7. What layers of identity were involved in the conflict?

Identity multiplexity

Our colleague Ron May is fond of saying that ethnicity is a 'notoriously slippery concept in Melanesia'. Both Guadalcanal and Malaita comprise numerous linguistic and tribal groups, and there are few physical differences between the peoples of the two islands—far fewer than between Bougainvilleans and PNG Highlanders, for example. Moreover, island-wide identities such as 'Malaitan' and 'Guale' are relatively recent phenomena, doubtless reinforced by recent conflict, with their origins in the colonial and early contact periods. For most people in the Solomons, and indeed across Melanesia, primary identities and loyalties continue to reside with what can be variously described as kin groups, clans and tribes.

For these reasons, it is useful to visualise ethnicity in Solomon Islands in terms of Anthony Smith's (1991:24) 'concentric circles of allegiance'. For example, a young man's primary loyalty is usually to his clan on, say, northern Malaita. Under certain conditions, however, such as those that prevailed during the ethnic tension, that loyalty becomes refocused on the wider circle of 'Malaita' and its 'leaders'. Solomon Islanders can navigate between these wider and narrower circles of identity with considerable dexterity and alacrity. The fluidity and mutability of ethnic identity in Solomon Islands render it prone to manipulation. There are always those who seek to manipulate identity discourses purely for personal, political and economic ambition, and this was certainly evident during the conflict in Solomon Islands.

Among the multiplexity of identities that matter in the Solomons conflict, we will consider in turn kinship and island identities, big-man identities, youth identities such as *Masta Liu* and multiplex Chinese identities. We then consider the paradoxes of *wantokism* as obstacle and resource in national identity formation and national reconciliation.

Resistance as a font of identity

Allen (2007:90), following Bennett (1987), argues that colonial patterns of economic development created regional haves and have-nots. The people of Malaita and the Weather Coast, Allen continues, fell into the have-not category. They sold their labour to the blackbirders, then to the Solomons plantation economy away from their homes, then to the Honiara urban economy and on to the adjacent north-eastern plains after World War II, to compensate for their extremely limited opportunities at home. In the case of Malaitans, this has forged a sense of themselves as a people who have made the most of government neglect of their island to work their way up the class structure of Solomon Islands society.

Furthermore, Allen argues that identity was forged out of resistance to external sources of power—to traders and blackbirders, to the church, the colonial administration and the post-colonial state. On both the Weather Coast and Malaita, fidelity to *kastom* law as opposed to government law was a font of this identity of resistance. In colonial times, there were social movements such as the Maasina Rule Movement, of which Andrew Nori's father was one of the two founders, which helped forge a pan-Malaitan identity of resistance to colonial rule. On the Weather Coast, the Moro Movement mobilised a return to *kastom* across southern Guadalcanal against the church as well as the state. The IFM enrolled and re-energised the Moro Movement to its militant projects. When he was alive, Chief Moro kept his distance from the IFM, which adopted the ideas and practices of Moro selectively and only by some.

Figure 7.1 Isatabu Freedom Movement guerrilla, a son of Chief Moro, whose Moro Movement renounces modern ways, with foliage as camouflage, patrols with a homemade rifle in 2000 to protect a Moro Movement village on the Weather Coast

Figure 7.2 IFM fighters who are members of the Moro Movement, renouncing modern clothing, at a waterfall on a break from patrolling the Weather Coast, 2000

Photos: Ben Bohane

Big-men and identity

While hereditary male chiefs are not uncommon in Solomon Islands and female leadership, especially through the church, is also important, the dominant form of leadership identity is a big-man identity.[1] An effective big-man could widen the scope of identity by linking lineages that inherit different areas of land into a communal alliance. Big-man identities infuse contemporary parliamentary

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1 The dominant form of political organisation in pre-contact times was the big-man system, though chiefly systems also existed, and in some places hereditary title and achieved status were 'intertwined or complementary' (Keesing 1985:237). In some areas, including much of Malaita, a clear distinction was maintained between three different types of leaders (discussed in Keesing 1985). There were the 'classic' big-men whose success lay in their ability to organise and mobilise resources, particularly pigs and root crops, in order to generate and distribute wealth. There were warrior-leaders, chosen for their strength, aggressiveness and skill in warfare. These men were also expert at raising and leading raiding parties, usually in response to a request from a big-man or from the relatives of a slain man for whom vengeance was sought. Keesing (1985:237) argues that 'Big Men have held centre stage in the period of ethnographic observation partly because men whose prominence was achieved in warfare and feuding have been forcibly removed from the stage by pacification'. The third type of leader was the priest, who was responsible for maintaining relations

leadership; Solomon Islands is one of the eight nations in the world that has no female representative in the national Parliament at the time of writing—a pattern of under-representation that is almost as extreme in other branches of national and local governance (Corrin 2008). Corrin (2008:172–3) argues that there is considerable continuity between this contemporary under-representation and pre-colonial governance in which women were generally excluded from leadership roles—reinforced by colonial governance that sanctioned indirect rule through headmen, to the exclusion of female leaders.[2] Big-manship is earned by leadership ability, but also through the gift economy of providing feasts and giving away wealth of other kinds to *wantoks*. Under both colonial and post-colonial government, an important part of the leadership that earned big-man status was in mediating the relationship between the state and local communities.

Translation of such big-manship into the parliamentary institution has produced a corrupt and unstable form of parliamentary governance. In the 32 years since independence, there have been 15 governments (Allen and Dinnen 2010). Non-emergence of strong political parties is one of a number of other factors in the parliamentary instability that Jeffery Steeves (1996) has described as 'unbounded politics'. Approximately half the Members of Parliament lose their seat at most elections, thereby accentuating the urgency to accumulate and redistribute within this relatively small window of opportunity. Often losers become losers because they have failed to be generous enough delivering personal wealth to those who voted for them the previous time. This means politicians serve their *wantoks* more than the nation.

It has also had the consequence that politicians who accept bribes from wealthy interests such as loggers and foreign fishing fleets have been better able to survive by passing on a proportion of these payments to those who vote for them. A result is that the politics of development is personalised, simultaneously undermining bureaucratic delivery systems. Ultimately, the problem is driven

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between a kin group and its ancestors. In parts of western Solomons, such as in the Marovo Lagoon area, there were named leadership roles for women, but these appear to have disappeared entirely as a consequence of the colonial authorities' privileging of men in local leadership positions (that is, as headmen).

2   McDougall (2003:78), however, ponders whether institutional structures that have worked poorly for women and for men would work much better with more women included: 'A better approach might take women's organizations as models to be emulated in new efforts to draw diverse people together for collective action and common purposes.' McDougall found on the island of Ranongga that local women's church networks had bottom-up strengths in enabling collaborative action—strengths that were lacking in both local male social organisation and male-dominated civil society networks in the capital (to which women's groups were being coopted). In her vision, village-level women's collaborations could be the building blocks of more attuned and less aggressive governance. An interesting aspect of this on Ranongga was the use of art—the way mature women engaged their adolescent or adult children in the performance of parodies of young men who disappointed them by migrating to town, supposedly for education or work, but instead indulged in a 'rascal' or 'foreign' lifestyle of drinking, smoking or violence. The male lifestyle they disapproved of was communicated to new generations of young men by culturally attuned clowning using empty beer cans and Rambo attire as props.

both by politicians demanding ever-larger discretionary funds and by citizens of Solomon Islands who drive this political culture. Citizens demand patronage from their elected representatives—often their own kinsmen—in return for their electoral support and in accordance with Melanesian social norms of obligation and reciprocity.

Masta Liu

The post-colonial period has also seen the emergence of what Jourdan (1995a) describes as the 'cultural phenomenon' of the *Masta Liu*, a pejorative term used to refer to the young unemployed men who frequent the streets of Honiara. The *Masta Liu* are very much the product of increasing socioeconomic differentiation, particularly in the urban context (Frazer 1985; Keesing 1992:174, 1994). Their unemployment stems from both low levels of educational attainment and the dearth of employment opportunities. Very few students complete secondary school. Students sit exams at the end of primary school, at the end of form three and at the end of form five. At each stage, large numbers of students are 'pushed out' of the system, often because their parents cannot afford the fees. In 1992, only 2000 of the 8000 students who completed primary school went on to secondary school; and only 25 per cent of those who sat the form three exam were admitted into form four (Jourdan 1995a:221). Furthermore, during the mid-1990s, the education system was producing 1000–1500 secondary school graduates a year, while the number of new jobs, in addition to vacancies produced by retiring workers, was only 700 a year (Fraenkel 2004a:184).

Many, but by no means all, *Masta Liu* engage in petty criminal acts such as theft and extortion. Such acts are motivated not only by economic deprivation and poverty, but also by cultural factors. With regard to deprivation, Jourdan (1995a: 213) finds that hunger is a commonplace occurrence for *Masta Liu* and that petty theft is at its highest at the end of the month when the money has run out and their 'preoccupation with food becomes an obsession'. With regard to the cultural factors motivating delinquent behaviour in town, for Malaitans, particularly the Kwaio, the influence of dead ancestors encourages young men to engage in a range of 'spoiling' behaviours from pig theft to murder (Fifi'i 1989; Keesing 1992:175–8, 1994).[3] There is also an element of what Akin (1999:60) describes as the 'reshaping of *kastom*' to suit the urban environment in ways

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3   These behaviours are not limited to the Kwaio or to Malaitan pagans. According to Stritecky (2001:71): 'I had conversations about young men's spoiling behaviours with Christians in Catholic, COC [Christian Outreach Centre], SSEC [South Sea Evangelical Church], and SDA [Seventh-Day Adventist] churches, all of whom claim that many young men in town still cultivate ties with deceased male kin, who in turn prompt the young men to steal, drink alcohol, fight and rape women.'

that diminish the control and authority of elders. The prime example of this is the emergence of urbanised forms of compensation demands described by Jourdan (1995a:219; also see Akin 1999:51).

Scholars of the relationships between masculinity and violence in Melanesia have pointed to the importance of foreign, as well as local, influences on the behaviour of young men. Images gleaned from television, videos and pictures have contributed to 'the "Ramboisation" of young Melanesian men' (Jolly 2000:317). Across Melanesia, from Papua New Guinea to Vanuatu, young men 'affect militaristic styles of dress and behaviour that they think convey an aggressive, confident menacing look' (Macintyre 2002:9). Macintyre (2002:10) also observes that the behaviour of militants during the Solomons conflict was strongly reminiscent of the ways in which PNG policemen behaved after returning from 'tours of duty' on Bougainville: 'men…who insisted on swaggering (often drunkenly) around the town wearing their battle fatigues and Rambo-style bandanas, their weapons swung casually over their shoulders.' Other imported cultural influences informing *Masta Liu* behaviours include drug culture (presently limited to marijuana) and American gang culture (transmitted in part via hip-hop and rap music).

Keesing (1985) saw the more traditional Kwaio violence scripts, which these foreign scripts were later seen to complement, as decidedly male. He quotes women as not thinking this way (for example, Keesing 1985:243), when he says:

> Being *nabe*, 'placid, peaceful', is a virtue for a man in some contexts (particularly if he is known to have physical strength and resources to respond aggressively and chooses forbearance); but to be *nabe* when honour demands aggressiveness and anger is a matter of shame, not pride. (Keesing 1985:244)

Adept peacebuilders in a context such as Solomon Islands need to understand in very local ways that there are both peaceful selves and violent selves, and associated scripts, which can be brought to the fore depending on whether one's project is peacemaking or violence. It could be that only peacebuilders from that island will be fully adept at persuading combatants to put their peaceful self forward during reconciliation processes by caressing and cajoling those peaceful identities, and even by poking fun at warlike ones (see Chapter 7, Footnote 2).

'New' and 'old' Chinese identity politics

Chinese identity politics has sometimes been neglected in analyses of the Solomons conflict, when it is in fact important to understanding these conflicts to consider how different Chinese actors see themselves differently one from the other. During the 2006 riots, the Chinese were constituted as folk devils (Cohen 1972), as evidenced by much anti-Chinese graffiti around the capital during our fieldwork in the months after the riots. Even the Commission of Inquiry (2009:5) into the riots went close to collective blaming of the victims: 'The Chinese community needs to take a hard look at itself. It needs to self-regulate its behaviour, clean up its image, the facades of its business houses, become more public-minded, and less rent-seeking.' Old Chinese families, some of whom were spared in the riots because of the respect they enjoyed in Honiara (Moore 2008), separated their identity as 'old Chinese' from that of 'new Chinese' who had arrived more recently from China and allegedly behaved haughtily towards Solomon Islanders in their stores, did not pay fair wages and other alleged petty commercial abuses. New Chinese also persistently corrupt immigration laws by bribing immigration officers for visas and passports. Yet some of the 'old Chinese', as well as Malaysian Chinese who are neither new nor old in Honiara, were at the centre of the politics of king making for cash, and domination of a shadow economy revolving around logging, casinos, other licences and contracts from the government and money laundering.[4] Some 'old Chinese' have been prominent in paying bribes to politicians to induce them to vote for no-confidence motions, in organising prostitution (including for RAMSI personnel) and other abuses. The grievances of those who were angry at the money politics of the election of Snyder Rini as prime minister were directed at the domination of certain 'old Chinese' of the shadow economy as well as at the petty rip-offs of 'new Chinese' store owners.

Identities, reconciliation and transformation

Understandably, RAMSI has found identity issues both too complex and too hot to handle. While this was also true to a degree of the Truce and Peace Monitoring Groups in Bougainville, one of our conclusions was that a strength of peacekeeping in Bougainville was that it targeted leaders on different sides of multiplex divides and urged meetings between them under the security umbrella of the peacekeepers. Their hope was that once the risky business of making the first move was born by the peacekeepers, locals

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4   The idea of a shadow state cashed by the shadow economy was resonant with the crowd who changed Solomons history on 18 April 2006, as evident in the shouts of '*Waku* [Chinese] government' from the mob (Alasia 2008:131).

would take over the diagnosis of the sources of conflict and how they might be reconciled and a new unity might be forged across old divides. This indeed has happened to a much more impressive degree in Bougainville than in the Solomons.

As complex and beyond the nuance comprehension of outsiders identity politics is in Melanesia, one consequence of the big-man phenomenon is that one does not have to be utterly culturally adept to be able to identify the fact that a divide and a knot of grievances coalesce around certain big-men who occupy nearby geographical spaces. What outsiders poorly understand is what makes this identity divide tick and where a great variety of individuals stand in relation to this divide versus various others who have calls on their loyalty. Recognising this seems to have been part of the genius of the Bougainville peace process: being assertive enough to be a catalyst for reconciliation between targeted big-men, with humility enough to then stand back to let locals do all the serious mediation work. Limited willingness of RAMSI to do that, though hardly universal, has been one of its weaknesses.

By 2006, one might have expected RAMSI to be pretty sure on its feet in knowing who the leaders were. But since the burning of Chinatown, we have been unable to identify RAMSI attempts to reconcile Chinese and Malaitans, new and old Chinese or countless other crosscutting conflicts among indigenous Solomon Islanders.[5] In a society of many overlapping layers of identity, it is hard to grasp, harder still to predict, which senses of grievance, relating to which identities, might have sufficient bite to animate violence. Central planning cannot deliver this; only local knowledge can. Yet national institutions such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission could be crafted to enable pluralised, locally led reconciliation of a variety of hues. So this new institution is a source of new hope—just as the National Peace Council once was a source of that kind of hope before it was dismantled.

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5   One prominent Chinese business leader said some reconciliations had been undertaken between Chinese victims and their victimisers: 'And Chinese can engage in a Chinese way, which is a comfortable fit with local reconciliation. They kill a pig. We give something back in Chinese custom. In Chinese custom we will bring friends together from both sides over tea. Can be a meal or meal after. The important thing with both indigenous and Chinese ways is that it must come from the heart. In the Chinese way you ask for forgiveness in front of this group of friends from both sides. This involves loss of face, which gives it power, [and] therefore makes it lasting because it is hard to do and comes from the heart.' This gentleman suffered trauma from the events of 2006 for which he sought treatment from a psychologist. He also said: 'The Chinese are easy targets. They have wealth and do not fight back. Victim[s] of envy. ''We are poor so that must be because you are rich.'' Chinese have a stoic philosophy: let the wind pass. This too shall pass.'

Wantoks and big-men as part of the problem and part of the solution

In Chapter 6, we saw how Jimmy Rasta took care of dozens of his boys post-conflict by employing them in his legitimate business. We saw how he and his wife promoted reconciliation with their former enemies while in prison and on release continued to support logistically and financially the Sycamore Tree reconciliation program. Jimmy Rasta's big-manship was part of the problem in the onset and escalation of this conflict, but is also part of its solution. Former prime minister Alebua was a very different kind of figure from the other side to Jimmy Rasta, but this was true of him as well. When we spoke to Alebua for a second time, in January 2010, after he had been released from prison, he was dedicating himself to reconciliation work. It has been a failing of both RAMSI and state elites that they have for the most part stigmatised such men as simply pariahs, or even as 'gangster politicians', as Ken Averre has put it, rather than seeing their stature among the excluded as a resource for good as well as a danger.

In a similar vein, Morgan Brigg (2009) has critiqued Francis Fukuyama's (2008) analysis of *wantokism* as a problem, when it is also a cultural resource for tackling governance challenges. Brigg sees *wantokism* as something insufficiently mobilised to foster emergent national identity building. The form of Brigg's argument is that the only kind of national identity that can be meaningfully constructed must be formed from the clay of starting identities that involve real attachment. One of the promising things about *wantokism* as a resource here is that it has many layers of meaning for Solomon Islanders. In a context in which one's family or clan members are present, family or clan identities will be salient; in other contexts, in which speakers of the same dialect are present, language could be defining, and island or nationality in other contexts. *Wantok* often refers to those who share kinship ties,

> but also includes, on larger scales, those who share the same language, are from the same area, from the same island and the same region of the world. So, in a village context, one's *wantoks* are direct kin, but as one moves further away from local contexts one's pool of *wantoks* expands. (Brigg 2009:153)

Brigg makes his point by arguing that in international settings, all Melanesians can be referred to as *wantoks*; *wantokism* at this level is a resource for constituting a Melanesian Spearhead Group of states that is highly unified in comparative international relations terms. If this is so, why cannot *wantokism* be a resource along the path to forming national identities, rather than simply an obstacle? Some of the strongest national identities are forged in the embrace of difference,

as when *pakeha* (white) New Zealanders perform a *haka* that distinguishes them from Australians and unifies their national identity in the context of a rugby test. As we argued earlier, this was Mandela's appeal to South Africa to seize an identity as the nation that transcended apartheid, and Lincoln's to the United States to be the nation that endured an awful struggle to transcend the institution of slavery.

It seems to us that Brigg is right to see that there is no reason why *wantokism* cannot be a cultural resource about difference that, in the hands of deft practitioners of Melanesian identity, can constitute unity. Consider the resilience of *wantokism* after colonial controls were lifted as English civil service leaders departed. Resurgent *wantokism* asserted dominations of political big-men over once proudly independent civil service departments. This post-colonial experience suggests that a post-RAMSI policy of crushing *wantokism* seems an inferior prescription to working with its grain.

A second part of Morgan Brigg's analysis is that *wantokism* is the stuff of a Melanesian resolution to Lord Acton's dictum that 'power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely'. Brigg thinks Melanesians, like South American Indian societies (citing the work of Clastres 2007), early realised that transcendent central power was a mortal risk for the group. The Western solution to this problem was Hobbesian, then republican, to allow the central state to grow stronger and pacify ever-widening spaces within its borders; then to set up democratic checks and balances on central abuse of power. We elaborate somewhat on Brigg's text here. The Melanesian solution to the same problem was to constrain emergent big-men who put together widening coalitions by checking their central power with accountability to local kin obligations, local area obligations via reputation, sorcery and other culturally resonant regulatory mechanisms. As a big-man acquires power by unifying wider networks, all the concentric circles of identity (Smith 1991:24) that he has used as a resource in that constitution of power have claims on him. He has obligations to share wealth he acquires with *wantoks* within each circle, which is a check and balance on him ever becoming supremely wealthy. As a younger man in the process of becoming a power broker, he must be open to being pulled back by his elders, including women, within each circle. Or at least he is obliged to respectfully listen to concerns that *wantok* chiefs and other elders choose to express.

This is what constitutes participatory democratic deliberation as a Melanesian check with a Melanesian form on central abuse of power. To attempt to throw this away in a heroic project of believing that it is possible to replace *wantok* identities with national loyalty could be the worst of both worlds—one in which both Western and Melanesian checks and balances are neutered. This is analogous to the dangers in Melanesian societies of crushing indigenous justice that we have discussed, the danger that neither Western law nor *kastom*

delivers freedom and security for citizens. The better path is the search for the hybridities in which formal law and customary law are mutually enabling (Forsyth 2009); just as hybrid economic entrepreneurship that simultaneously strengthens village economies and national market economies is a particularly attractive path to development in societies where local identities are very strong.

Western deliberative-democracy theorists have of course rediscovered the virtues of networked, crosscutting checks and balances in Western contexts as a complement to hierarchical checks and balances. More so in a Melanesian society it is necessary to 'think of possibilities arising from networks for emergent types of checks and balances rather than mechanical forms that operate through hierarchy and administration' (Brigg 2009:159). Mirroring Smith (1991:24), Jenny Job's (Job and Reinhart 2003) research shows that even in a society such as Australia, social capital formation builds like ripples across a pond, expanding primarily from primary groups, family and workgroups, ultimately to trust in the state—more so than Putnam's (1993) Western model of social capital expanding from intermediate groups such as clubs, societies and 'bowling leagues'; though Putnam's model also has a little explanatory power in these data. It does seem a mistake to view, as Fukuyama (2008) does, *wantokism* as a basis for social capital formation that can work only at the local level, as opposed to one that can ripple out to more encompassing circles of trust and obligation.

How often in the course of a year does a wise old man of Solomons society such as Sir Peter Kenilorea, or indeed a wise, respected middle-aged woman such as Joy Kere, take a younger civil service *wantok* aside and counsel them to honour their obligations in the state, to earn the trust the nation has put in them, by fulfilling the duties of their office? In this vein, Brigg (2009) argues that connections facilitated by *wantokism* can be linked with checks and balances in Melanesian social organisation to regulate corruption. This possibility (and emergent reality) becomes more real as 'several decades of marriage across tribal and island groups in modern Solomon Islands has generated a dense countrywide web of relationships' (Brigg 2009:156). Drawing on this web of relationships is what can give the networked governance of corruption that we discuss elsewhere in this book widespread appeal and relevance that can engage growing numbers of citizens. Even when marriage or attending the same school creates weak ties compared with lineage ties, as Granovetter (1974) has shown, there is a strength in weak ties when weak bridging links mobilise a resolve of two strong networks to share a project. Ambitious projects such as strengthening core pillars of governance are best achieved in modern conditions by enrolling (Latour 1986, 1987) networks of pre-existing strength (Castells 1996).

Because big-man accomplishments of power can be accomplished only in a network, big-men are inescapably vulnerable to regulation of their excess by that network. So, Brigg (2009:157) recounts the social fabric that could underwrite his idea of a 'wantoks against corruption' campaign:

> Some Solomon Islanders tell me that the inclusion of *wantoks* from different ethnic groups within a work or project team provides a useful counter to corruption. In other words, *wantoks* might keep each other in check rather than covering for each other when *wantokism* is mobilised for a common goal…Where a closed *wantok* network can provide a way of hiding one's bad practices, a more open network—such as that which would be promoted actively through *wantok* nationalism—could provide mechanisms for transparency and accountability.

A 'wantoks against corruption' campaign opens up prospects of a valued identity emerging that strengthens rather than undermines pillars of the core state. Fundamentalists of pillars of the core state would say *wantokism* will always be hijacked by the greediest politicians and commercial corruptors of the state. Brigg retorts that this is already the case. The question is whether the advocates of good governance will continue to sit back and allow the practitioners of corrupt governance to monopolise the harnessing of the circles of identity that are loosely referred to in this debate as *wantokism*.

Identity as a mask

The quantitative literature on armed conflict does not show that ethnic fractionalisation is a clear predictor of civil war (Collier 2007; Fearon and Laitin 2003). We also do not conclude that the much higher level of identity differentiation in Solomon Islands, compared with Western societies we know, is a root cause of this conflict. We do conclude that entrepreneurs of conflict did mobilise around various concentric identities we have discussed, such as Malaitan. We have seen that resistance and armed violence can be constitutive of identity because when violence begins, people seek refuge by taking sides defined by the entrepreneurs of violence (and therefore of identity). Hence, the source of conflict is not difference per se, but the strategic enrolment of difference to violent projects. To understand the conflict, it is therefore a mistake to see it as an outpouring of an ageless ethnic conflict that has been bottled up, waiting for the cork to blow. This is not to deny that there were underlying structural grievances in this conflict that were constructed around ethnicity. It is to say that our peacebuilding analysis is about focusing on those grievances and the deeper structures that produce them. These include deep structures of inequality that have fallen particularly harshly on the people of the

Weather Coast, for example. Our analyses should not allow identity essentialism to mask the diagnosis of real and perceived inequalities, other grievances and other underlying factors in the conflict that have, sometimes wilfully, become intertwined with identities.

Second, we have sought to argue in this book that success in mounting warlike projects has been based on a manipulation of identity politics and manipulation of outcomes such as compensation payments associated with claims based on respect for identity. This is one line of analysis that has led us to the conclusion that suppression of identities that had been hooked up to violent projects is hardly the way to advance peacebuilding projects. Understanding identity politics is vital to the peacebuilder because we hypothesise that the way to be effective is to be a more skilful entrepreneur of identity politics than the war maker. Instead of crushing identities that have been a problem in the conflict, the astute peacebuilder finds a path to harness those identities to projects of peace. This requires the peacebuilder to be culturally adept, creative and nuanced in a way that would be beyond the capacity of almost all foreigners. It follows that the crucial identity work of peacebuilding must overwhelmingly be crafted by locals.