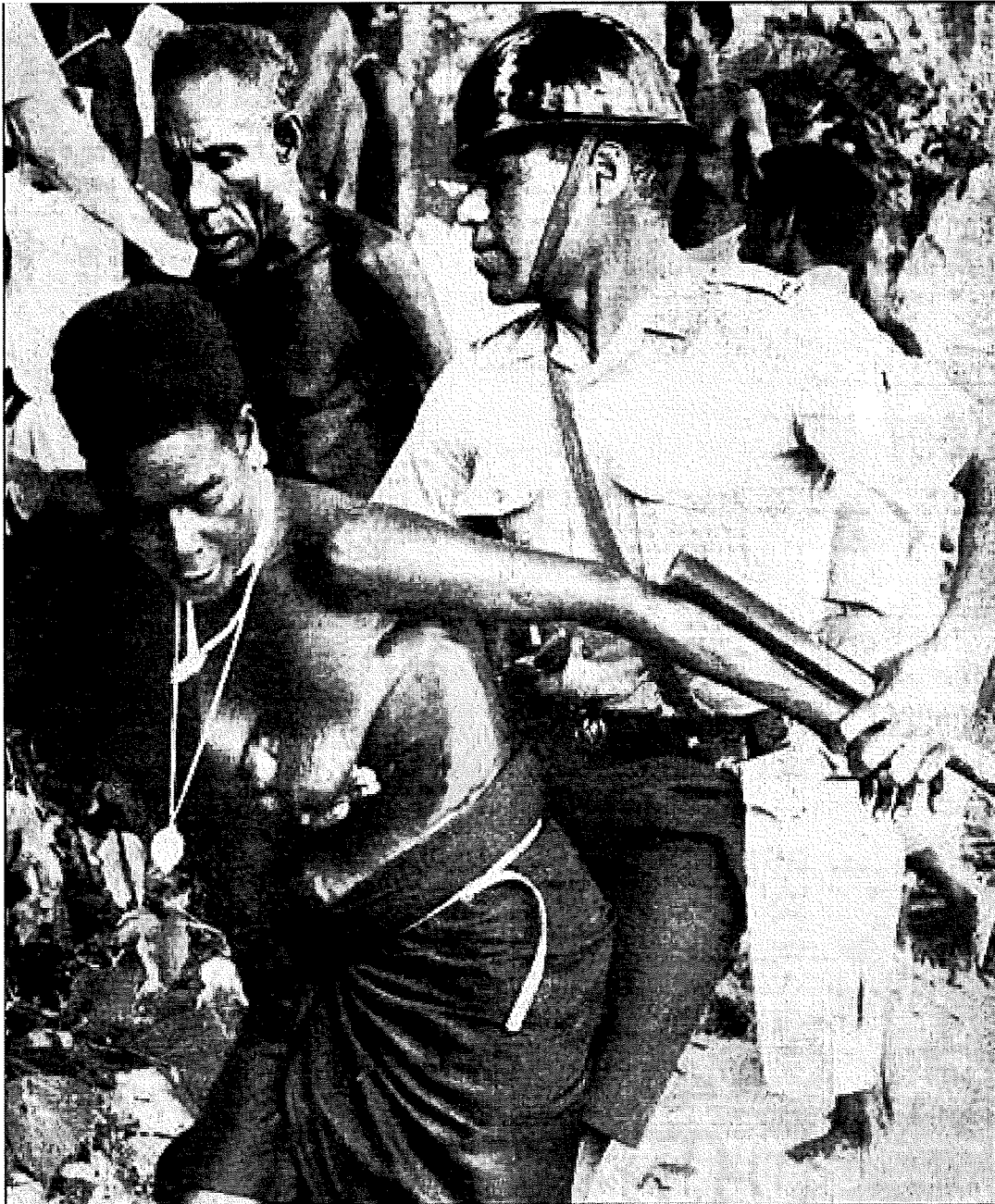


Figure 2.1 Rorovana women resist the bulldozers moving in, 6 August 1969

Photo: *Sydney Sun*

A combination of infighting among Bougainvillean political leaders who were on guard against adversaries gaining credit for getting a better deal for landowners (Griffin 1990:11) and a recession that was pinching BCL and PNG Government finances meant that the 1981 review of the mining agreement (provided for in

Somare's 1974 renegotiation) never occurred. This did not help the legitimacy of the Panguna Landowners' Association. '[H]ad the government under Prime Minister Sir Julius Chan renegotiated the BCA [Bougainville Copper Agreement] in 1981, the bloody Bougainville crisis may have been pre-empted' (Momis 2005:310).

A new generation frustrated by not only BCL but the non-confrontational politics of their elders, led by Francis Ona and Perpetua Serero,⁸ formed the New Panguna Landowners' Association in 1987. Melchior Togolo (2005:285) and some whom we interviewed alleged that greed was a motive, that some in the new association were 'refused loans because of past loan delinquency' after more rigorous accountability for its trust fund was introduced. What they demanded was massive and they were not taken seriously: K10 billion for environmental damage, 50 per cent of BCL profits and transfer of BCL to Bougainvillean ownership within five years. Carruthers' (1990:41) summary of the relative share of wealth generated by the mine from 1972 to 1989 shows how unrealistic the K10 billion plus 50 per cent of profits claim was and how little of the wealth from the mine went to Bougainville—particularly the landowners:

- K million
- National government 1078
- Provincial government 75
- Landholders 24
- Non-government shareholders 577
- Total 1754

Carruthers' numbers above also show that the national and provincial governments were making (in taxes, fees and dividends) twice as much from the mine as the mostly foreign private shareholders.⁹ These numbers are about the share of profits in the wealth created by the mine. There is also labour's share—a large proportion of which went to citizens of Papua New Guinea. While the minority expatriate employees were much more highly paid, they spent a lot of their salaries in Papua New Guinea.

In August 1988, the New Panguna Landowners' Association occupied the offices of the foundation controlled by the association and declared the appointment of a new board of the association. A key member of the old board, Mathew Kove, was allegedly murdered on the orders of his nephew, Francis Ona, in early 1989. By then, the legal battle over control of the association was moot as the mine was about to close and the New Panguna Landowners' Association had launched the BRA as a Bougainville-wide uprising led by Ona.

⁸ Perpetua Serero died soon after the civil war began.

⁹ Similar proportions apply in the numbers provided in a more detailed breakdown by Hilson (2007:29).

Closure of the mine in May 1989 because of the violence was a massive setback for the PNG economy. The mine was providing 45 per cent of Papua New Guinea's export income, 17 per cent of internally generated government revenue and 12 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) (Carruthers 1990:38). It had completed 1000 apprenticeships and trained 11 000 PNG employees in industrial skills, which many had taken to jobs in other parts of the economy. Four hundred tertiary graduations had been funded. All this training input into the PNG and Bougainville economies stopped with the war.

Immigration

Concern was widespread in the areas where immigrant workers were employed (by BCL and its contractors and also as plantation workers) over disrespect for local customs and local women, especially by Highlanders from New Guinea. Highlanders were seen as primitive, especially because of their quick propensity for payback violence. An incident in the Highlands in 1972 focused this stereotype. Two respected Bougainvillean civil servants—one a physician—were beaten to death after they struck and killed a little girl with their car. Some research at the time among southern Bougainville students ranked a hierarchy of social acceptance that placed 'New Guineans' highest (after Bougainvilleans), followed by 'Papuan', 'Europeans' and, last, 'Highlanders' (Nash and Ogan 1990:10; Moulik 1977:103–6).

Immigrant workers from the mainland established many squatter settlements in Central Bougainville, some of which became violence hotspots or were perceived that way. The conditions of dislocation created by rapid urban development in fact also incubated a great deal of violence and property crime by Bougainvillean gangs. In addition to taking thousands of jobs at the mine, the migrants bought up many local businesses such as bus services. Howley (2002:33) alleges that mainlanders ran three brothels. Another 'redskin' ran an organised crime business based on gang members robbing houses. These were disturbing developments for the formerly well-ordered, low-crime Bougainvillean societies.

The rape, murder and mutilation of a popular nurse from the hospital unleashed a fury against 'redskins' in 1988. The 'Koromira Home Guard' armed and cleared their area of 'redskins', killing any men who resisted (Howley 2002:35).

Conclusion

There was a historical basis and a movement for Bougainville separatism before the mine. We will see in the next chapter that when dissatisfaction over the

2. Historical background to the conflict

mine and over the related issue of immigration boiled over as violence, Francis Ona was able to broaden his armed coalition by linking the mine issue and the immigration issue to the separatist movement. The Australian left and progressive forces within BCL itself were concerned about the mine causing injustice—or being seen by Papua New Guinea to cause it—from the late 1960s. But they viewed this injustice in the frame of a wealthy multinational exploiting a Third-World nation. Their emphasis was therefore on compensating the PNG Government for environmental destruction and guaranteeing Port Moresby a generous windfall from the profits. This involved a misunderstanding of the more local nature of the felt injustice that would endanger peace and development. Both BCL and its critics on the left in Australia failed in particular to grasp the importance of clumsy compensation policies that opened divisions between old and young local landowners and between landowners and 'redskin' immigrant workers.

5. The architecture of the peace

The Truce and Peace Monitoring Groups

For a number of years, the BRA had been working towards internationalising the conflict through various UN agencies. So when an international monitoring force was agreed to in 1997, the BRA/BIG preference was for a UN force. Having always resisted the BRA's internationalising strategy, the PNG Government also resisted UN peacekeeping. A Truce Monitoring Group (TMG) was established in November 1997, led by Brigadier Roger Mortlock of New Zealand. Half the 250 monitors were New Zealand military, with most of the rest being Australians (civil servants for the front-line roles, where there was distrust of Australian military involvement, though Australian military filled other roles) and military/police from Fiji and Vanuatu. Various informants said there were immediate positive effects from their arrival. Fighters no longer felt they could kill others with impunity. In the newly pacified space, lines of communication began to open up. While the sheer fact of arrival increased confidence that commitments for peace would be kept, the projection of the slogan '*No ken stoppem*¹ peace' ('The peace cannot be stopped') by the peace monitors was well crafted to build optimism in the invincibility of the peace.

Both the TMG and subsequent Peace Monitoring Group (PMG) were unarmed. This was driven by BIG/BRA anxiety that Ona and his remaining allies might misinterpret the intentions of an armed intervention—for example, as an Australian invasion to retake the mine. As Anthony Regan (2008) concludes: 'By basing peacekeeping authority on a moral element instead of physical force, it enhances peace by contributing to a non-violent culture.'

In May 1998, the TMG was replaced with a new mission with a similar peacebuilding mandate: the Peace Monitoring Group (PMG). After a softening of initial resistance to Australian leadership, the PMG was led by Australian commanders. There had been successful confidence building through the Australian presence in the TMG. Much of the suspicion about Australian involvement centred on Australian commercial interest in reopening the mine. We were told stories of Australian helicopters 'prospecting for gold' and of Australians being tested with offers to buy gold. The 300-strong PMG was five-sixths Australian (Londey 2004:222) with Australian naval support offshore.

1 Sic. It should have been '*stopim*'.

Beyond monitoring the truce, the PMG was to educate citizens about the peace process, provide a framework for the full restoration of government services, oversee the collection and destruction of weapons, foster reconciliation, promote development and help establish a Bougainville police force. PMG commander Osborn saw part of their job as bringing conflicting parties together in dialogue and facilitating negotiations by providing a mixture of 'ideas, information, communication and transport' (Londey 2004:223). The PMG did not provide development aid but helped with medical assistance and transport for locals in response to immediate needs they confronted in the field, while trying to be careful not to distribute favours such as offering rides in ways that seemed to favour one faction over another. The peace operation 'saved many lives, particularly those of mothers and newborn babies'. We interviewed peacekeepers who had babies named after them whom they had helped save by getting their mother to a doctor (sometimes to the concern of their wives!).²

Between the deployment of the Truce and Peace Monitoring Groups, the Lincoln peace conference was held in January 1998, bedding down a 'permanent and irrevocable' cease-fire.

In 1997, when the TMG arrived, there could have been 800 PNGDF troops in Bougainville and 150 police mobile fighters armed with automatic weapons within PNGDF patrols (Londey 2004:219). The BRA fighting strength could have been more than 2000 on one account (Londey 2004:219). Anthony Regan's comment on our text here is that the number of core fighters could have been only a couple of hundred, with many more being 'home guards'. The BRA had perhaps 500 automatic weapons and 2000 or 3000 reconditioned World War II or homemade guns (Regan 2001).³ The Resistance had perhaps 1500 fighters, according to our interviews, though some Resistance leaders claimed 5000 men willing to fight, with a variable number of weapons 'on loan' from the PNGDF. Again, Anthony Regan makes the point that the overwhelming majority of the Resistance forces were little more than home guards.

2 One Vanuatu peacekeeper we interviewed was concerned about his wife's reaction to a baby being named after him and the dispatch of gifts to baby and mother in Bougainville. He was relieved when his brother was subsequently posted to Bougainville and able to renew the family connection, reporting back to his brother's wife on the reality of the happy family circumstances of the birth of the baby. Another was greatly relieved to receive a photo of the baby named after him to show his wife how Bougainvillean was the skin colour of the baby!

3 Commenting on these numbers in 2009, Anthony Regan said '[t]hose figures would need to be reconsidered in light of the weapons actually contained from 2001–2005—which were about 2000. The assumption by then was that this might be two-thirds of the total weapons, with perhaps 500 or so still in the hands of the Me'ekamui Defence Force, something similar retained by other elements—BRA/BRE, etc. But we also know there has been some leakage out, some new weapons in, and perhaps 400 or more World War II weapons dug up and brought into circulation.'



Figure 5.1 BRA fighters posing with a US World War II bomber turret gun they had restored

Photo: Brother Bryan Leak

While the TMG was led by New Zealand, it was supported mainly by Australian resources. The Australian Defence Force was an advocate of Australian leadership, but all the diplomatic advice, including from Australia, was that the second-best after UN leadership for BRA acceptance and legitimacy with disarmament would be New Zealand leadership of the TMG. A New Zealand-led regional mission could also be put in place more quickly than a UN-led mission. The UN Security Council lent its support to the operation, but did not open a six-member UN Political Office in Bougainville (UNPOB), with some local employees, until August 1998, after the TMG had handed over to the PMG. Nevertheless, this office of the United Nation's Department of Political Affairs (as opposed to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations) was a central part of the peace process, playing a vital role in bringing the leading parties to the conflict together to discuss the substance and process for the peace.

Ninety per cent of the BRA fighters had followed Kabui and their military commanders, rather than Francis Ona, into the truce. Ona saw the strength of will of the people of Bougainville for peace, which was evident within his own village, and began to adopt the position that he supported peace, but not the particular peace that his former deputies had negotiated. He declared a 'no-go zone' in the mountains centred on his village of Guava and encompassing the mine site. Both the TMG and the PMG respected the no-go zone, hoping

that Ona's hold-out force, which became known as the Me'ekamui Defence Force, would eventually fully join the peace and surrender their weapons. Ona almost certainly believed that a peace could not work without him. Instead, he gradually became more marginal and ultimately the Autonomous Bougainville Government and its leadership became more legitimate in the eyes of the people of Bougainville. Bougainvilleans had looked to Ona to get out in front in pushing for peace; his star faded when he failed to hear these hopes.

Outside the no-go zone, the TMG and PMG formed into small patrols that visited most of the villages in Bougainville, explaining the peace process, handing out literature and listening to complaints and concerns. They operated out of five regional centres in addition to the central bases (Regan 2001, 2010:65). The patrols were multinational and each included a woman. The female member of the patrol was important for building rapport with the women of the village. This assisted with maintaining the momentum of women's leadership in peacebuilding. Many of the villages could be reached only on foot. Village meetings often ran for hours. In time, the emphasis shifted from visiting as many villages as possible to spending more time at villages strategic for the peace—for example, where there were a lot of weapons to be handed in or where there were potential spoilers. Peacekeepers learnt the social respect acquired by laying on a feast. They became good at building a relationship over food, with music and through sport⁴ (Breen 2001b:48). Even a volleyball team from Francis Ona's village joined in the volleyball competition organised by the PMG; an Australian military surgeon bought them jerseys. Monitors who could play a musical instrument or sing were especially important assets. This leads to some lessons learned from Bougainville: make musical talents a selection criterion for peacekeepers, give singing lessons to interested peacekeepers, and prepare peacekeepers before deployment with some training in how to lay on a feast that indigenes will really appreciate. Australian and New Zealand military commanders saw the peace potential of music and organised several successful tours of Bougainville by military bands.

The Pacific Islander contingents increased more than the diversity of the musicality of the international peacekeepers, though they certainly did that as well:

I was with a patrol commander, a medic, a civilian monitor and one or two ni-Vanuatu and Fijian peace monitors. They were so much better than we were at picking up the vibe of a village. For example when we would fly in these people could tell us fairly quickly if there had

4 Sport, according to some interviews, was especially helpful to the peace when combatants from different sides played on the same team, as opposed to team competitions that mapped onto divides from the conflict.

been something that had happened since the last visit. They had a much quicker rapport with the locals than we did. (Australian peacekeeper interviewed by Reddy 2006:239)

A member of parliament for the Panguna area diagnosed Bougainville's problem as one of distrusting everyone: Papua New Guinea, Australia, but most importantly one another. The TMG/PMG, and particularly the peace newsletter they distributed during their village visits, started to rebuild trust, in his view, by providing factual information that countered some of the wild rumours that were common.

The PMG gradually wound down and finally departed in June 2003. Both the TMG and the PMG were overwhelmingly acclaimed for the sensitive and helpful job they did, though the acclaim for the TMG and for Brigadier Mortlock was even more emphatic than that for the PMG. We consistently failed to draw any criticism during our Bougainville interviews from questions about the biggest mistakes made by peacekeepers or suggestions for how they could have done a better job, though a large number of respondents to the latter question said they should have stayed longer or stayed until all weapons were handed in and until Francis Ona formally joined the peace. There were the occasional allegations of Australians looking for gold from their helicopter and in rivers and another about an Australian soldier smuggling out orchids. This near-universally positive assessment of the monitors was in great contrast with the reaction to peacekeepers we report in the next two *Peacebuilding Compared* volumes on the Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste and in UN peace operations in other regions. As a top Australian intelligence official said: 'Unlike so many UN operations, there was none of that frequenting of brothels. Monitors were highly disciplined and that was a key to success. New Zealand set a good tone; it worked well because they set good rules early on. [There were] strict rules on fraternisation.'

From July to December 2003, the Bougainville Transitional Team of just 15 remaining from the PMG assisted with the withdrawal of the peacekeepers and the completion of weapons disposal, which still had a long way to go and in 2002 suffered reversals from a number of de-containments of contained weapons in response to perceived or real local threats (UNIFEM 2004). A successor to UNPOB, the UN Observer Mission of Bougainville (UNOMB), continued the UN work in 2004 through to June 2005. All these missions came and went with no casualties from violence. They did leave, however, with perhaps a thousand or more usable weapons not contained.

The post-conflict peace process

Regan (2008) identified three phases to the post-conflict peace process: a process phase that did not attend to outcomes; the negotiated political settlement phase; and the implementation of the settlement phase. The first stage lasted from 1997 to June 1999. It involved establishing the peace process and its institutional architecture, including the Truce and Peace Monitoring Groups and a Peace Process Consultative Committee, a road map for steps towards a negotiated process signed at Lincoln, a 'reconciliation government' 'to unify the Bougainvillean factions in advance of negotiating a political settlement' (Regan 2007), establishing the UN political office in Bougainville (UNPOB) with a mandate to monitor monitors and the peace process more broadly. The Peace Process Consultative Committee, which included no women, was chaired mostly by the director of the UN observer mission. He became in time a more important mediator than the leadership of the Truce and Peace Monitoring Groups of a peace negotiated principally among local leaders. As trust grew, ad hoc meetings of two or more of the parties were also an increasingly important method for settling specific issues (Regan 2005a).

The second phase ran from June 1999 to the signing of the Bougainville Peace Agreement on 30 August 2001. It guaranteed: a referendum on independence for Bougainville, deferred for 10–15 years; a high level of autonomy for Bougainville; and demilitarisation by disposal of the weapons of local combatants and withdrawal of all PNGDF and police mobile forces. The third stage continued from 2001 to the present. It involved real disposal of weapons in a process that continued to 2005 but that left many weapons circulating in Bougainville, especially in the hands of Ona's Me'ekamui Defence Force and Thomas Tari (the commander who captured the weapons at Kangu Beach; Box 4.1). Demand for new weapons from the militarisation of Tonu Village, where Noah Musingku sought refuge, and the realisation that guns could be an export industry for Bougainville criminals have seen in recent years an upsurge in digging up and reconditioning World War II weapons around the old American base in Torokina. In 2009, the US Government finally undertook to clean up the buried weapons it left behind on Bougainville 65 years ago in the interests of the security of the South Pacific (Regan 2010). The third stage of the peace process also involved withdrawal of the PNGDF in 2001, constitutional laws to implement the agreement that were jointly crafted and passed by the PNG Parliament in 2002, a participatory process for drafting a constitution for an Autonomous Bougainville Government (ABG) and an election for the ABG in 2005 that saw Joseph Kabui become President.

Anthony Regan (2010) characterises the peace process as 'political negotiations across two divides'. The first divide separated the Resistance and the BRA. It

was in fact a suite of divides along a continuum of positions between strong support for immediate secession and for immediate full integration with Papua New Guinea. The second divide arose after a consensus position among the Bougainville factions was reached. It was between the newly united Bougainville parties and a PNG state that feared even a deferred referendum on independence as a divisive and dangerous precedent.

The first suite of divides was bridged in mid 1999 as Bougainville factions prepared for political negotiations with Papua New Guinea by a process of advisers to all factions jointly developing nine options for the future. These ran from immediate independence to full integration into Papua New Guinea.

Next the advisers assigned tentative ratings to each option—high, medium or low—based on assessments of how well each option could contribute to dealing with the needs of post-conflict Bougainville reflected in 20 criteria (Regan 2002c). These criteria took account of Bougainville's weak economic base and low level of administrative capacity, and so on. This process gave the highest rating to the option of a constitutionally guaranteed referendum on independence for Bougainville from Papua New Guinea combined with a high level of autonomy for Bougainville during the period of deferral. Next, the advisers' analysis was discussed at length by the leadership, who agreed that the highest-rating option provided the best basis for a compromise solution. Only this option balanced the interests of opposing factions by keeping the question of secession alive, but leaving an ultimate decision on the choice between secession and integration to a later democratic process conducted when weapons had been disposed of, reconciliation achieved and the economy restored (Regan 2005a:26–7).

This consensus Bougainvillean negotiating position set the agenda for negotiations with Papua New Guinea that began in June 1999. The PNG negotiating team resisted it fiercely, seeing it as a threat to the unity of the central state that would presage disintegration were it emulated by other provinces. Australian Foreign Minister, Alexander Downer, broke through this deadlock by suggesting the compromise of, first, deferral of a referendum for 10–15 years, and second, substituting the Bougainvillean proposal of a binding referendum with a non-binding referendum subject to the sovereign approval of the PNG Parliament (Wolfers 2002:3). Why would the former BRA leaders agree to a referendum that the PNG Parliament could ignore? Backstage, Downer and the other influential international players persuaded them that the international community could and would pressure Papua New Guinea to honour a vote for independence at that time. Because so much of the PNG budget at that time was funded by Australia, it seemed plausible that this pressure would work. Downer argued that even without that clout over Indonesia, international pressure caused Indonesia to honour the 1999 East Timor independence referendum outcome. This compromise on the Bougainville compromise finally

crossed Regan's two divides. Minister for Bougainville Affairs, Moi Avei—as Peter Barter had done—built a high degree of trust with the Bougainvillean and PNG players at this critical moment (Regan 2002b:118).

The other key part of the agreement was that the Autonomous Government of Bougainville would have full authority to administer its own affairs, to legislate across the entire gamut of governance, including those areas most embroiled in the conflict: land, minerals and other natural resources and the environment. Key exceptions reserved for the central government were most foreign affairs and defence powers, central banking, international trade, customs and quarantine, international shipping and civil aviation, industrial relations and posts and telecommunications. Bougainville would have its own police, courts and taxation power.

The next priority was drafting a *Constitution of the Autonomous Region of Bougainville*. The draft was completed between 2002 and 2004 by a 24-member Bougainville Constitutional Commission that was broadly representative. The constitution was discussed, amended and ultimately adopted in November 2004 by a broadly based Bougainville Constituent Assembly.

Credible commitment architecture

As we have documented, Papua New Guinea and Bougainville had a history of deep distrust. Yet Papua New Guinea did have a comparatively good record of credibly committed constitutionalism. So the Bougainville negotiators derived assurance from entrenching the commitment to a referendum in the *PNG Constitution*. Double entrenchment was accomplished by requiring consent of the Bougainville legislature for any constitutional amendment relating to Bougainville (Wolfers 2006a). Even more creative was the embedding of implementation assurance in an architecture of 'sequencing of, and linkages between, agreed-upon steps for implementation of key arrangements' (Regan 2008). Each side committed to steps where it yielded up some power, provided the other gave it some power first. One party's stepwise commitment was a precondition for the step-by-step commitments of the other.

The main linkages are between the provisions, on the one hand, for disposal of weapons by Bougainvillean factions and, on the other hand, the withdrawal of PNG forces from Bougainville and, more importantly, the constitutionalising and implementation of the agreed arrangements. The linkages involved completion of steps agreed to by one party being specified as a 'condition precedent' to be completed before the other party was required to take a separate step. In particular, the obligation on Bougainville's ex-combatant groups to move weapons to secure storage arose only on Papua New Guinea both making the

constitutional amendments implementing the agreement and beginning the withdrawal of its forces from Bougainville. In order to maintain pressure on Bougainvillean groups to dispose of their weapons, after the constitutional amendments implementing the agreement were passed by Parliament, they did not come into operation until the UN mission verified completion of stage two of weapons disposal (secure containment). Lack of substantial compliance with the agreed-on weapons disposal process could have resulted in the UN mission delaying elections for the ABG (any party to the agreement could call on the United Nations to verify and certify substantial compliance with weapons disposal and whether the level of security for the weapons was conducive to the holding of elections) (Regan 2008).

There is contextual genius in this architecture that gives parties who have taken pride in tricking one another incentives to honour their commitments. The sequencing has proceeded not always punctiliously and punctually, but pretty well. Particularly slow has been the transfer of specific governance competencies to the Bougainville administration (for a discussion of notice and other procedures for transfer, see Wolfers 2008). The Bougainville civil servants so far remain much more under the authority of their civil service bosses in Port Moresby than Bougainville ministers and the ABG President. This is partly a matter of Bougainville politicians needing time to develop experience in directing civil servants. Bougainville does not yet have its own court system; its judicial branch is part of the PNG judiciary. Capacity bottlenecks are the main reason why so few executive and judicial competencies have shifted to Bougainville so far. There is just so much to be done with building the full range of state capacities from scratch in such a small polity. In all areas, state capacity in Bougainville remains stunted. International assistance for this work has been less than it should have been—strikingly less than we will encounter in our next case study, the Solomon Islands.

The positive side of this is that Bougainvilleans are taking their time to construct their own autonomy in their own way. For Anthony Regan (2005a:44), this is part of the virtue of 'extended timetables with which managers of international interventions are usually not comfortable'.⁵ In the Regan view, improved state capacity that comes slowly in response to local pressure for better service for

5 This does not have to be inconsistent with moments when pushing through to a result for a negotiation deadline through a kind of exhaustion has no place. Brigadier Osborn (2001:52) described the negotiations the night before the scheduled cease-fire signing ceremony of 30 April 1998: 'The signatories and the TMG had only agreed on its contents at 3.50 am that morning on *HMAS Tobruk*.' Dr Bob Breen, who was on the *Tobruk*, said that the women leaders played a vital role that night and morning as go-betweens and in pushing the men to the point where they would sign. When we asked Breen to check if we had got this right, he contacted two other senior Australians who were on the *Tobruk*, one of whom 'was adamant that the women shamed the men into signing the implementing agreement', with the other 'supporting this view'. The women had also played important goading and go-between roles at Burnham and Lincoln before the male leaders were ready to join hands. And they had often done that before in the jungles where battles were being fought.

citizens is more likely to be sustained and more genuinely responsive to needs as well. There remains a worry that the sequencing of commitments of the peace might work well up to the last step. To be blunt—and hopefully unfair—we fear there was good reason for Bougainville to be distrustful of the PNG state. If Bougainville votes for independence in a few years, will the PNG Parliament vote to honour their choice? Our interviews suggest many in the current PNG Parliament would not. There is much persuasive diplomatic work to be done by the many—nationally and internationally—who believe independence is not in the interests of economic and human development for Bougainvilleans. They need to get on with that conversation with the people of Bougainville just as they need to engage the present and potential future leaders of Papua New Guinea with the need—in the interests of such a hard-won peace—for national and international resolve to honour whatever the people of Bougainville decide is best for them.

The peace that was won in Bougainville was remarkable. Many experienced hardheads who were close to the action did not believe it could hold. The architecture of sequenced, linked commitments described above deserves some of the credit for it holding so far. If it does unravel in a final fateful feat of betrayal of Bougainville, we should not throw out the lesson that has *already* been learned about the contribution contextually attuned linked sequencing of commitments can make to peace. This is not to say that the particular sequencing that has secured 12 years of peace in Bougainville will work elsewhere. In most contexts, it would be wildly imprudent to delay weapons destruction for as long as it was delayed in Bougainville—just as having unarmed peacekeepers would often be a naive step in other circumstances. In Aceh (Braithwaite et al. 2010:Ch. 6), we saw that peacemaking failed when it opted for a truce deferring a political settlement and weapons destruction until confidence building proceeded; yet peacemaking succeeded in Aceh when a ‘nothing is agreed until everything is agreed’ political settlement preceded the cease-fire. What we laud in this book is the contextually attuned architecture of linkages that in this particular case saw the truce precede the political settlement. This is not to laud its specific sequence as generally applicable. We know that failures of credible commitment recurrently explain the outbreak of war (Collier et al. 2003). We know that peacemakers can learn to ‘think in time’ (Neustadt and May 1986) by asking contextual questions.

Disarming Bougainville

The Bougainville peace process was unusual in that the international peace monitors departed long before weapons disposal was completed. The PMG also made no real attempt to disarm the Me’ekamui Defence Force though elements

of the force broke away and joined in, disposing of their weapons (Wolfers 2006b:7), as the peace process progressed. Francis Ona seemed to have no intention of an armed assault to take over Bougainville. He knew that the people of Bougainville would not support that—nor would many of his former fighters. When we asked a group of Resistance commanders what they would have done if Ona had sought to use his guns to re-conquer Bougainville, one said, ‘Our guns were in boxes, but we had keys.’ When we quibbled, pointing out that the United Nations held the second key, he said, ‘We had bolt-cutters too.’



Figure 5.2 BRA fighters, 1994, with homemade weapons and a World War II Japanese canon reconditioned at the Panguna mine workshops

Photo: Ben Bohane

Ona was a hold-out, as he saw it, because it was only a matter of time before the people of Bougainville would come to his view that the truce was a trick. Papua New Guinea would betray Bougainville and then the people would come back to him. There were some in the BRA who went with the peace thinking that if Ona was right after all, it would perhaps be as well that Ona was holding out with his guns in the no-go zone. Sam Kauona (2001:88) went close to saying this even in 2001: ‘We would rather he join us in the peace process, but in a way Francis provides the check and balance by staying out. He serves as a warning; as a reminder of the alternative if the peace process fails.’ It is still quite possible that Papua New Guinea will not honour its commitment to defer to the people of Bougainville if they vote for independence a few years from now. In 2005, Ona died without being vindicated. The Me’ekamui Defence Force, however,

lives on. At different times since Ona's death, different individuals—including Noah Musingku and Chris Uma—have claimed to have inherited Ona's control of the force and its weapons. Some local informants said in 2007 that after Musingku had broken away to form with Fijian-trained fighters a different node of opposition to the ABG, there remained three factions of the old Me'ekamui Defence Force. One was the faction led by Uma, another was a group loyal to Ona and the third was a group who had been suspended from the Me'ekamui Defence Force by Ona for criticising his collaborations with certain white people. In early 2010, some unity has formed among many of the Me'ekamui factions, particularly in the no-go zone, joining together in the new peace processes led by President Tanis, but fragmentation remains or has increased around Noah Musingku and possibly Chris Uma.

The reality of Me'ekamui hold-outs has created an unstable situation in southern Bougainville in recent years. The considerable residual access to automatic weapons in the south has played into a variety of historical grievances between different groups and families, different armed factions from the war and into opportunities to exploit greed through roadblocks, extortion from the government and other criminal activities. A new push on weapons disposal is needed and President Tanis has been seeking to secure agreement to this. His successor, John Momis, promised during his 2010 election campaign that he would continue this push. Getting the agreement of the US Government to clean up its World War II weapons has been an encouraging start. A good example of the problem is the conflict between the Damien Koike and Thomas Tari groups, which have each been responsible for killings of members of the other group, with Koike attempting to kill Tari and Tari attempting to kill Koike. It was an inter-family, inter-warlord struggle for control in which each used the continued access to the formidable arsenals of the other to justify their own refusal to destroy weapons.

In 2001, when progress was stalling on the weapons disposal process, Australia provided A\$5 million for small income-generating projects for ex-combatant groups in communities where weapons disposal was proceeding. Combatants were also promised amnesties and pardons for conflict-related offences as part of the 2001 peace deal. The three stages of the agreed weapons disposal process were completed only in May 2005 (Regan 2005a). This involved collecting weapons into locked boxes that were regularly audited by the PMG (Spark and Bailey 2005:601). At first, ex-combatant commanders of the units that surrendered the weapons kept the keys. In the second stage, locally contained weapons were consolidated into more centrally located double-locked containers. The UN observer mission held the second key. After UN verification of completion of the second stage, the third stage was final disposal/destruction of the weapons.

Seven and a half years between truce and disposal of (perhaps most) weapons was a long and risky wait. In fact, it was a double-edged risk. One side of that risk was what Thomas Tari did: refusing to dispose of the weapons at the end of the agreed containment stage, and later breaking open the containers and creating a certain amount of havoc with them as a post-conflict criminal entrepreneur. Another was the larger risk of restarting the war, which did not happen. But the biggest risk of that happening was posed by the Me'ekamui Defence Force, which was not a party to the peace or to weapons containment. The BRA and Resistance could only credibly promise to protect the unarmed international peace monitors because in the circumstances of an attack on them by the Me'ekamui Defence Force they could open the containers.

Anthony Regan's (2010) most recent update—headed for press at the time of writing—suggests that the weapons retained by the Me'ekamui Defence Force (MDF) could have been much greater than previously believed:

It was estimated by senior BRA figures at the time that the MDF held about 400 to 500 weapons, though more recent estimates by former BRA and MDF leaders who, since 2009, have been seeking to facilitate development of a weapons disposal process involving the MDF elements in the former 'no-go-zone' in the vicinity of the Panguna mine... suggest that there could be a much greater number of weapons in the hands of MDF elements—perhaps as many as 2,500 (including a substantial, though as yet unknown, number of WWII weapons as well as significant amounts of ammunition from the former US/Australian World War II base at Torokina, most obtained since 2005). (Regan 2010)

Credible commitment and confidence in the peace

Delayed, graduated and partial weapons disposal linked to constitutionalisation of autonomy and a referendum provided a unique panoply of assurances. It would begin and progress only after the political settlement and constitutional changes began and ended (and after the PNGDF had completely departed). And it remained in place until the year of Francis Ona's death—seemingly from natural causes. Stages of disarmament did not proceed until stages of politico-legal transition and stages of marginalisation of Francis Ona were behind the wary factions. By May 2005, 1900 weapons had been destroyed and UNOMB certified that stage three of the disposal process was complete and the community was now living with a sense of security. Some police think it could be accurate that two-thirds of all weapons that had been circulating have been contained, but the figure is considerably less than that for factory-made weapons. Thomas

Tari's arsenal (Box 6.1), which had been part of the peace process, and the Me'ekamui Defence Force arsenal, which was beyond the reach of the peace process, were significant on their own. Many weapons were also sold to be used in fighting in the New Guinea Highlands and in the conflict in the Solomon Islands (Alpers 2005:65, 69). Philip Alpers (2005:41) reports that two of the F-1 machine guns that Australia shipped to Papua New Guinea for use in the Bougainville war were seized by Southern Highlands Police in Wogia. National Intelligence Organisation officers in 2007 reported they still regularly received reports of the movement of guns into and out of Bougainville. It was far from a perfect weapons destruction process. Weapons destruction after war never works perfectly. In Bougainville, it worked credibly enough to consolidate peace but not well enough to give Bougainvilleans security from former BRA commanders who became minor post-conflict criminal entrepreneurs such as Thomas Tari, Damien Koike and Chris Uma, and indeed from Noah Musingku.

Yet it might have been better if the PMG had stayed at least until Thomas Tari, the Me'ekamui Defence Force and Damien Koike's group were fully disarmed and all roadblocks that secured no-go zones with guns were dismantled. That might have been done with a patient winding down of the size of the commitment of personnel to quite a minimal level, but with a willingness to escalate—and indeed escalate to armed peacekeeping—had diplomacy at the roadblocks failed through the reality or the promise of armed violence. Volker Boege and Edward Wolfers both questioned in their comments on this conclusion whether it ever had been or would be necessary to mobilise for armed enforcement. Wolfers said: 'The progress made in encouraging former hold-outs to engage in the peace process, including efforts by former President Joseph Kabui shortly before he died,⁶ and by his successor, James Tanis, would seem to belie the arguments for a delayed peace process or possible international armed intervention.' Further progress in broadening the genuine engagement of various hold-out armed factions, with courageous support from church, chiefly and other traditional leaders, including many women who walked into armed camps to talk peace, in the six months after Wolfers' comments would seem to vindicate his analysis. This steady expansion of the peace certainly does caution against any hasty resort to peace enforcement or police enforcement by making the point that patient local diplomacy has slowly born fruit.

6 The *Panguna Communiqué*, signed at a large reconciliation meeting in August 2007 (Boege 2008:11; Wolfers 2008:189), was the culmination of a process of discussion by President Kabui and leaders of his government with Me'ekamui leaders in the preceding months. It greatly expanded the path for the restoration of government services to the no-go zone and the dismantling of roadblocks. Included as a minor part of this process was a two-day peacemaking conference organised by the Peacebuilding Compared Project, the Buka Open Campus of the University of Papua New Guinea and the ABG, attended by the President and by James Tanis throughout and also by Me'ekamui leaders on the occasion of the second anniversary of the ABG in June 2007. Willie Aga signed this communiqué on behalf of the Me'ekamui Defence Force. A video of this entire conference can be found on the Peacebuilding Compared web site.

While the top-down architecture of the peace we have described in this chapter has been critical to the peace that has been secured so far, an even more important ingredient is the bottom-up reconciliation and reintegration discussed in the next chapter. Yet a central conclusion of this book will be that this is a peace with a mutually enabling relationship between a top-down credible commitment architecture and bottom-up reconciliation.

6. Reconciliation and reintegration

Reconciliation

Local reconciliation efforts began 'almost as soon as the conflict began' (Regan 2005a:15), gathered momentum throughout the 1990s and continued at the time of writing. There has long been recognition in Bougainville that reconciliation takes decades rather than years. In some areas, reconciliation processes following intertribal fighting occasioned by World War II continued into the 1980s (Londey 2004:224; Nelson 2005:196).

Every village-level story of reconciliation was unique. The village where John Braithwaite lived in 1969 had been the base of C Company of the BRA. In 1991, they had been involved in assaults on the PNGDF at Buka after swimming across Buka Passage with their weapons. A PNGDF patrol-boat supplied by Australia had fired on the village. Starting in 1990, when the war became chaotic, voices in the village began to be raised in favour of adopting a position of neutrality. Women from across Selau organised a peace march followed by an all-night vigil for peace that it is claimed 5000 attended—most of the population of Selau (van Tongeren et al. 2005:124). The war had opened up some old internal divisions. There were allegations that the local BRA commander had used his position to murder a man who was much disapproved of because of sorcery. He was also fearfully reviled by many because he had married his own daughter. In turn, there were allegations that the combat death of that local BRA commander was 'friendly fire', which was in fact 'unfriendly fire' from loyal kin of the murdered sorcerer within C Company. Others dispute this. Reconciliation within the area and between the PNGDF and the village was accomplished in August 1991 after the women seized the peacemaking agenda with the council of chiefs and the village declared itself neutral (Saovana-Spriggs 2007:195).

Both the villagers and the PNGDF officer who attended the reconciliation ceremony remember it as moving and a turning point towards local peace. It was a peace that created an island of civility (Kaldor 1999)—a peace zone—in the Selau region, which demonstrated the advantages of peaceful neutrality to those living in adjacent conflict areas, in a similar way that the North Nasioi peace zone did after 1994 in Central Bougainville. The PNGDF loaded all the BRA weapons from that part of Selau onto a helicopter and Sister Lorraine Garasu and elder Bernadette Ropa dropped them into the deep water just offshore from the village as part of the ceremony. This sealed the peace and the weapons disposal

in this little corner of Bougainville many years before the peacekeepers of the Truce and Peace Monitoring Groups arrived. The story of such a single village reveals why we must always be circumspect with the grand narrative of the Bougainville peace that says it was negotiated at Burnham and Lincoln. It was in fact a cumulative peace that took quantum leaps at Burnham and Lincoln, but was still an incomplete peace even at the time of writing for those who lived in the persisting no-go zones of different factions of the Me'ekamui Defence Force. Some PNG security forces personnel who attended reconciliations such as that in Selau reported them as the most positive memories of their time in Bougainville, saying that the aspect of the ceremonies that most moved them was when both the soldiers and the villagers had the opportunity to speak about their personal feelings of loss for particular individuals who had fallen. One of these officers said Bougainvillean women peacemakers changed him as a soldier:

I was a very aggressive traditional soldier. Very tough on people. As a result of my experience on Bougainville, I changed. I listen to my soldiers more now. I think negotiation is more important. [He explained how he was particularly affected by the compassion of women with children who had lost their husbands]...I wonder if my own wife would react that way if it was me who was killed. (PNGDF interview, Port Moresby 2007)

The Selau region has a population of only 7000, but the chiefs told us in April 2006 that they had participated in 87 separate formal reconciliations by then. While hundreds of large reconciliations have been held across Bougainville for big groups, and thousands of smaller ones in relation to hamlets, families or individuals, a widespread perspective a decade after the war is that most of the reconciliations that are needed still remain to be done.

The peace in Bougainville is two stories. There is the story of top-down peace ultimately negotiated under New Zealand auspices in 1997 and 1998, and ultimately under UN facilitation of the political settlement between PNG and Bougainvillean factions in 1999, 2000 and 2001. And there is the story of zones of local reconciliation (see Boege 2006:11) starting soon after the onset of war and continuing the struggle to expand its reach two decades later. The continuation of this story into the late 2000s is well illustrated by the large spike of reconciliations associated with the Youth Cross (Box 6.1). Most accounts assume the top-down story is the master narrative and the bottom-up reconciliations are subsidiary. But in important ways the bottom-up micro-narratives subsume and infuse the top-down peace. This way of thinking—that peacebuilding starts in families and ripples out from there—was repeatedly emphasised in

our conversations with Bougainvilleans (Tanis 2002b).¹ In that way of thinking about the peace, the 'failed' Arawa peace of 1994 that led to the Miriung vision of the North Nasioi peace zone and a transitional government that empowered chiefs, women, church and youth leaders to lead local reconciliations under councils of elders is an intermediate narrative that infuses the master peace narrative. It laid the foundation, for example, for 700 women to come together again in Arawa in 1996 to assign specific peacebuilding objectives to women leaders from every corner of Bougainville (Rolfe 2001:51). This was supported by the Uniting Church in Australia (Eagles 2002). Peter Reddy's (2006) PhD thesis, moreover, shows that just as Bougainville is not a master narrative of successful peacebuilding, Somalia is not a master narrative of failed peacebuilding. He read Bougainville as a story of successful peacebuilding in three-quarters of Bougainville and (at that time) failed peacebuilding in one-quarter (the no-go zones), while Somalia was the reverse: a failed peace in three-quarters of the nation and a flourishing peace in one-quarter (Somaliland).

Box 6.1 The Youth Cross

We have seen that one of the strengths of peacebuilding in Bougainville is the Church. And a strength of the international peacekeeping was that it worked this strength by giving its three chaplains—'The Three Amigos'—free rein to work the churches as a central plank of its peacebuilding strategy. It was the Church that gave the most important base to the peacebuilding work of the women. The Youth Cross story is about how in the post-post-conflict period it gave an organisational base to youth leaders who wanted to take reconciliation to a new level. The Youth Cross story also shows that while the big story of reconciliation in Bougainville is about indigenous traditions of peacemaking, almost as big a story is the grafting of Christian traditions of healing onto the peace process.

World Youth Day—a huge gathering of Catholic young people—was held in Sydney in 2008. A lead-up in 2007 was the Youth Cross travelling to many countries of the world on its way to Sydney. The Youth Cross came to Papua New Guinea, but to the dismay of Catholic youth in Bougainville, not to their island. So the youth of Bougainville made their own little cross, travelled to Rabaul to place it on the Youth Cross, then placed it on their own large wooden cross back in Bougainville.

¹ More widely, Bougainville looks like a case where social capital (trust building as well as peacebuilding) ripples out from local accomplishments (Job and Reinhart 2003). We thought of this after attending a ceremony for the arrival of a large number of water tanks in a Siwai village. The paramount chief said: 'This is no small thing we have done together. What a great leader we have found in the chairman we appointed for this water tank project. And what a great committee he had working with him. Look what we have accomplished here.'

The Catholic Youth of Bougainville decided that the theme for the visits of the Youth Cross would be 'peace and reconciliation'. The youth believed they could show their elders how their generation could take reconciliation up to a new and more spiritual level. While it was a Catholic event, the Protestant churches were all invited to join in, which they did when they saw what a huge following the cross was attracting to Siwai. During our 2007 fieldwork, we followed the Youth Cross from Siwai into Bana District. For much of its journey, the cross was followed by thousands of people. Days of fasting and prayer preceded its arrival in most villages. At that point, it was stopping at every village for three days and we were told that the plan was that it would stop in every village in Bougainville. It should have been clear that there was not time to accomplish this before World Youth Day 2008. And in any case, we are told that the enormous ecumenical momentum we saw the Youth Cross to have in Siwai waned as some Protestant communities further north took offence at some of the iconography of preparing roadsides for the arrival of the cross.

Miracles occurred as the cross moved from village to village and some who were the subject of the miracles then became celebrities following the cross around the island. For example, one man, a village drunk, cursed at the cross when it entered his village. He instantly dropped dead. Half an hour later, miraculously, he returned to life. While he was dead, he saw many wonderful things, met many long-dead ancestors and was able to report messages from them to the crowd.

At all of the dozen villages about which we made inquiries in south-western Bougainville, major reconciliations in front of the cross relating to the nine-year civil war occurred. A Catholic priest told us that in Siwai alone, 500 separate war-related reconciliations had occurred in front of the cross. Unfortunately, he said these did not touch the remaining really major conflicts in Siwai. Reconciliation did occur, however, between the police and Noah Musingku's Palace Guards over the 2006 fire fight at the 'Royal Palace' and it was said this paved the way for opening the roadblock on the road to Tonu.

Some reconciliations related to killings, rapes and other serious crimes, where the perpetrator(s) went before the cross as it stood in the village to ask forgiveness from the victim or their family. Many were groups who went before the cross asking forgiveness from their victims. One of these (see Figure 6.1) involved a young Me'ekamui fighter and raskol who had robbed a micro-finance bank with a gun that he cut in half in front of the cross. During the robbery, shots were fired and a stray bullet hit a young mother with a baby. During negotiations in the days before the cross arrived in the young man's village, the local police sergeant gave the young man a '100 per cent guarantee'

that he would not be prosecuted if he asked for forgiveness from the mother in front of the cross and changed his ways. We asked the sergeant if anyone in the community criticised him for not prosecuting such a serious crime. No, he said, everyone in the community thought it was the right thing to do and everyone felt safer when a young raskol destroyed his gun and committed to obey the law in a spiritually profound reconciliation like this.

Rarely was monetary compensation paid in the reconciliations that occurred before the Youth Cross. The cross arrived in a village in the late afternoon and reconciliations occurred right through the night into the next day. It must have been exhausting (but exhilarating too) for the local priest. In Siwai, awe-struck children sat closest to the cross under cover, with the adult audience standing at the back in the sun.

The celebrations before the cross were theologically interesting. As a priest scowled at John Braithwaite, he said that some people would have us believe that Jesus was a waitman, when in fact Jesus was born in Nagovis. In some villages, when the time came for the procession of the cross to move down the road to the next village, those who would lift the cross from its base announced that it was stuck. 'The cross is stuck', reverberated around the gathering. 'Someone must step forward to ask forgiveness before the cross leaves.' And someone would step forward, finally finding the courage to ask for forgiveness.

This was a very different reconciliation context than the traditional one. The short time frame between the impending arrival of the cross and the proposed reconciliation before the crisis gave victims little time to come to terms with the reconciliation on big matters. One of our neighbours in Siwai was told by a former BRA commander as the cross was approaching the village that he had killed her husband and he pleaded for forgiveness before the cross. She had no idea that this man had killed her husband. It was a lot to digest, yet it was a successful reconciliation that moved the whole community. But in other such cases the cross moved on to the next village with the parties still working on the healing process through planned future reconciliation meetings.

John Paul Lederach (1997) influentially argued that peace must be not only top-down and bottom-up, but also middle-out. Bottom-up connects the grassroots to the political projects of elites; top-down connects capacities that can be mobilised only by national elites down to lower levels of the society. Middle-out complements these vertical capacities with horizontal capacities to move back and forth across social divides. Organisations in civil society that are intermediate between the state and families/hamlets often do this middle-out work. Yet in his more recent book, Lederach finds a web metaphor more useful.

What he calls the middle-out capacity is in fact strategic networking that 'creates a web of relationships and activities that cover the setting' (Lederach 2005:80). The women of Bougainville certainly did this with peace marches that wound across the island, connecting new women to the network at each hamlet they passed (Ninnes 2006). So did the next generation of youth with the journeys of the Youth Cross. Lederach (2005:91) perceptively sees the key to weaving these webs as 'getting a small set of the right people involved at the right places. What's missing is not the critical mass. The missing ingredient is the *critical yeast*.'

In Bougainville, women such as Sister Lorraine Garasu were that yeast and many local male peacemakers were as well. Gradually enough yeast is connected to the project of building the bread of peace and the mass of the bread rises. Lederach (2005:90) connects this to Malcolm Gladwell's (2002) idea from marketing of *The Tipping Point*. Gladwell's subtitle is 'How little things make a difference'. The Bougainville peace is a classic illustration of how little peacemakers finally linked together to tip momentum towards peace to a critical mass. This happened even as top-down peacemakers such as Theodore Miriung and John Bika were assassinated and even as the leaders of the war (Ona and the PNGDF) remained spoilers of sorts,² and even as profit-seeking international spoilers (Sandline and the shadowy multinational mining interests backing them) butted in. Once the tipping point of bottom-up support for peace was passed, progressive elements in the BRA and in the PNG military and political elite moved around the spoilers to join hands with the Sister Lorraines and the great mass of Bougainvillean peacemakers they had leavened. Gradually more elements of the Me'ekamui Defence Force right up to the time of writing in 2009 have joined in reconciliations and joined the peace.

While reconciliation of the more traditional kind, as opposed to the religious kind such as we see with the Youth Cross, is transacted in somewhat different ways in different parts of Bougainville, reciprocal gift giving by the two sides to a conflict that is intended to restore balance and social harmony is universal (Regan 2010). Pigs and ceremonial shell money are mostly the gifts involved and often small amounts of cash, which are not intended as reparation but as symbols of sorrow for the spilt blood. While the commercialisation of reconciliations by demanding large amounts of cash as reparation is not the widespread problem of 'manipulation of custom' (Fraenkel 2004) that it is in the Solomon Islands, it

2 While at the time of the assassination of Bika, it seems accurate to call Ona a spoiler, Edward Wolfers makes the thoughtful point in a comment on this paragraph that at later stages Ona became more an absentee than a spoiler: 'While Ona remained a determined hold-out, he was not a "spoiler" of the peace process overall. He did not, on the whole, try to disrupt what others were doing. The parties' willingness to keep moving ahead, combined with the national government's repeated invitation to Ona and the Me'ekamui Defence Force to join in the peace process, meant that they were absentees rather than "spoilers".'

is a worry in Bougainville that such demands have arisen in many cases. Patrick Howley of the Peace Foundation Melanesia has articulated the view of many concerned Bougainvilleans:

To the outsider the gift may seem to be compensation (blood money). However, to most Bougainvilleans compensation (blood money) is repugnant. A gift is to wash away the tears; it in no way is a payment for the loss incurred. Compensation is for gain and is equivalent to setting a value on the life of a loved one. With a gift, one asks for forgiveness; with compensation there is no forgiveness and the person is attempting something which is impossible, that is putting a value on something that cannot be bought or paid for. With our experience (Peace Foundation), we have decided that if people want money for compensation (blood money), then we refuse to mediate and tell them to take it to the court... Not only does the blood money fail to produce reconciliation but it also leads to further disputes and fighting. (Howley n.d.)

In a small number of cases, post-conflict reconciliations have included an exchange of young women to marry into the enemy group, using kinship bonds to consolidate the peace. Traditionally, this was a widespread element of reconciliation. With the near-complete demise of arranged marriages as the norm in Bougainville, however, we have seen this particular form of arranged marriage also disappearing. At a reconciliation meeting we attended in Buka, one of the older men argued this was the only way to reconsolidate bonds deeply between the two groups; a few people sniggered, some smiled at each other at such an impractical, backward-looking suggestion, some frowned and most ignored it. Betel-nut is usually shared and chewed together as a ritual of greeting among friends or introduction of strangers. There is singing and dancing. In some cases, return of the bones of a person killed in the conflict is the most important exchange. A rock may be buried or a tree planted to symbolise permanency of the peace, the growing, restored relationships and a weight that is put away forever; spears, bows and arrows may be broken. Our interviews (like Reddy's 2006:246) testified to the ethos of permanence with reconciliations, though there were suggestions that in the south reconciliations could be less irrevocable than in the traditions of central and northern Bougainville. The weight of social disapproval from renouncing a reconciliation was reported to be enormous. 'The moment the hatchet is buried, it stays buried. Anyone seen to be digging up the buried hatchet will get the most severe punishment. This means death' (Interview with President Kabui, ABG, 2006).



Figure 6.1a: Young women lead the Youth Cross as it arrives from one village into another.



Figure 6.1b: Young men with panpipes kneeling behind thousands following the Youth Cross as it travels from one Siwai village to another.



Figure 6.1c: A young Me'ekamui fighter surrenders a reconditioned World War II weapon to be cut in two in front of the Youth Cross and is forgiven in Siwai. He recently shot a woman in an armed robbery and this reconciliation became a catalyst for opening a roadblock on the road to Tonu village and for local police–Me'ekamui reconciliation

Photos: Anonymous Siwai photographer or John Braithwaite, 2007

Tarout or vomiting—as discussed earlier in the description of the Burnham peace talks—often occurs as part of the whole process, though usually at the preparatory meetings where what will be exchanged is hammered out. A long sequence of mediation meetings between dozens of chiefs builds up to a public reconciliation ceremony that hundreds, even thousands in rare cases, might attend. This is why this form of peacebuilding is at the heart of the highly participative peace accomplished in Bougainville. At the large final ceremony, both sides express concerns and remorse. Apologies by men are often tearful and can be responded to with tearful, loud, demonstrative displays of sadness and very often forgiveness by the women who are the closest family to the victims who are subjects of the apology. Christian traditions of prayers of solace and pleas for forgiveness are normally intertwined with the indigenous traditions of the reconciliation ritual. Both their indigenous origins and their Christian elements gave this path to peace special legitimacy in the eyes of Bougainvilleans (Regan 2005a). 'Women's leaders and groups also initiated many

such efforts, often drawing on long-established traditional dispute-settlement roles of women' (Regan 2005a:16). The sheer spread of such local reconciliations put 'pressure on leaders of all Bougainville factions' (Regan 2005a:17), including Francis Ona and other potential spoilers, not to unsettle the peace.

Dr Bob Breen, who is writing the official Australian history of peacekeeping in Bougainville, and who served as a senior military advisor to the Australian commanders in Bougainville, thinks the greatest contribution of the peacekeepers was in accelerating reconciliations that would have eventually occurred naturally. That is, one of the hardest things with starting a reconciliation for inter-group killings is for someone to take the risk of proposing a meeting. According to Breen, this was the most valuable single thing peacekeepers did: simply going to one group and suggesting that it would be good if they met with another with a view to making peace locally—and offering to be in attendance to provide a kind of third-party security guarantee for the risky meeting. Australian and New Zealand peacekeepers particularly learnt from ni-Vanuatu peacekeepers how to set up a meeting in a patient Melanesian way.

There are two sides to traditional Bougainvillean reconciliations. On the one hand, there is the commitment to rituals of forgiveness that puts revenge aside (usually permanently). On the other hand, when a person becomes a recurrent potential spoiler of the peace—particularly when they flout a reconciliation agreement of which they are a part—a much less frequently used aspect of traditional Bougainvillean social control is for their relatives to kill them (by surprising them on a hunting trip, for example). Many informants agreed that in the Bougainville peace process, more than a few spoilers on both sides were killed by their own kin to preserve the peace—perhaps as many as 10.

During 2009, when this book was being written, major new reconciliations occurred. One was between local commanders of the Me'ekamui Defence Force and the Wisai Liberation Movement (WILMO) in May 2009. Another was held in Tonu between BRA Buin commander, Thomas Tari, and Me'ekamui Defence Force southern commander, Damien Koike—according to one report, with 3000 people in attendance. This reconciliation also encompassed the attack Tari led on Noah Musingku's U-Vistract headquarters at Tonu in 2006. A major reconciliation between the PNGDF and the people of Buin over the Kangu Beach massacre was also at an advanced stage of planning. In June 2009, Sir Julius Chan, supported by the whole cabinet of his New Ireland Province, and traditional culture groups participated in reconciliation ceremonies all day on 13 June at which Sir Julius apologised for his role with Sandline. The festivities continued with his group's participation in the fourth anniversary of the Autonomous Bougainville Government on 15 June 2009. During 2009, ABG President, James Tanis, energised yet another wave of important reconciliations with different Me'ekamui factions and other armed factions in the south, including Noah Musing'ku, with whom amnesty was discussed during 2009.



Figure 6.2 Bougainville President, James Tanis, washes the feet of former PNG Prime Minister Sir Julius Chan during their 2009 reconciliation

Photo: Aloysius Laukai, New Dawn

Restorative justice and the new Bougainville justice system

There is a desire in Bougainville to develop a criminal justice system different from the one seen in the retributive behaviour of the PNG riot police that was a cause of the war. The *Report of the Bougainville Constitutional Commission* makes numerous specific references to shifting away from the PNG criminal justice system and towards restorative justice (Reddy 2006:249). One of the most prominent restorative justice advocates on Bougainville—whom our ethics policies prohibit us from naming—ordered his BRA unit to destroy Bougainville’s only prison. Today he works at trying to rebuild the Bougainville criminal justice system from the ground up as a more restorative system. Almost two decades on from the burning of the prison, Bougainville still does not have a jail. It is not high on Bougainville’s long list of state-building priorities, though it is on the list. Australia has been pushing for it to be higher and is offering to fund a new prison. Bougainville respondents to the National Research Institute

(2005:47) survey rarely rated 'harsher penalties from the courts' as one of the 'government initiatives to make your area safer from crime'. Their priorities in response to this were, in descending order: youth activities, more jobs, more police, better living conditions and fighting corruption. There are human rights problems with crowded police lock-ups, though most detainees are free to roam the vicinity of the lock-up during the day and eat meals with their relatives.

While the *PNG Constitution* provides for a 'Police Force', the *Bougainville Constitution* provides for a 'Police Service' that will 'develop rehabilitatory and reconciliatory concepts of policing', 'work in harmony with communities and encourage community participation in its activities' and 'support and work with traditional chiefs...to resolve disputes' (Regan 2005a:40). We attended high-quality restorative justice training for the police provided by the Peace Foundation Melanesia. Scheye and Peake (2005:258–9) contend that the war created an opportunity for chiefs to deputise community members as what Dinnen and Braithwaite (2009) might prefer to conceive as more like indigenous *kiaps* than police. Post-conflict, Scheye and Peake contend the writers of the new Bougainville constitution had the wisdom to deputise these already working 'police' as 'community auxiliary police' still under the control of the chiefs, still leaning on traditional means of regulating crime and other major social problems such as the making of home-brew. The policing model in Bougainville today is heavily reliant on these part-time village-based auxiliary police who answer to a village Peace and Good Order (or Mediation) Committee. The New Zealand Government also had the vision to see the virtue of a new post-conflict hybrid that continued to empower the de facto village constables and a new town-based full-time police in Buka, Arawa and Buin. The Western policing model is, however, hegemonically in the hearts even of some of the by and large kindly New Zealand constables³ sent to assist and among indigenous Bougainvillean police trained in Papua New Guinea sent back to build the new, mostly unarmed Bougainvillean police.

Reintegration of combatants

Three of the 41 seats in the Bougainville House of Representatives were reserved for former combatants. One of the problems of such reintegration through guaranteed power sharing in a democracy is that in Bougainville three seats reserved for combatants also means three seats reserved for males. There were no female combatants in this war. What kind of message would this have been to the women who displayed such magnificent leadership in pushing for peace?

³ Australia has also supported police capacity building on and off during the past decade in Bougainville.

So, three seats were also reserved for women. All voters (not just women and ex-combatants) voted for these six seats. The special seats would exist for a maximum of 10–15 years (Wolfers 2006a:9).

Most estimates of the number of Bougainvillean combatants in this war are about 5000 at a maximum. But 15 000 registered as ex-combatants with AusAID's BETA fund to reintegrate ex-combatants through business and training opportunities. In the end, this program funded 2734 applications—mainly from groups of combatants—to a cost of US\$2.4 million. There was much fraud. Many men who never fought in the war were funded (UNIFEM 2004:27). In 2006, the PNG Government paid K10 million to Resistance fighters. The final list of claimants totalled 4085.⁴ Perhaps this was not such a large amount of money for something that was seen as necessary to push combatants along in seeing the benefits of weapons surrender. Some of the businesses and training that were supported doubtless delivered benefits, but for most this was a hard case to sustain. Trade and hardware stores were funded, provisions were made of stock, feed, agricultural projects, piggeries, bike shops, chicken farms, saws, copra driers, carpentry workshops, boats and motors for fishery, welding supplies, and so on, plus many education projects.

Most of the new recruitment of full-time jobs in the police and as part-time auxiliary police went to ex-combatants. This being so, it is interesting that Bougainvilleans have a reasonably positive attitude towards their police (National Research Institute 2005). An even larger number of ex-combatants got jobs on the AusAID road and bridge rebuilding and repair projects. Only a few of the more senior and more educated combatants got jobs in the Bougainville administration, though many won seats in the House of Representatives beyond those designated for combatants. It is common for younger ex-combatants to feel excluded and 'betrayed' by the comparative success in business and government of their former leaders, while they remain poor (Boege 2008:36).

Refugee rehabilitation

Refugees (mostly in fact internally displaced persons, or IDPs) suffered terribly in the war, after one-third of the population of Bougainville fled their burnt villages. Some suffered in hiding in the mountains, but most were in military-controlled IDP camps called care centres. All of these returned quickly to their villages when peace returned to their region. Unknown but large numbers of the 15 000 to 20 000 mainland New Guineans who fled (Regan 2005b) never

⁴ We are grateful to Edward Wolfers for this information.

returned, largely because they had no BCL-related jobs to return to. The Chinese community never returned to rebuild their businesses because they felt they would not be welcome or free to do so.

Maria Kopiku, in an interview with Patrick Howley (2000:24), recounts insightfully the nature of the damage the care centres did to people and cultures:

People were crowded together with no privacy; their village groupings were broken up; the network of mutual relationships, associations, interaction and mutual social obligation was suspended. The cultural glue that binds the villages and people together was lost for ten years... Without this glue many people, especially the young lost their sense of respect and shame. Adultery, stealing, domestic violence, lack of respect for elders....became so commonplace...The soldiers who administered the camps were often inconsistent and violent when thwarted. They killed suspect BRA and used their position to steal things and demand women to sleep with. Only now are we seeing the moral damage of the camps in our children who are growing up lacking the values of our society.

There was a considerable investment in trauma counselling in the years immediately after the war. The Marist mission, the Sisters of Nazareth, Caritas and Harvard University played prominent roles in this work, which delivered group or individual counselling to some 20 000 people suffering trauma. While this was a considerable investment, it was not sustained for many years and most people still suffering trauma a decade after the war had no access to professional help. Victims of the war with physical disabilities also did not receive long-term therapy and rehabilitation (Ahai 1999:131).

The Solomon Islands are easily visible from the south of Bougainville, so many people fled there—perhaps 2000 (Reddy 2006:217)—especially the wounded. The PNGDF gave chase into the Solomons at times. This spread aspects of the conflict to that country and worsened the ultimate disintegration of that nation into violence, as we will see in the next *Peacebuilding Compared* volume on the Solomon Islands.

Conclusion

Refugee and combatant reintegration was much less adequately resourced in Bougainville than in any of the nine Indonesian and Timor-Leste conflicts discussed in the first and fourth volumes of *Peacebuilding Compared*. In spite

of this, kin networks helped most people to rebuild houses and re-establish gardens, and helped them with support from the Church to cope with their trauma. Many years on, the anguish of trauma remains etched on many lives.

The depth, breadth, duration and local ownership of reconciliation are the great comparative strengths of the Bougainville peace. This is even though Bougainvilleans say most of the work of reconciliation remains to be done. This very attention to the glass half-empty reflects the resilience of Bougainvillean reconciliation in comparative perspective. It is hard to think of a case where peacebuilders could learn more from how restorative justice can play a more central role in a peace through studying how indigenous approaches to expanding a peace from islands of civility. That local reconciliation work instructs the peacebuilder to be wary of grand narratives of what a war is about as pointing to the things that need to be reconciled in a particular place. In Bougainville, a particular piece of land or an act of sorcery could be a big issue in what the war was about in that village. Top-down peacemaking does not get at this. Yet these problems can ignite a conflict, just as very local inter-generational conflicts were so vital in starting the conflagration in the first place. We are all familiar with grand narratives as to what World War II was about. For Bougainvilleans, it meant none of these things. They lost many lives in World War II fighting on one side for very different, very local reasons or loyalties. Some chiefs seized on the civil war as an opportunity to settle scars from these World War II conflicts between one village on the side of the Japanese and the other on the side of the allied forces. The historical lesson here is that resilient peace requires attention not just to the top-down settlement of grand geopolitical narratives. It also requires locally meaningful reconciliation that attends to micro-narratives of resentment.

It is to the credit of the Truce and Peace Monitoring Groups that they came to understand the disparate local plurality of conflicts and the trust they could place in local traditions for healing them. Bob Breen nevertheless puts his finger in this chapter on a useful role the internationals played as catalysts. He points out that the hardest part of reconciliation is starting it. And fear of violence is one reason why ordinary folk tremble at making the first move. Truce and Peace Monitoring Group peacekeepers repeatedly made a great contribution in making the move of suggesting a first meeting under their security umbrella. They then had the wisdom to understand that once the conversation was under way, the locals had skills in mediation that they could never attain.

7. The cost of the conflict

The politics of numbers of deaths and the politics of humility

Thus far in *Peacebuilding Compared* we have encountered conflicts in which the most widely quoted estimates of lives lost from the conflict are considerable underestimates as a result of the state concerned keeping out the international media and non-compliant national journalists or issuing official counts that are underestimates intended to downplay the crisis. These are accepted by lazy journalists as good enough and become the dominant estimates. West Kalimantan (Braithwaite et al. 2010) is an example of such a case. In other cases, international advocates with an interest in exposing such cover-ups of killings counter the cover-ups by producing exaggerated estimates of their own. West Papua in Indonesia is such a case where inflated estimates have become widespread (Braithwaite et al. 2010). Bougainville is in the latter group.

What happened was that the international community woke up one day in the 1990s and realised that what had been occurring in Bougainville for years was not just a 'crisis' or a 'rebellion', but a civil war. In Australia in particular, there was some embarrassment that Australian mining and colonial policy played a big part in the causation of the conflict, that the war was being fought with weapons supplied by Australia and that our media and our leaders had downplayed it. Indeed, the Labor governments of Bob Hawke and Paul Keating had worked with the PNG Government to do so. While the Government of the Solomon Islands allowed the BRA access to their internationally uninfluential media on many occasions to get the terrible story of Bougainville out, on the rare occasions when the BRA leaders got to Australia for peace talks, they were kept away from the media. On at least one occasion, it was an explicit condition of Joseph Kabui's visa that he not speak to the media while in Australia.

The intriguing biography of Alexander Downer in Bougainville

Australia was an ineffective peacemaker in Bougainville during the Hawke and Keating governments because, unlike New Zealand, its policy was to not talk to the BRA. Australia believed the secession of Bougainville would be bad for both

Bougainville and Papua New Guinea as a whole. To be fair, Australia consistently supported a peaceful solution after 1991, resisting waves of pressure from Papua New Guinea to provide greater military support, particularly in equipment for the war. Australia came under pressure from Papua New Guinea for allowing senior BRA member Moses Havini to run an information office in Australia. Havini was married to an Australian citizen. Australian government officials consistently refused to meet with Havini and countered the mostly accurate information he was getting out of Bougainville by satellite phone on atrocities that were occurring in the province with counter propaganda to the effect that Havini was a radical revolutionary who was not a credible source. The Australian media mostly bought this and, during the decade when the war raged, downplayed its horror and significance (Watts 1999). Even the more rigorous and progressive elements of the international media misreported or failed to report the Bougainville war. For example, the *Guardian Weekly* of 7 February 1993 reported the Canberra line of the time that the war was all over, won by the PNGDF: '[T]oday most people, apart from a few Australians, agree that the [Bougainville] rebellion has fizzled out' and only a 'handful of leaderless guerrillas are still active' (Watts 1999:33).

Enter Alexander Downer as the new Foreign Minister in the conservative Howard government. Downer had been meeting with Moses Havini and listening. Like his predecessor, Gareth Evans, Downer was Foreign Minister for more than a decade. He was a less distinguished Foreign Minister than Evans, who had major accomplishments such as the brokering of a UN peacekeeping mission in Cambodia, and even more important contributions as a peacebuilder after leaving politics. But Bougainville was Downer's finest moment, though Downer himself saw East Timor as his finest moment when we interviewed him. When we interviewed Downer's Prime Minister, John Howard, he confirmed that he had more or less left Bougainville policy totally in Downer's hands, except at the height of the Sandline crisis.

In opposition, Downer concluded that the Keating government was handling Bougainville badly. In encounters with Bougainvilleans in opposition and government, he was genuinely touched by their plight and Australia's awful contribution to it. One experience that particularly moved him was accidental. His helicopter had a problem that caused it to land in the Bougainville bush. Where he happened to land, Bougainvillean women were conducting one of the many women's peace marches between BRA and Resistance areas, gathering together in the march women from both sides. He sat down with them for a long talk and the women told him what they wanted him to do to support the peace. Downer did what they asked—and more. Even by his own admission, Downer is hardly a humble man. But he showed humility by allowing New Zealand to lead peacemaking in Bougainville. He allowed New Zealand Foreign Minister,

Don McKinnon, to do much of the front-stage work and take the credit for the international brokering of the peace.¹ He did this because, on the advice of his officials, he believed this was best for the peace—as it was. One of those senior officials said this of the two long-serving Australian foreign ministers of our generation:

Downer was well suited to Pacific diplomacy with his free-wheeling approach which in Bougainville was pretty effectively responsive to the players. Whereas Gareth could let his frustration get the better of him there. Gareth was better in Cambodia which was better suited to his analytic approach. He was good at working the UN system.

Politicians are normally not very good at allowing other politicians to run away with the credit when they are mobilising most of the dollars for a peacebuilding effort and doing a lot of the hard diplomatic yards behind the scenes. There is no doubt that Howard and Downer played crucial roles in pressuring Papua New Guinea to renege on the contract it had signed with Sandline and using the Australian Air Force to force down the air-freighter transporting Sandline's heavy equipment to Papua New Guinea. Australia leaked much of the inside story on Chan's war plans with Sandline to the international media to put pressure on Chan—at great diplomatic risk to Australia's relationship with Papua New Guinea—though the story was first broken by Mary-Louise O'Callaghan in *The Australian* (Claxton 1998:102).² Arguably, there was no greater turning point to peace in Bougainville—and to reviving the fading international norm against mercenaries—than the media getting hold of the planned Sandline invasion of Bougainville. None of this is to downplay the role of New Zealand in the peace. It is simply to locate Downer as a leader of a department that also made important contributions and the New Zealand–Australian partnership as effective because of a certain politics of humility.

Whereas New Zealand's military leader on the ground, Brigadier Mortlock, was advising it to go with the BRA view that it would be prudent for the peacekeepers to be unarmed, Downer had to placate the strongly held view of some generals in the Australian Defence Force that this would be most imprudent. Australian generals were particularly shocked when Mortlock also went along with the BRA view that they should not be required to hand in their weapons as a first priority for the peace process, though again senior Australian Foreign Affairs officer Greg Moriarty supported the Mortlock approach (Regan 2001). Most Australian

¹ In interviews with senior foreign affairs and military officials involved with Bougainville in New Zealand, and some in Australia, it was said the relationship between McKinnon and Downer was combative. But when we interviewed Downer himself he said he had a good working relationship with McKinnon and Downer respected his great contribution to the peace.

² Hugh White says he was given the job of leaking the story to Mary-Louise O'Callaghan, but when he called her, she had almost the entire story already—probably from a senior PNG military insider.

generals said they wanted their weapons while the PNGDF were on the ground with their weapons and they also wanted to be able to protect peacekeepers from Francis Ona's forces, should that be necessary. In fact, the deeper reason was that the BRA would negotiate for disposal of weapons to be completed only when a delayed referendum for independence was constitutionally entrenched, and not before then. The top brass in New Zealand also did not warm to Mortlock's approach at first. One New Zealand brigadier, who at first thought Mortlock's support for unarmed peacekeepers among insurgents who were not being disarmed was reckless, told us in an interview that not only did it turn out that this call was right, 'it was profoundly right'.

The risk was not quite as big as it seemed. An Australian Navy vessel with an arsenal was just off the coast of Bougainville during all the years of the peacekeeping operation. While this was never admitted publicly, the BRA leadership was aware of it. If a peacekeeper had been killed in a military attack, the BRA also understood that all the peacekeepers would be withdrawn after armed soldiers secured the withdrawal. This knowledge caused both the BRA and the Resistance to be exceptionally protective of the peacekeepers. For example, in circumstances when an emotionally damaged, drunk ex-combatant was at large with a weapon, locals mounted a 24-hour guard at the peacekeepers' accommodation in a village. It was a unique and complex peace that was being kept here.

When the peace came, Downer derived great personal satisfaction from it. At that point, he put his humility aside and began to tout to Australia and internationally the positive role Australia had played since the election of the Howard government in solving such a major war. In press releases, Downer's advisers settled on the number 20 000 or the more common estimate of 15 000 for the number of deaths caused by the war (Downer 2001:1). The United Nations has also opted for the 15 000 estimate (UN News Centre 2005). Twenty thousand was a big number for such a small population and was widely picked up, reinforcing the appropriate lesson that this was a war that was ignored by the Western world because it was not geopolitically significant in the northern hemisphere. The politics of exaggeration for a good cause is easy to slip into when the only estimates around come from credible sources such as the Australian and New Zealand Departments of Foreign Affairs and statements by the United Nations. But the estimates were baseless.

The elusive count of suffering

The most serious scholar of the conflict, Anthony Regan, has been concerned to offer a corrective to the clear exaggeration in the Downer 20 000 deaths estimate. We judge his statement below to be the most authoritative estimate of the cost of the conflict and more conservative than most estimates in the literature.

The conflict had terrible impacts. For Bougainville, they included the trauma resulting from perhaps several thousand deaths (at least some hundreds in conflict, many more from extrajudicial killings on all sides, and an unknown number caused or contributed to by the PNG blockade of BRA-controlled areas) and injuries; deep divisions among Bougainvilleans; destruction of most public infrastructure and private-sector productive assets; destruction of the capacity of the local state (the Bougainville provincial government's administrative arm); the large-scale dislocation of life for huge numbers, with up to 60,000 of Bougainville's population of about 160,000 living in refugee camps by 1996.³ By the time the peace process began, Bougainville had gone from its preconflict status as the wealthiest of PNG's nineteen provinces to among the most impoverished. For PNG, the impacts included hundreds of combat deaths and injuries, massive economic impacts through closure of the mine (which had contributed about 17 percent of government revenues and 36 percent of gross export earnings), and serious impacts on the capacity of the state, including the undermining of the morale of the security forces (in constant crisis from 1989 to 1997). (Regan 2005a:10–11)

We wonder, however, if it is too conservative in correcting the exaggerated accounts that preceded it on the number of combat deaths on the Bougainville side. We code 1000–2000 as the range for the number of conflict deaths. Regan is right that Papua New Guinea suffered 'hundreds of combat deaths'. Many months before the war's end, the PNG Defence Minister said that 200 soldiers and 50 policemen had died on Bougainville (Dorney 1998:320). He had no reason to exaggerate, so we estimate approximately 300 combat deaths on the PNG side. In insurgencies such as the Bougainville war, the objective of the insurgents is

³ Sixty thousand is often quoted as the best estimate of the number of IDPs. It is probably too low. It does not include as many as 20 000 (most mainlanders, but also educated Bougainvilleans, Chinese and Europeans), who mostly fled to the mainland (but also to the Solomon Islands—perhaps 500 or as high as 2000 [Zale 1997:23]). It is a count based mainly on estimates of the number in care centres, such as Howley's (2002:65) estimate for 1994 of 42 000 and Amnesty International's (1997:6) for 1997 of 67 000. The biggest cause of the undercount is that many counted in 1994 were no longer in care centres in 1997 and unknown numbers in care centres in 1997 were not there in 1994. That is, both numbers fail to count those in care centres at other times. Finally, there were uncounted thousands of IDPs who fled their burning villages to hide in the bush for a period rather than live in a care centre.

not to inflict a larger number of deaths on the superior army with superior weapons and training that they confront. It is to win by not losing and to inflict sufficient losses for the state to conclude that the military losses it suffers are too high a price. The BRA won the war by not losing in just this sense.

The BRA ended the war in a hurting stalemate in which its forces were more optimistic of victory than the PNGDF.⁴ While it had retreated to allow the PNGDF to control most of the territory of Bougainville, the BRA was never defeated in its heartland, and in that heartland and other places as well (from Kangu Beach in the far south to Buka in the far north), it inflicted many significant little defeats on the PNGDF. Even though it was an insurgency in which the insurgents gave a better account of themselves than in most insurgencies, it still recounts as one that fits the pattern of superior state firepower inflicting more deaths on the insurgents than poorly armed insurgents inflict on them (see, for example, Liria 1993). So we assume in the absence of systematic evidence that more than 300 BRA were killed in fighting with the PNGDF. Second, we assume a comparable number of BRA would have been killed in fighting with the Resistance to fighting with the PNGDF. We assume this because the Resistance was on the ground continuously from the time it came into existence, whereas the PNGDF was on the ground only in some places at some times. Moreover, in the place where the PNGDF was on the ground for the longest period, Buka, it stood back and left it to the Buka Liberation Front to do most of the considerable killing of BRA that occurred there. It seems safe to conclude that the number of Bougainvilleans killed in BRA–Resistance fighting on both sides was greater than the number of BRA killed in BRA–PNGDF fighting. So if 300 is a good number for the losses of PNG fighters, if they killed an even greater number of BRA and if an even greater number than that was killed in BRA–Resistance fighting,⁵ the number of conflict deaths was way more than 1000. Hence, our coded estimate of 1000–2000. It remains the case, however, that we can only speculate on the number of deaths caused by the blockade and withdrawal of government services (see Regan 1999:557–9). The death toll from being cut off from medicines and professional medical care was certainly high, especially among the elderly who fled their homes.

4 BRA military leader Ishmael Toroama did not think there was a hurting stalemate at all: 'We were not tired of fighting. Most of our boys did not agree with us because we were gaining ground.' While he agreed there was a lot of exhaustion among his fighters, he saw the motivation for the peace in terms of the effect the war was having on the children, including the fighting boys themselves being brought up in the way of the gun.

5 Some newspapers have reported 2000 Resistance members killed (Claxton 1999:140). This is most implausible; it would amount to the loss of most of their fighters.

The cost for women

The Leitana Nehan Women's Development Agency told us that they had systematic files on thousands of cases of sexual assault, many by the PNGDF, that were all intentionally destroyed in a PNGDF raid on their premises. These included more than 1000 victims of rape (often with multiple rapists) on Buka Island alone (Saovana-Spriggs 2007:128). We will return to the issue of the cost of the war in terms of a legacy of levels of family violence that did not prevail before the conflict.



Figure 7.1 Helen Hakena holds the UN Millennium Peace Prize for Women awarded to the Leitana Nehan Women's Development Agency, with Peter Reddy in the background

Photo: John Braithwaite

The economic cost

In addition to the loss of royalties, taxes, dividends, thousands of jobs in the mine and thousands of others serving the mine community, all other forms of economic activity declined during the war. Many crops were destroyed or abandoned and fishing became dangerous in many places. Copra production

dropped to zero in the early years of the war, then gradually increased to half its prewar level at the end of the war (Lumanni 2005:248). Smallholder cocoa production during the war remained at less than one-third of its prewar peak (Lumanni 2005:255). With considerable development assistance from Australia, the European Union and the UNDP, smallholder cocoa production by 2004–05 had returned to levels similar to the prewar record of 1988–89 (Regan 2007).

Bougainville's micro-finance disaster

One economically debilitating legacy of this conflict is that large parts of Bougainville's banking system have been captured by criminals implementing the philosophy that the best way to rob a bank is to own it. A number of credit unions existed in Bougainville at the beginning of the conflict. All collapsed during the conflict—unable to pay out loans (Shaw and Clarke 2004:12). The institutional collapse associated with civil war allows many kinds of crime to flourish, including financial crime. Micro-finance is important to kick-starting economic development after a war. Conventional Western-style bank finance finds little attraction in lending for investment in post-conflict areas. It is an environment in which credit unions and other models of funding of little people lending to little people are vital to the beginnings of capital investment in business and rebuilding. Bougainville's micro-finance initiatives are, however, weak in comparison with those found in other post-conflict areas.

There have been three legal micro-finance organisations post-conflict—a lot for a population of 200 000. AusAID withdrew funding for one before the scheduled movement from project funding to business funding because of poor management, in spite of early promise (Newsom 2002; Marino 2006:113–14). It was charging 2.5 per cent interest a month on small loans in 2006. Another, funded by the European Union, collapsed as a result of poor management (Shaw and Clarke 2004:12). Two former BRA commanders who ran an ex-combatants' association after they had worked for the other two micro-finance organisations formed another to finance cocoa projects. They had fallen out with other directors of the first two banks. In one case, they described to us the chief executive officer as 'too much of an accountant' who always 'wanted to follow the rules'. This seemed a worrying kind of reason to start a bank.

While micro-finance is vital for creating legitimate opportunities after a war, in postwar environments, it also creates illegitimate opportunities. Prudential supervision of banks is absent on Bougainville's governance landscape. The worst consequence of this has been four pyramid schemes run by Bougainvilleans posing as banks (Shaw and Clarke 2004:12). The largest of these, U-Vistract, created by silver-tongued conman Noah Musingku, has cost a large majority

of the families of Bougainville a significant part of their meagre savings, as well as tens of thousands of others in mainland Papua New Guinea and elsewhere in the Pacific (especially Fiji). The modus operandi has allowed some community and political leaders, even the Chief Ombudsman, to make large profits out of U-Vistract and to spread confidence in the 'bank' from the top down. Even President Kabui was a substantial investor in U-Vistract as were other cabinet ministers in Bougainville and Papua New Guinea.

Noah Musingku hooked U-Vistract up with Francis Ona, who was also a large investor. Musingku conned Ona into believing U-Vistract could make the Me'ekamui alternative government in the no-go zone financially viable. More than that, the bank would make Me'ekamui "the head of the world financial system rather than its tail". Not long before Ona's death, there was a falling out between Ona and Musingku. Nevertheless, Noah Musingku continued to control part of the Me'ekamui brand and, some of the weapons, and he retained five Fijian soldiers, —two of them former peacekeepers, —to train a small private army in his home village of Tonu. In other words, what we have here is a financial fraudster harnessing a combatant brand -name (Me'ekamui) to defend himself from arrest. U-Vistract has been renamed the Royal International Bank of Meekamui. Its web site claims that it manages US\$1 trillion. Noah Musingku has crowned himself His Majesty King David Peii II and as the successor monarch over Ona's kingdom. In a telephone interview with a man who described himself with a chuckle as a spokesman for the King in 2008, John Braithwaite was told, 'President Kabui assured us of amnesty and we assured him we would give him and his men amnesty'!

Thomas Tari (the BRA commander who led the Kangu Beach massacre; Box 4.1) worked with police, who Tari also armed with weapons captured from the PNGDF at Kangu Beach, and led a 'Bougainville Freedom Fighters' attack on Noah Musingku's Tonu 'Royal Palace' in November 2006 in a effort to capture him. After a fire fight that lasted more than an hour, Musingku was wounded, but not captured, and the assault was called off to get a Bougainville Freedom Fighter, who subsequently died, to hospital. In 2010, Musingku remains at large in Tonu, still protected by a dwindling group of armed supporters (Regan 2010).



Figure 7.2 Noah Musingku wearing a crown inscribed 'King' inspects his 'Royal Palace Guards' in Tonu

Photo: *The National*

A mighty cost

While exaggerated accounts of the number killed in the fighting are common, probably considerably more than 1000 were killed directly in the fighting and a larger unknown number died as a result of being cut off from medicines, medical care and their gardens—in many cases as a result of intentional acts of war such as the blockade. Thousands of women and girls were raped. More than one-third of the population lost their homes. A generation of children missed out on an education. All aspects of the export economy collapsed. It is hard to think of a place that has come out of conflict with a more utterly devastated and dysfunctional financial system legacy than Bougainville. The cost of a no-trust banking system in terms of stunted long-term development will be very high, especially if ratings agencies have to assess the financial system of an independent Bougainville and therefore the price it will have to pay for money it borrows.