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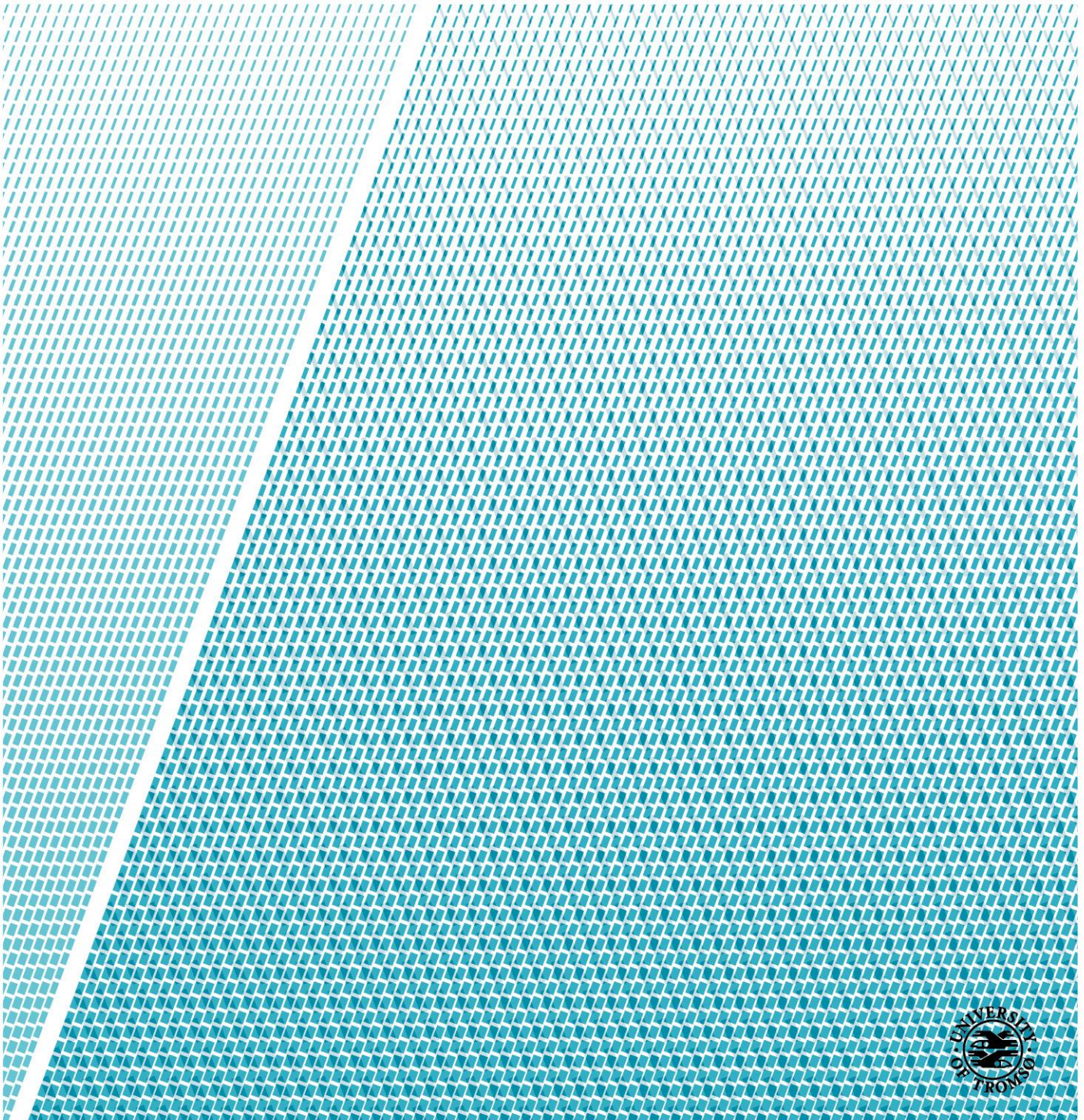Faculty of Humanities, Social Science and Education

Inequality, Perceptions of Identity and Conflict

Inferences from the Black Cat Track, Papua New Guinea

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Abstract

This thesis considers how violent conflict can be explained and studied, the type of evidence that suggests causes of conflict, who is gets involved and why. Interest is in what causes the cleavages between adversaries and the extent to which differences might be real or perceived. A case study, from the Black Cat Track in Morobe Province, Papua New Guinea (PNG) and involving a violent attack on a group of guides, porters and military tourists in 2013, has been chosen to look closely at the causal mechanisms of conflict, on a scale where the context, people and relationships might be better known and understood. Even so, pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial histories are considered. Changes over this period are discussed to establish how people along the track perceive inequality, identity and conflict.

One source of conflict is the existence of horizontal inequalities – or severe inequalities between groups of people who share a common identity. Salient identities can be recognised through the way people are discursively positioned with inherent rights and duties in storylines. The study uses both horizontal inequalities and positioning theory to examine how particular identities become the identities around which groups of people mobilise for conflict.

Key Words: identity, conflict, inequality, positioning theory, development, peace studies

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Map 1 The Black Cat Track and Villages, Papua New Guinea [1]

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Description

Much is said and written about the differences underlying causes of violent conflict. The language of war (and peace research) pushes us this way, to identify *others* who are not like us; not peaceful, not rational people. It seems uncomfortable to admit how susceptible *we* might be to the avarice, resentment and anger we see evident in conflicts around us. But oddly, our human family may be unhappy in remarkably consistent ways. Conflict is such a universal affliction we are prone to miss similarities that appear along the discursive path to conflict. Many conflicts are rooted in local and day-to-day interactions and demonstrate familiar patterns of escalation. Furthermore, since peace is "by far humanity's more common experience" (Richmond, 2014: 1), by opening to this broader possibility - an exploration of underlying patterns in the way conflict unfolds in conversation - conflict might be steered towards more peaceful goals.

While there are many types of conflict, violent *communal conflict* is the focus of this study. Communal conflict is a sporadic and apparently spontaneous form of inter-group violence that does not directly involve the state (except perhaps as an *intervener or indirect actor*) (Brown and Langer, 2010). Although it is necessary to zoom between the conceptual scales of violence when discussing theory and practice, communal conflict is distinct from *secessionist conflict* and *civil war*, where the state is more directly involved as one of the parties to conflict. To examine communal conflict is to examine conflict at the coalface. It brings us closer to the combatants and to their concerns. It allows us to put conflict, together with its contending theories and practices, under the microscope.

Violence can be defined as the use of power to cause harm. Others add *intentionality* and the *unnecessary insult of basic needs*, which broadens the definition to include threats of violence and the hidden repression built into social and political structures (WHO, 2002; Galtung, 1996). In this study, *conflict* need not inherently be violent, and is interpreted to be more of an opportunity than a problem. Its imminent contextual and situational character seeks to be understood rather than resolved.

This thesis considers how violent conflict can be explained and studied, the type of evidence that suggests causes of conflict, who gets involved and why. Interest is in what causes the cleavages

between adversaries and the extent to which differences might be real or perceived. A case study from a small region – the Black Cat Track in Morobe Province, Papua New Guinea (PNG) - has been chosen to look closely at the causal mechanisms of conflict, on a scale where the context, people and relationships might be better known and understood (so far as that is possible). Even so, pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial histories are considered. Changes over this period are discussed to establish how people perceive inequalities, identity and conflict. A deeper exploration of the relationships between these concepts and a violent attack on a group of guides, porters and military tourists on the Track in 2013 is undertaken to discover how something so distinctive might also be general. [2]

1.2 Motivation

Unpredictable and violent conflict involves deep human costs and is a source of reduced investment and growth. Consequently, preventing violent conflict is a high priority for those interested in development and poverty reduction. One source of conflict is the existence of severe inequalities between groups of people who share a common identity (Stewart, 2010b). A major challenge for PNG is to sustain its economic growth in the coming years and to develop inclusive growth strategies that see the benefits of growth flow to a broader constituency (ADB, 2012). This may not be possible without recognising which groups are the salient groups and prioritising policies to correct economic, social and political inequalities between them, particularly in post-conflict environments.

Having walked the Track peacefully and without fear of violence in the past, I would also like to understand what makes my experience different to more recent events.

1.3 Problem Statement

This study aims to understand what factors influence perceptions of identity among villagers along the Black Cat Track and how particular identities become the identities around which groups of people mobilise for conflict. [3]

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[2] *Military tourism* describes activities aimed at those with an interest in historical military sites, including museums, battlefields and cemeteries.

[3] *Mobilise* here means to prepare for conflict, becoming more aggressive and even violent.

1.4 Research Questions

Which identities are discursively positioned as antagonists in the conflict?

How do horizontal inequalities influence such discursive antagonism and its potential for violence?

1.5 Background

The Black Cat Track (refer Map 1) is reputedly one of the toughest and wildest adventure trails in the world (EcoSustainAbility, 2008). Approximately 60 km long, the Track runs from Salamaua on the North-East coast of PNG to Wau in the elevated hinterlands. The Track passes through the territories of three distinct cultural-linguistic groups: the Bong, Iwal-Kaiwa and Biangai. [4] [5] Settlement of the area appears to predate the 1700s, but little specific information is known. It belongs to a period of oral history, before events are remembered in any distinct way (Bradshaw, 1997; Burton, 2000b; Willis, 1974). The Bong people inhabit villages in and around Salamaua. Iwal-Kaiwa occupy the territory inland (westward) from the coast and up to the Bulolo valley. The Biangai inhabit the upper reaches of the Bulolo river, or Wau valley.

The villages at either end of the Track see some regular passing traffic and consequently have some contact with the commercial centre of Lae. In the 1920's Salamaua was the "capital" of Morobe Province and gateway to the goldfields. It remains an important weekend destination for expatriates living in Lae. [6] Villagers from around Salamaua earn regular incomes as house staff and gardeners at expatriate holiday houses and as deck hands on game fishing boats. Wau was at the centre of a gold rush in the 1920s and 30s. Villagers around Wau have had extensive contact with European miners and settlers. Wau remained a significant regional township up until the 1970s. There are no roads or means of transport (other than foot transport) to the Iwal-Kaiwa villages in the middle of the Track, so they remain largely isolated from the rest of the world.

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[4] Burton (1995) cautions against the use of the term *clan* because it obscures the fact there is no clear delineation of people into territorial groups, unilineal group recruitment or leaders that can speak expressly for the group as a whole. I use the term when referring to a general ethnic group and this specificity is not required.
[5] Iwal-Kaiwa are referred to variously as Kaiwa (a derivative of a coastal term for *inlanders*) and Iwal (the language group). I adopt the term my research participants most often used to describe themselves – Iwal-Kaiwa.
[6] An expatriate or 'expat' is a person temporarily or permanently living in a country other than that of their citizenship.

Organized treks have occurred on the Track since the early 2000s. While hold-ups were occasionally reported, they were non-violent in nature and directed at *ad hoc* individuals or groups attempting the trek without adequate consultation with local villagers. Customary land in PNG is a form of collective and inalienable title which has sustained common benefits, over many generations. About 97 percent of PNG's land is owned by families and administered under customary law (Anderson, 2010: 11). Permission is required from the customary land owners to pass along the Track. [7]

On the evening of Tuesday 10th September 2013, a group of eight Australian and New Zealand trekkers, their Australian Tour Leader and 19 local guides and porters were viciously attacked by three armed men, at their first overnight camp. The three attackers, thought to be from nearby villages, each wore balaclavas. One carried a .303 rifle, the other two bush knives. They were extremely aggressive, moving fast while shouting at the party to lie face-down on the ground. Two porters resting in a tent at the head of the clearing were assaulted with bush knives. Eight blows split one porter's arm in two and his skull open. Both porters died at the scene. Porters trying to move or escape were also slashed about the legs causing serious and debilitating injuries. The party was robbed of mobile phones, cameras, passports and the porters' wages. The trekkers were beaten and traumatized, but otherwise none were severely injured (Hoffman, 2014). [8] [9]

1.6 Thesis Outline

Chapter 1 introduces the reader to the purpose of the study, the conflict at the heart of the study, key protagonists, motivations for the enquiry and questions raised.

Chapter 2 begins with a brief history of the Black Cat area and the first encounters with Europeans in the late 19th century. It orients the reader to discursive positioning of indigenous people, major influences and disruptions to life along the Black Cat Track over the next century.

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[7] A detailed review of differences between Melanesian customary land and Western property rights can be found here: http://intersections.anu.edu.au/pacificurrents/huffman_review.htm

[8] Carl Hoffman is an American journalist and contributing editor at National Geographic Traveler magazine, a former contributing editor at Wired and has published articles in Outside, National Geographic Traveler, Smithsonian, Men's Journal, National Geographic Adventure and many others. His article on the Black Cat Attack provides valuable insights into how people from PNG are positioned and events depicted in the Western media.

[9] Kerry Rarovu and Mathew Gibob were killed in the attack. Lionel Aigilo died later in hospital.

It outlines development in PNG up to independence in 1975. This provides a context for the description and discussion of events that follow.

Chapter 3 describes the key theoretical frameworks that are applied in the analysis and discussion. Beginning with an overview of why inequalities matter, the reader is then introduced to the main arguments explaining causes of civil war - *greed* and *grievance*. This discussion leads to a reformulation of the debate, through the theory of *horizontal inequalities,* or inequalities between groups of people who share a common identity. The second part of the chapter introduces *positioning theory* as a way of understanding how identities are constructed through discourse. The *positioning diamond* is presented as a framework for reflecting on meanings that become apparent in social life. It is used later to analyse narratives in the case study.

Chapter 4 describes researcher's relationship to the study, makes the case for the case study, describes the methodology used, how the methodology relates to the research questions and how data was collected and analysed to answer these questions. Sensitivities related to the case study, how these were approached with research participants, and how the researcher is positioned within the research are discussed. An example using the positioning diamond is developed to help the reader understand how the framework is applied in the analysis.

Chapters 5 and 6 provide analysis and discussion of the data. The analysis utilises the data obtained from documents and interviews with the research participants. It establishes five dominant storylines that capture causes for the attack in the case study. The storylines illustrate how identities are positioned and conflict is promoted through the allocation of rights and duties. Then, the discussion takes the different identities presented in the storylines and explores connections between these identities and horizontal inequalities. Insights gained from the case study and opportunities to take this approach further are also raised.

Chapter 7 recaps the key findings and the purpose of the study.

Chapter Two: Historical and Ethnological Context

"Knowledge connected to power not only takes on the authority of "truth" but has the power to make itself true. Truth is something cultures produce."

Michel Foucault [10]

2.1 Brief History

One feature of historical circumstance that becomes immediately evident is the different amounts of information available on the Biangai, Iwal-Kaiwa and Bong cultural-linguistic groups. By their stake in contemporary gold mining activities, the Biangai have been involved in detailed social mapping studies (Burton, 1995b; Burton, 2000b). Equivalent information was not found for Iwal-Kaiwa and Bong people. This is in one sense, *knowledge making itself true*, and why Willis (1974: xv) opens with Frantz Fanon's observation that, "white men who write the histories of the colonies in which they live … write the history of their own nation." Some caution therefore needs to be taken in accepting this outline as *the* truth. None the less, a brief history is outlined, and a particular reliance is acknowledged and placed on MacWilliam's (2013) description of Australian colonial trusteeship in PNG, to provide context for the subsequent discussion.

The name for the people residing along the Bulolo River, the Biangai, is of colonial origin (Burton, 1995b: 4). It designates seven villages sharing a common language and customs. The political unity of the pre-colonial Biangai is equivocal. Villages constantly raided each other prior to contact with Europeans, and also formed alliances to attack others. However, there was sufficient shared interest to form alliances against threats from non-Biangais. Burton's (1995b) informants suggest that "internal fighting … was characterised by exact payback. If a death was unavenged, the 'victorious' group would live uneasily until they had lost a man themselves, if necessary an elderly man would be sacrificed to achieve a balance."

While this sounds extreme, the Biangai's established enemy were the Watuts, from further inland. Unlike Strathern's (1985) Hagen Highlanders, the Biangai did not exchange wealth items like pigs and shells for redress or dispute settlement (Burton, 2000b: 12). Internal disputes

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[10] Foucault (1977) *Discipline and Punishment*: 27. Truth's objective and relative nature can also reveal something about the truth teller and what they are trying to achieve, as might be illustrated in Appendix A.

needed to be settled quickly so that attention could be turned outwards to defend against Watut and other hostile neighbours' war parties. Morobe District Officers' Linehan and Ellis encounter with the Biangai on the Bulolo River in 1920 includes a description of large numbers of Kaiwa people following the party "anxious to straighten out some disputes" with the Biangai; an indication of how delicate any prevailing truce may have been (Burton, 2000a: 2).

To the south were another closely related group, the Biaru. Biangai and Biaru speakers are both part of the Goilalan linguistic family, share many cultural similarities and many Biangai from the village of Elauru are distantly related to Biaru. Pre- and post-colonial trips to the coast for shells, the maintenance of alliances and the work of warfare against enemies defines much of Biangai history, but also suggests a regular, albeit cautious, movement outside of the fortified villages (Halvaksz, 2006a: 104).

The traditional habitations were considerably smaller than contemporary villages and set high on hill tops or ridgelines. [11] They were autonomous polities, some with as few as one or two hundred members, but most were not self-sufficient in suitable marriage partners. Since people found spouses in near-by villages and gifts were mostly given to kinsmen, goods and people tended to move short distances over time. Local specialisation was also reason for trade. The Salamaua Peninsula was the only good source of stone for adze blades. The marsh-dwelling villages specialised in weaving baskets from lakeside grasses and along the Fancisco River villagers produced surplus taro and sago to reciprocate for baskets, bowls and mats (Bradshaw, 1997: 233). [12]

Few attempts have been made to describe the period of early European arrival from the indigenous Papua New Guinean's point of view (Cass, 2011). Nineteenth century European portrayals of Melanesia were replete with "images of monstrous barbarism and cannibalism beyond the peripheries of civilization." Simply put, Melanesians were seen as savages (Knauft, 1990: 251). Such characterisations were hardly surprising since in early encounters Melanesian

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[11] In the years after contact, settlements were aggregated in the fertile Bullolo valley with the encouragement of both the Lutheran Mission and kiaps. Kiaps, or patrol officers, were mobile representatives of the Australian government in pre-independence PNG.

[12] Research participants confirmed how this exchange between lowland and inland areas continues today in the form of trade for betel nut, bamboo for construction and sago palm leaves for durable roofing.

attackers frequently killed shipwrecked crews, took heads and engaged in cannibalism. Beyond these perceptions, reciprocating violence between Melanesians and Europeans was common (*Ibid.*: 252).

With regional colonies being developed by the British, French, German and Dutch in the late 19th century, violent conflict progressed from simple skirmishes between villages and occasional sailors to more one-sided and punitive expeditions. [13] In German New Guinea, this frequently entailed the burning of villages, the killing of enemy and shelling of settlements from man-of-war gunships. The causes of such violence were contested, even among Europeans at the time. Traders tended to attribute cause to treachery and atrocities committed by the Melanesians, prompting a forceful punitive response. This image of cruel and wretched savages was strongly refuted by pacifist missionaries, who had their own accounts of savage Europeans – i.e. unscrupulous, unchristian labour recruiters who traded goods, diseases and guns for profits, sexual favours, Melanesian bodies and lives. Missionaries argued that Melanesian attacks were retaliatory (Knauft, 1990: 252).

The competing views of traders and missionaries are counterparts to a reciprocating cycle of violence between indigenes and outsiders in the 19th century. The cycle could start on either side – traders and recruiters taking Melanesian lives, or being attacked by Melanesians for traded goods, bodies and heads for ceremonial purposes and military glory. Circumstances could be interpreted by either side to support their own point of view (or *truth*) (Knauft, 1990: 253).

While the church was liberal and sympathetic towards indigenes, its paternalism was also evident. The trope of "infantilization" and consequent paternalism allowed government and church authorities to believe they were responsible for savages in the babyhood of civilization, that required higher cultures to protect, civilize and develop. It was a common theme in colonial discourse and persists in asymmetrical social relationships and descriptions such as "boys" for guides and porters. Infants that remain dependant on their parent, teacher or ruler. The perceived "nakedness" of Papua New Guineans was another reason to bring salvation. Christian

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[13] In the late 19th century New Guinea (in the north) was a German colony and Papua (in the south) a British colony. After the great war the League of Nations authorized Australia to administer German New Guinea as a Mandate territory and Papua to become an external territory of the Australian Government. After WWII the two territories were combined under Australian administration. PNG established its independence from Australia on 16th September 1975.

discourse sought not only to instil Christian moral conscience, but to make the native body clothed, clean, neat and physically healthy (Stella, 2007a: 100-105). Proper, developed people.

2.2 Development

The term *development* has many connotations, including processes by which the improvement in economic, political and social well-being of people are achieved. The development referred to in this paper has its origins in the chaos and unemployment endemic in post-Napoleonic Europe. Its intention was to transcend the tarnished concept of *progress*, characterised by early forms of industrialisation, and identify and address the negative consequences (MacWilliam, 2013: 19). Thus, this idea of development was conceived as a reformation of *spontaneous* forms of development by the application of *intentional* responses designed to counteract disorder, unemployment and impoverishment. In the 20th century the state played a significant role in guiding many backward countries down the path to industrialisation and development (Rapley, 2007: 1).

In colonial PNG, the objective of development also entailed economic growth, improvement in living standards and addressed the need to counteract growth's negative effects. As such, Australian officials both employed 'the external authority of capital' and anticipated possible negative consequences of growth – particularly the destruction of village life as an (idealised) classless community. Consequently, development policies supported the logic of capital accumulation while giving preference to a specific form of local production - that of small holder agriculture – over industrialisation (MacWilliam, 2013: 22).

Through the 1920s, substantial numbers of indigenous labourers were recruited for work on large plantations and in gold-mines as indentured labourers. [14] So successful were these operations, by the 1930s growth in production was being severely constrained by available labour supply. Then, native labour was drastically curtailed during the war years (1942-45). At the end of the war, the welfare of native peoples and their social, economic and political development was back at the forefront of policy. A strongly anti-imperial trusteeship model emerged (influenced by a

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[14] The indentured labour system, in which workers were employed under contract (indenture) for up to three years, was a common form of labour practice used in the south pacific and in PNG up until 1945 (MacWilliam, 2013). Workers were often employed in plantations and gold mines far away from their birth villages. A detailed account of a variety of mining labour practices, including indentured labour, in PNG is also found in Nelson (1976).

Fabian edict *to socialise* rather than *to smash* the British Empire), the rise of welfare states, and with internationally bestowed authority to promote indigenous welfare, hasten self-government and even independence. In July 1945, the Papua-New Guinea Provisional Administration Bill, tabled in the Australian parliament, signalled a substantial increase in legislated minimum pay rates, reduced hours and indentures cut from three to one year, with indentures to be eventually abolished altogether. Previously dominant expatriate settler interests were forced to adjust to the primacy given to small holder agriculture (MacWilliam, 2013: 21-26).

The scale of disruption WWII brought to indigenous populations in PNG was unprecedented and far beyond that wrought by plantations and mines. Not all parts of the country were affected evenly, but where war did strike it was devastating. Rural villages, food gardens, roads and bridges suffered significant damage. Allied forces employed about 55,000 indigenes as carriers. The number employed and co-opted by Japanese forces is unknown. Over 15,000 indigenes died during the conflict. Devastation of livestock and gardens was also severe. The pig populations were almost annihilated in some areas - some 100,000 pigs were estimated to have been killed (MacWilliam, 2013: 47).

Recruitment of males for military work left the burden of cultivating gardens on women and children. Forced removal of villagers from some areas during the war for their own safety also made meeting basic needs harder. Immediately after the fighting ended thousands of males were then demobilised, returning to their villages and placing additional burden on households to support them (MacWilliam, 2013: 48).

A further substantial change following the end of the war was the possibility (for young men, at least) of more leisure rather than labour in rural villages. The return of workers from war-service combined with the abolition of the indentured labour scheme was a cause of unemployment or underemployment. Changes in consumer preference for purchased goods like rice and tinned fish, rather than domestically produced goods, was another - as it reduced the need to labour in gardens. The increasing availability of steel tools such as axes and shovels also reduced the time required for many domestic tasks traditionally carried out by males, such as clearing trees and land for gardens. The provision of compensation for damage to houses, livestock and gardens became a sudden source of money intended to replace these losses. By the end of 1949, nearly

one million pounds Australian had been paid to indigenes in war damaged areas, with a similar amount yet to be paid. (MacWilliam, 2013: 62).

Up until Independence, and especially during the 1950s, state power had been highly centralised, ensuring international firms, expatriate owner-occupiers and the emerging indigenous capitalist-class could not apply excessive leverage against the colonial administration. Australian public servants were also largely precluded from owning and operating commercial enterprises. As indigenisation of the colonial administration occurred, legal and other barriers between state positions and commercial activities were lowered. Accelerated development and the political reforms leading up to Independence gave the indigenous capitalist-class significant political power. This leverage was used for commercial advantage and in the establishment of provincial governments after independence to further pursue opportunities for commercial operations. State trusteeship of smallholder and other indigenous interests after independence was significantly diminished (MacWilliam, 2013: 229-230).

While MacWilliam (2013) describes a benevolent colonial administration's sensitive and tailored approach to development in PNG, former academic and world-bank economist Helen Hughes attacks the colonial powers, particularly Australia, for failing to bring growth and development to PNG quickly enough. She argues that development was only focused on "roads, airfields, ports, water and electricity (which) serviced urban areas where expatriates lived" and that "… when independence came to the Pacific … populations were unprepared for it" (Hughes, 2003: 13). [15]

Villagers living (or who have lived) along the Black Cat Track have witnessed all of these stages of development - from first contact with European explorers, the arrival of German missionaries, the influence of German, British then Australian colonial administrations, the appearance of gold prospectors, Japanese and Australian soldiers, European settlers, foresters, plantation owners, miners and more recently, independence for the state of Papua New Guinea and indigenous National, Provincial and Local Level Government. Yet, for all this development, it is difficult to see how traditional substance lifestyles have change significantly for villages along the Track. [16]

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[15] In part, this negative appraisal is contingent on the definition of *development* the author applies in her analysis.
[16] I elaborate on reasons why this is so in the Analysis and Discussion chapters.

Chapter Three: Theoretical Framework

"Whichever way we look at it, we must always return to the same conclusion: namely that the social pact establishes equality among the citizens in that they all pledge themselves under the same conditions and all enjoy the same rights."

Jean-Jacques Rousseau [17]

3.1 Introduction

Inequalities among groups are not only unjust, but they contribute to violent conflict and lack of social cohesion (Stewart, 2014). Cohesive societies work to uphold the well-being of all members, minimising disparities and marginalisation. Unpredictable and violent conflict involves deep human costs and is a source of reduced investment and growth. Consequently, preventing violent conflict is a high priority for those interested in poverty reduction and the development of safe, stable and just societies.

This chapter presents two theoretical perspectives that help to elucidate the concept of an inclusive and shared society: 1. Horizontal Inequality; and 2. Positioning Theory. It begins by outlining the dominant *greed* versus *grievance* arguments that encompass much of the academic debate about causes of civil war and how the idea of inequality has been approached in this discourse. Then it introduces a contemporary view - that deep resentments may arise when cultural differences between groups *coincide* with economic, political and social differences - and this may lead to violent conflict. A first step then, is to identify the relevant groups, i.e. define the boundaries that are important to people and form the basis of discrimination or favouritism between groups. The second section develops this enquiry into the nature of identity and *when* and *how* particular identities become the identities around which groups of people mobilise for conflict.

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[17] Rousseau, 1968 [1762] *The Social Contract*: 76

3.2 Horizontal Inequalities

Conflicts based on identity have become much more explicit since the end of the Cold War. The collapse of socialism deflated subjective divisions between East and West and one source of funding for class or ideology-based disputes. The proportion of all conflicts coded as ethnic has risen from 15% in 1953 to nearly 60% in 2005 (Brown and Langer, 2010: 28). Identity conflicts have also taken on religious dimensions and become global, as confrontation between Islam and the West has replaced Cold War divisions (Stewart, 2010b: 6). However, ethnic violence is not inevitable. Fearon and Laitin (2003) have shown that most multi-ethnic societies are peaceful. The critical question is why some ethnic or religious conflicts erupt in violence, while others do not.

Greed and Grievance Based Arguments for Civil War

Research on civil war has distinguished between *greed* (also known as *resource mobilisation*) and *grievance* (or *relative deprivation*) related motives for rebellion. In recent years, large-N studies of civil war have concluded that unequal distribution of wealth has no statistically significant relationship with the risk of violent conflict (Collier and Hoeffler, 2004; Fearon and Laitin, 2003). Instead, independent variables such as low per capita income and weak state institutions (that relate to the *viability* of, or *opportunity* for a rebellion) are accepted explanations for conflict onset. However, in difference to all the numerical data that supports this position, the "debate over grievances is far from dead" (Cederman et al., 2011: 478). A brief outline of the main theories explaining collective violence follows.

The *relative deprivation* studies draw on psychological theory and explain how real and perceived deprivation is related to violent behaviour. In the 1960s, Davies applied the Freudian frustration-aggression hypothesis to revolutions, predicting that revolutions are more likely to occur when periods of prolonged economic and social improvement are supplanted by a period of reversal (Jakobsen, 2010: 3). In other words, an intolerable gap emerges between what people want (or have come to expect) and what they get. Østby (2013: 209) credits Ted Robert Gurr with taking the theory further, arguing that the magnitude of relative deprivation is the difference between people's desired and actual situation. Gurr (1970: 12) also proposes a causal chain where discontent is politicised and then actualised in violent action against political objects and

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actors. Grievances can be derived from a number of sources. Collier and Hoeffler (2004) identify ethnic or religious hatred; political repression; political exclusion and economic inequality. State repression has also been viewed as one way to create an intolerable gap between what people expect and what they get. While relative deprivation involves an individual's judgement, relative to that individual's expectations - a variation contends *inequality*, or *deprivation relative to others*, provides the underlying causal mechanism. [18]

From the 1960s onwards, greater emphasis was placed on causes related to inequality. By the late 1980s the empirical literature was complete with examples of every possible theoretical relationship between economic inequality and political conflict – positive, negative, convex, concave and none (Østby, 2008: 144). Such a mixed record began to undermine the fundamental notion of relative deprivation theory. Østby (2013) adds that early critics of relative deprivation, such as Snyder and Tilly, also rejected the grievance-based arguments on grounds that all societies contain aggrieved and frustrated individuals. However, in spite of these challenges, relative deprivation theory remains the most prominent explanation connecting inequality with conflict (Cederman et al., 2011: 479).

Meanwhile, resource mobilisation based explanations for civil conflict have gained prominence, particularly among economists. This approach views the possible gain of reward as the prime motivating factor for rebellion. It also rejects deprivation as a trigger. The English, American, French and Russian revolutions are presented as examples of conflicts that all took place when the material conditions in these societies were improving (Jakobsen, 2010: 5). These examples address the *frustration* notion related to stalled socio-economic improvement, but hold less sway regarding the gap between what people have and what they expect to have, particularly in relation to more difficult to measure political and cultural expectations. Other critics of the relative deprivation approach, such as Collier and Hoeffler (2004: 564), claim "Misperceptions of grievance may be very common: all societies have groups with exaggerated grievances. Societies experiencing civil war would be distinguished by atypical viability of rebellion."

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[18] Social Identity Theory psychologists Tajfel and Turner (1979) also describe three important variables that contribute to the emergence of intergroup discrimination: i) the extent to which individuals identify with an ingroup to internalise that group membership as an aspect of their self-concept; ii) the extent to which the context provides grounds for comparisons between groups; and iii) the perceived relevance of the comparison group. Social Identity Theory suggests that when a group's action for positive distinctiveness is frustrated or prevented by an out-group, it promotes overt conflict and hostility between groups.

Resource mobilization approaches, apply economic rational-choice theory and define the antagonists as 'rational actors'. Rational actors are assumed to make cost-benefit calculations about whether it is more lucrative to retain their daytime job or join a rebellion – the higher the income from non-violent activity, the higher the reward from rebellion must be. Such terminology obscures a much broader epistemological discussion about the materialist interpretation of rationality imbued in economic thought and whether it is rational to act on grievances, or not.

While both resource mobilisation and relative deprivation approaches address the *collective action* problem in different ways, Jakobsen (2010) identifies Tilly as the main contributor to the collective action family of theories. In Jakobsen (2010: 7), Tilly highlights that the creation of an *identity* is important in instigating collective action and, together with *political entrepreneurship*, this can create processes that incite collective violence. In addition, political entrepreneurs need to engage in brokerage to create new links between previously unconnected social groups. [19]

One significant objection to earlier empirical studies relates to poor data on income inequality and the high level of missing observations. The pattern of missing data is compounded by having fewer inequality data for conflict-ridden countries. Many countries have no inequality data at all. Since more data is available for countries that have experienced less conflict, this could create an inference that inequality's effects on violence are weaker than actual. More comprehensive cross-national data on inequality has recently emerged in sources such as the World Income Inequality Database (UNU/WIDER and UNDP, 2000) (Østby, 2013: 211-212).

Another objection to the inequality-conflict literature is that most studies focus on economic inequality, using the Gini coefficient to measure income distribution among individuals, and neglect the group aspect of inequality. [20] Østby (2013: 212) argues that the national-level Gini coefficient is only a superficial sign of inequality. She provides two counterexamples of countries with a low Gini coefficient but that exhibit significant inequality: Indonesia and

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[19] The collective action problem refers to the need to induce individuals to cooperate rather than take advantage of others' co-operative behaviour.

[20] The Gini coefficient (or index) is a measure of statistical dispersion intended to represent the income distribution of a nation's residents. It is one of the most commonly used measures of inequality. A low Gini coefficient indicates a more even distribution.

Rwanda. It is the differences at *close quarters,* the visible and felt inequalities at the local level, that lead to violent conflict. Not ratios of the richest and poorest quintiles of the population that matter. Furthermore, access to land, financial assets, welfare and basic rights are other dimensions of inequality that are not measured by these economic proxies.

Finally, resource mobilisation studies miss the theoretical target by measuring inequality among *individuals,* when they aim to explain *group* conflict. Civil wars are primarily group conflicts, not individuals randomly fighting one another. A fundamental methodological problem arises when studies rely on individual-level measures of inequality instead of group-based measures, and is likely to be one reason why these studies have failed to find evidence of inequality's war causing effects (Østby, 2013: 145). Sambanis also highlights this inconsistency in his extensive compilation of case studies testing Collier and Hoeffler's (2004) model. Sambanis notes that the repeated references to inequality in the cases studied do not tally with the apparent quantitative non-findings. He suggests that this disparity is related to the way interpersonal inequality is measured and that group-based inequality is a much more likely catalyst for ethnic wars. A growing number of rich and insightful case studies now demonstrate that the beguiling simplicity and assumed precision of many statistical studies tell us little about individual cases and the actual causes of conflict (Sambanis, 2005).

An Alternative Approach – Horizontal Inequality [21]

Horizontal inequalities are inequalities among groups of people who share a common identity. Mobilisation by group identity has become the dominant source of violent conflict today. However, most multi-ethnic societies are peaceful. The concept of horizontal inequalities is quite new, but shares similarities with other approaches to understanding the dynamics of group mobilization, outlined above. The horizontal inequalities hypothesis proposes that violent conflict is more likely when groups that share a salient identity face severe inequalities of various kinds (Stewart, 2010b).

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[21] The horizontal inequalities concept has been developed by the Oxford-based development economist Frances Stewart in conjunction with researchers at the Centre for Research on Inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity (CRISE) and partner institutions in West Africa, Latin America and Southeast Asia.

People can be grouped in many ways, and most people are simultaneously members of many groups. Categorisation may emerge from self-identification, as a result of categorisation by others or due to some legal status (such as citizenship), or a combination of these (Stewart et al., 2005). Horizontal inequalities are different from everyday definitions of inequality (often termed vertical inequality) that measure inequality among individuals rather than groups. Horizontal inequalities occur along several dimensions including:

- *economic* dimensions, where it is not just income, but land ownership, employment access to resources, capital and credit, government infrastructure and physical security that are relevant to people's wellbeing and grievances;
- *social* dimensions (and *situation*), such as access to health services, education, safe water, unemployment and poverty;
- *political* dimensions, including participation and control in central and local government, the bureaucracy, police and the army, as well as other sources of power; and
- *cultural* status, including societal respect for a group's religious practice, language or dress.

Each dimension is important and may be instrumental for achieving others. For example, political power is both a means and an end. The direct impact of inequalities on peoples' well-being is central to the emergence and solidification of identities. People's well-being may be affected by both individual circumstances and by how well their group compares with others (Stewart et al., 2005: 4). People who suffer discrimination may then feel their cultural identity more strongly, particularly if others place them in groups for perpetuating discriminatory practices against them (i.e. creating and enforcing horizontal inequalities). Consequently, group members become more self-conscious about common bonds and interests, which contributes to the further solidification of boundaries and identities. Perceptions of difference may be as important as objective measures of difference (Brown and Langer, 2010: 30, 51).

Horizontal inequalities may arise from a variety of historical contexts, such as colonial policies which privilege some groups over others. Alternatively, there may be no deliberate causal agency. Inequalities may simply become evident, as when traditional people on the margins of a modernizing society meet more powerful and technologically proficient groups. Further, such horizontal inequalities may be remarkably persistent over time. For example, an initial

advantage such as access to resources or education tends to reproduce itself, securing further advantages. Where relative deprivation theory focuses on the motives of the disadvantaged, an important feature of the horizontal inequalities approach is that the relatively privileged may also rebel against the unprivileged (or the state). The relatively privileged may react to what they perceive to be unfair redistribution of resources, or fear to be an assault on their political power. Two such examples are the Biafra war in Nigeria and the Basque conflict in Spain (Østby, 2013: 214-215).

There is increasing evidence that the presence of severe horizontal inequalities, or inequalities among groups, raises the risk of conflict (Cederman et al., 2011; Østby, 2007; Østby, 2008). Where some studies have failed to find a connection between economic inequality and conflict, it is argued that this is precisely because they have been using the wrong measure (Østby, 2013: 213). Studies that only look at vertical inequalities, or inequalities among individuals and households in a society, fail to grasp the complex relationship between inequalities and conflict. Violent conflict is primarily a group phenomenon. Group identity is crucial to recruitment and maintenance of allegiance to the conflicting organisations. Where there are large inequalities in access to socio-economic resources, low-income groups may mobilise to improve their position while richer groups may mobilise to protect their privileges, if there is no peaceful way to secure change. Political inequality or exclusion is most likely to motivate group leaders to instigate rebellion. Most serious conflicts require strong leadership and are organised rather than spontaneous (Stewart, 2010b). Alternatively, economic and social inequalities and those of cultural status are more likely to motivate the masses. Cultural status inequalities increase the salience of identity differences (Stewart, 2010a: 3).

To the extent that ethnicity contributes to a group's security, status, well-being and political influence, it is likely to feature as part of their identity. Østby (2013) posits that all three factors – *shared identity* - together with the two main factors accounting for group mobilisation in the literature - *grievance* and *opportunity* - operate interdependently to precipitate violence. While acknowledging the fluidity of such socially constructed categories, Østby places emphasis on the differences that are salient to people and the importance of boundaries where economic, social or political differences coincide with cultural cleavages. These are the differences that *do* matter. Mobilisation along group lines occurs if people identify strongly with their own group and see

others as being different in fundamental respects. The likelihood of conflict is higher where economic and social horizontal inequalities are greater. Conflict is also more likely where political, economic and social horizontal inequalities are consistent (Stewart, 2010b).

Figure 1 shows a theoretical basis through which horizontal inequalities imply both relative deprivation (a) and relative privilege (b). Relative deprivation can lead directly to grievances (c), while relative privilege leads to fears of potential or real redistribution (d, e). Both types of grievance are likely to lead to strong motivations for collective action (h). Further, privileged groups are likely to have more material resources, which imply better opportunity to begin and sustain rebellion (g). Opportunity may also arise because of strong group cohesion (j), which in turn is reinforced by and reinforces collective grievances (i). Finally, violent group mobilisation results from a combination of opportunity (k) and motive (l).
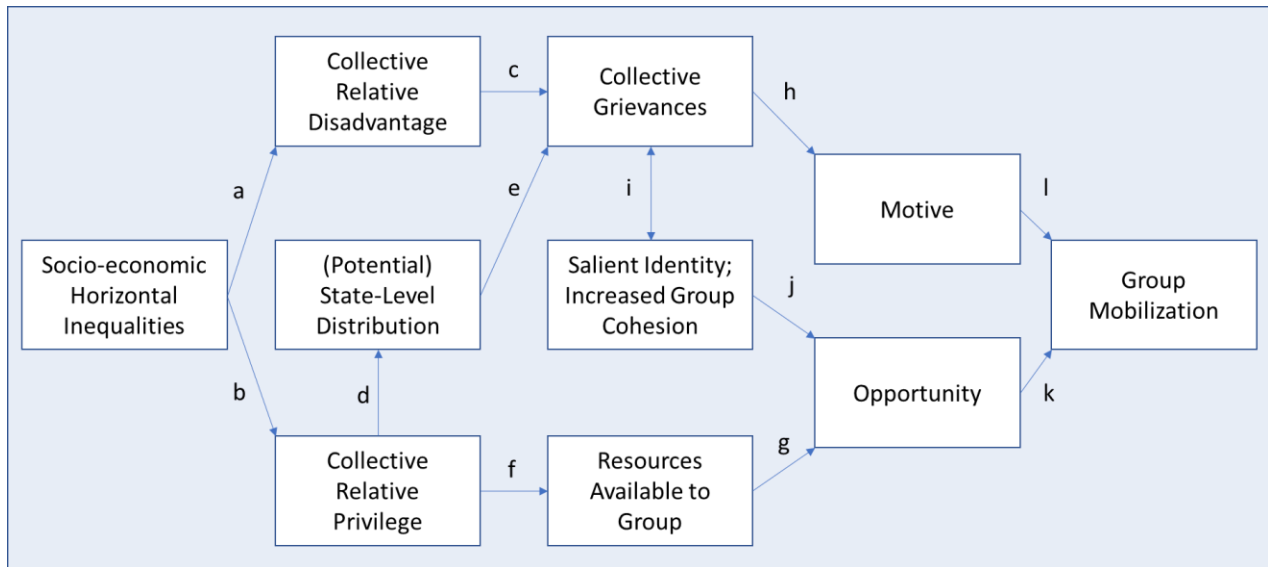
Figure 1: Mechanisms linking horizontal inequalities to group mobilization (Østby, 2013: 217).

The literature on horizontal inequalities is less specific about the different types of violence that horizontal inequalities might provoke. Political conflict against the state or other groups is an obvious example, however the different forms of political conflict may range from riots to civil war. In other words, a wide scale of violence may be influenced by the same underlying

inequalities. Østby et al. (2011) suggests horizontal inequalities are likely to have a stronger effect on episodic violence rather than routine violence, as low-scale "routine" violence has little or nothing to do with ethnic groupings. Horizontal inequalities are associated with conflict onset, as they provide a motivating force for mobilization. That said, vertical inequality is more likely to be associated with violent actions that lack a clear political basis, such as crime (Stewart, 2014: 52).

If group differences are to be meaningful, group boundaries must be relatively clearly defined and hold some continuity over time. Primarily, group divisions must have social significance and influence behaviour and well-being in a significant way. Understanding group differences requires defining the boundaries that are important to people and form the basis of discrimination or favouritism. Ways in which group identities can be constructed and why some differences are perceived to be socially significant and others not will be elaborated in the next section.

3.3 Construction of Identity and Positioning Theory

Research on horizontal inequalities has provided valuable new insight into the salience of group identity to violent conflict. Further, it has been suggested that horizontal inequalities themselves contribute to the emergence and solidification of identities, underlining the reflexive nature of identity formation. However, no description of the theoretical or empirical connections between the social construction of identity and violent conflict exists (Fearon and Laitin, 2000: 847).

This section explores links between the social construction of identity and conflict. First, what is meant by identity and its construction is discussed. Then, three possible pathways through which constructed identities may precipitate ethnic violence are analysed for explanatory power and to provide insight into the links between constructions of identity and violent conflict. Finally, an alternative approach, using positioning theory, is presented and developed. "Positioning Theory looks at what a person *may do and may not do*" discursively (Harre et al., 2009). It helps us to interpret contested events and reveal something of the worldviews and perspectives of the people concerned. It opens a window into the origin of conflicts and sheds light on how the thinking and actions of many people may be influenced in a violent direction.

What is identity and how is it constructed?

Identity refers to a social category, such as: man, woman, homosexual, European, Muslim, worker, etc. Social categories are sets of people (actors) given a specific label (or labels) and meaning (Fearon and Laitin, 2000: 848). Social categories may also apply to something narrated - or positioned - such as region, a country or other types of purported communities (Slocum-Bradley, 2008b: 2).

Fearon and Laitin (2000: 848) propose that social categories have two salient features: 1) *rules of membership* that define who is and who is not a member of the category, and 2) *content or characteristics* such as beliefs, interests, values, moral commitments, behaviours (roles) and physical attributes thought to be typical of members. This includes the social valuation of members – i.e. having a basic identity and being a certain kind of person - and the possibility of being judged, and to judge oneself and others, by the standards relevant to that identity.

Ethnic identities are specifically defined by descent rules of group membership and content composed of attributes such as religion, language, custom and shared historical myths (Fearon and Laitin, 2000: 848).

For identities to be socially constructed means that "social categories, their membership rules, content and valuation are the product of human action and speech". As a result, social categories can and do change over time (Fearon and Laitin, 2000: 848). However, actions and speech are not infinite. They are restrained by the nature of the discursive practices available in society. Cultural texts furnish the inhabitants with the resources for constructing identity.

What do identity constructions entail for conflict?

The *constructionist's* viewpoint is in stark contrast to those who believe social categories are natural, inevitable and concrete facts about the social world. [22] The belief that social categories are fixed by human nature; or a (mistaken) interpretation of biology - gender, sexuality, ethnicity; or by theology, is a prime target of constructionist efforts to show how the content and membership of taken-for-granted social categories change over time. *Primordialists* argue that ethnicity is a cultural given or state of being determined by one's descent; ethnic violence results

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[22] *Constructionism* is an ontological position (often also referred to as *constructivism*) (Bryman, 2016: 29). It is a term that flags the basic tenet of the approach, that social reality is constructed (Robson, 2002: 27).

from hostilities that are enduring properties of ethnic groups. However, the primordial view doesn't explain why ethnic groups change over time. Constructionists reject unchanging, essential characteristics of ethnic groups, arguing that even if two groups "are hostile to each other now, this need not be (and probably has not been) an eternal condition" (Fearon and Laitin, 2000: 849). While it may be interesting to know where ethnic distinctions came from historically, this may or may not be important in explaining violence. However, the processes by which identities are produced in actions and discourse are worthy of closer attention.

Fearon and Laitin (2000: 850) propose three ways that constructed identities may precipitate ethnic violence: through broad structural forces, (grand) discursive formations, or individual agency.

Broad structural forces are observed in the construction of national identities. Fearon and Laitin (2000: 851) note that, while rejecting primordialist views, constructionist authors such as Benedict Anderson argue that social and economic processes largely explain the emergence of nationalism in the modern period. Anderson claims that borders and national identities were created as a by-product of the structural force of "print capitalism" that created new local reading communities beyond the practice of the obscure academic language, Latin (Anderson, 2006).

Economic modernisation has undoubtedly affected all communities, but falls short of an explanation for violent conflict between groups of people. Not all modern neighbouring groups fight. However, such forces may go some way to explaining how ethnic identities emerge in the first place and form a part of the underlying conditions for conflict.

(Grand) discursive formations include language and other symbolic or cultural systems that have their own logic or agency. In more deterministic interpretations, individual identity is merely a product of the larger discourses that exist and flow independently of individual actors. Colonialism, globalisation and the discursive logic of masculinity, where people unwittingly play their 'role', are examples of such supra-individual discourses. While it is possible to see how these formulations can set one group against another, they are also inherently multifaceted and are frequently adopted to explain, defend and condone a variety of competing cultural practices.

As with modernisation, these (grand) discourses are nearly ubiquitous, but violent conflict is not. They may create a disposition for violence, since they tend to be enduring structures, but the

mechanism for causality is indeterminate. They also fail to explain cases where violence is absent and why, at the point of violence, the (grand) discourse cannot be abandoned or reinterpreted.

Ethnic identities – both the content and boundaries – may also be constructed by individuals. *Instrumentalists* see ethnicity being used by groups and their leaders to achieve political or economic ends. For example, ethnic violence may occur where political elites construct hostile narratives to strengthen their own power. Elites cultivate ethnic conflict to gain political support, which in turn favours more violent conflict that serves to harden ethnic boundaries between opposing forces. Several suggestions have been presented for why followers would choose to engage with and support elites' interests in this way.

One explanation, drawing on Social Identity Theory, suggests that ethnic groups adopt learned or innate psychological bias to discount elites' manipulation of ethnic conflicts, such that the *other* takes the blame. Another explanation suggests that elites monopolise dissemination of information leaving followers with a *devil's choice* of who to believe – their own or the *other*. A third possibility suggests that elites do not deceive followers, but simply arrogate power under threat of the *other*. By simply creating an out-group, in-group leaders can increase popular demand for protection from the *other*. A further explanation Fearon and Laitin (2000: 855) attribute to Brass, suggests that ordinary folk involved in "community violence" are pursuing their diverse agendas. When elites position these disputes in an ethnic frame, they provide a *licence* to pursue these disputes as ethnic conflicts.

Importantly, the people who construct ethnic identities need not be politically motivated or a member of the elite. The constructionist logic of *individual agency* compels us to think of identities being socially constructed at *grassroots*. Marginalised individuals may subtly or overtly contest common assumptions about specific social categories. This action may create new identities, with new cultural boundaries, that lead to new conflicts over previously accepted boundaries. The ambiguity surrounding identities and processes for contesting the salient boundaries that delimit ethnic categories is what gives rise to ethnic violence. "It emerges from reactions by elites to efforts by ordinary people that threaten to redefine social boundaries." What is being suggested is "not that ethnic identities are constructed, but that violence is socially constructed as *ethnic*" (Fearon and Laitin, 2000: 857, 869).

Absent from these constructionist theories of how social processes produce and reproduce the content and boundaries of ethnic groups is a clear explanation of the exact mechanism by which they lead to the identities that carry out ethnically based violence. In the aftermath of violent conflict, the causal factors are notoriously difficult to pinpoint and much retrospective analysis entails reading *between the lines*.

However, a story of conflict is often all there is. Only rarely are shots fired and blood spilt. But if these ultimate episodes of violent conflict are *already* present in storylines, where incompatible and irresolvable contradictions become entrenched, more careful examination of the storylines may bring something *tangible* to light - a trace of *why* the conflict occurred. In this context, studying how people use words to describe themselves and others becomes a first step towards understanding the identities that reveal themselves in conflict.

Linking the social construction of identity and conflict through Positioning Theory

Another way in which constructed identities may precipitate violence involves the assignment of *rights* and *duties*, through a process of meaning-making, within a discursive framework. Positioning theory proposes that social reality arises from three discursive practices: conversations, institutional practices, and the use of rhetoric. These discursive practices have no fixed or static structure - they are linked, connected and developed through the rhythm of the interaction. However, it is in such conversations that our daily reality is reproduced and transformed (Tirado and Gálvez, 2007: 5).

Positioning theory is concerned with revealing the explicit and implicit patterns of reasoning that are performed in the ways people act towards others. By examining the social context, "in particular normative constraints and opportunities for action within an unfolding storyline, it becomes clear that access to and availability of certain practices, both conversational and practical, are determined, not by individual levels of competence alone, but by having rights and duties in relation to items in the *local* corpus of sayings and doings" (Harre et al., 2009: 6). One way to illustrate this point is to imagine the implausibility of *Cinderella* donning a *lightsaber* or summoning *The Force*. The *local corpus of sayings and doings* in the *Cinderella* fairy-tale determines the range of opportunities for action within the storyline. In real life, individual agency permits wider scope for action than in a fairy-tale, but the social context still limits some of the possibilities.

If life is seen to unfold as a narrative, with multiple, concurrent and interwoven storylines, the significance of peoples' actions (including speech acts) "is partly determined by the then-and-there positions of the actors" (Harre et al., 2009: 8). To be engaged in a social episode one must be in possession of some recognised rights. The unfolding storyline is mutually determined, unless challenged, by the (speech) acts people articulate, and that in turn is mutually determined by the positions that are taken in the episode. "Such positions are constituted by their assigned, ascribed, claimed or assumed rights and duties to make use of the available and relevant discursive tools" (*Ibid.*: 8).

Positions are clusters of beliefs about how rights and duties should be distributed during personal interactions and the practices in which these beliefs are explicitly realized. They are features of the local moral landscape. Positioning is something that happens during the interaction. It can be done intentionally, inadvertently or presumptively.

In these discursive processes, identity constitutes (and is constituted by) three components: narrative (storylines), moral commitments (or positions), and discursive acts. The process of identity construction and acts of conflict (or peace) are mutually constitutive elements in the construction of social reality (Slocum-Bradley, 2008c: 104).

One type of discursive act involves engaging in *patterns of conflict*, including:

- specific speech acts, accusations, rebukes, belittlement and blame;
- assignment of different rights and duties to different groups;
- assigning specific traits to groups (particularly *transgressor* and *victim* identities); and
- undermining the legitimacy of other actors and their actions through discursive techniques.

Patterns of conflict (and peace) are buried in narratives about *what is* and *what should be* and an interpretation of the wider cultural context. Identities produce, and are produced by, engagement in such discourse. Benhabib (1999: 344) captures this aspect of interweaving narratives in identity construction in his exploration of Charles Taylor's "*webs of interlocution*".

> "We become who we are by learning to be a convincing partner in these narratives … our agency consists in our capacity to weave out of those narratives and fragments of narratives a life story that makes sense for us, as unique individual selves."

In essence, positioning theory is the analysis of these interrelated aspects of identity, interpretation and meaning-making (Harre and Slocum, 2003: 103). Positioning theory allows for expansion of scale, from the analysis of person to person encounters, to the evolution of interactions between nation states (Harre et al., 2009: 6). The interactions can be conducted by individuals or groups of people - characterised as a single actor with agency and moral commitments.

Slocum-Bradley (2008c: 111) presents the *positioning diamond* as a framework for analysing meaning construction in discourse. She introduces four mutually influential elements: (1) the social force of (speech) acts [23], (2) storylines, (3) identities, and (4) sets of rights and duties (refer Figure 2). A change in one of the meanings generally induces a change in one or all the others. Identities (e.g. us – them) determine how rights and duties are allocated. Judgements about how rights and duties are fulfilled (e.g. good – bad), in turn, have consequences for the identity of the actors. The storyline determines which identities are relevant (e.g. Cinderella), and the identities that are summoned influence the storyline's plausibility. The social force of a (speech) act (e.g. blame) evokes identities and these identities influence how the social force is determined (e.g. Cinderella is the *persecuted heroine*).

The steps show how conflict can emerge through discourse. Each step is accomplished (often simultaneously) through discursive interaction. Conflict can arise at any or each of the steps, i.e. when there is a misallocation of rights and duties, an action is interpreted as an intentional transgression of another's rights, there is a failure to uphold assigned duties, or when the identities of *transgressor* and *victim* are ascribed (Slocum-Bradley, 2008a).

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[23] The *social force* of (speech) acts includes non-verbal acts and refers to the illocutionary force of the act rather than the act itself. For example, the exclamation "There's a snake beside you!" may have the illocutionary force of a *warning*. In other words, *social force* is the work (speech) acts do.
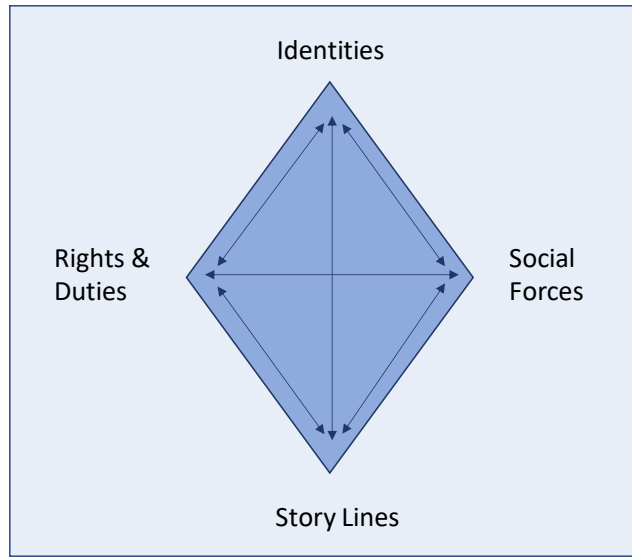
Figure 2: The Positioning Diamond (Slocum-Bradley, 2009: 92)

Previous research using positioning theory has illustrated how discursive tools can be employed to foment conflict, how group conflicts may arise when storylines adopted by different groups are incompatible, or in opposition to each other, and that oppositional positions and storylines contribute to the maintenance of conflicts. Further, evidence suggests "that at the heart of most conflicts lies a discrepancy over which rights and duties should be accorded to which actors" (Slocum-Bradley, 2008c: 114).

Positioning theory provide a specificity to the mechanisms of individual agency that structural forces and (grand) discursive formations lack. Storylines help us to deconstruct the motivations behind individual actions, both elite and grassroots'. Discord over the perceived rights and duties that flow from the representations (and misrepresentations) made establish grounds for conflict. One goal of positioning theory is to identify who did and did not have *positioning power*, and the basis on which that power was allocated (Harre and Slocum, 2003: 114). A reason for this difference is, while there are always competing representations embedded in the social context, "it is the representations produced by members of politically powerful, dominant groups that become accepted as 'true'." Dominant groups who control representation, then produce knowledge from an historical and social repertoire, which constitutes some part of the

identity of those represented (Stella, 2007b: 1). This positioning power also helps explain why some storylines are more prominent than others.

In summary: this chapter has introduced the concept of horizontal inequalities, or the proposal that violent conflict is more likely when groups that share a salient identity face severe inequalities of various kinds. Furthermore, it has suggested that horizontal inequalities may themselves contribute to the formation of identities. It has considered different ways in which identities may be constructed and mechanisms though which the social construction of identity may contribute to ethnic violence. It has introduced positioning theory as a tool for understanding such creation of meaning in social life. It has shown how an examination of storylines can reveal salient identities (to which implicit and explicit rights and duties have been allocated), how individuals interpret social context and how this can provide clues to the origins of conflicts. Deep understanding of social meaning is an important building block for the analysis of conflict. The positioning diamond is one possible way of revealing structure in social interactions. It will be employed in the analysis section (Chapter 5) to help interpret meanings in conversations held along the Black Cat Track.

Chapter Four: Methodology

"One can't say how life is, how chance or fate deals with people, except by telling the tale."

<div align="right">Hannah Arendt [24]</div>

4.1 Introduction

Among the many unanswered questions and contested explanations at the core of my research project, the importance of one (or perhaps it is three separate questions) keeps resurfacing: Why were a group of military tourists attacked and robbed, two porters killed and many others injured on the Black Cat Track in 2013? Secondly, what is the best way to answer this (these) questions? This chapter sets out to address the later, describe how data was collected and outline some of the challenges encountered. The following chapters (Analysis and Discussion) will address the first.

Data collection for the research project took place during June-July 2016. It involved travel to Melbourne, Brisbane and Cairns in Australia, and several towns and villages in PNG. Travel from Melbourne to PNG was subsidised through a research grant from the Centre for Peace Studies. In many locations, I was a guest of the research participants, their extended families or friends who also provided me with excellent company, accommodation, food and transport.

Travel to remote villages in PNG was undertaken to hear what underprivileged, and often underrepresented, voices had to say about the attack and related changes in their lives. Interviews with people living along the Black Cat Track are my primary source of data. Supplementary information has also been obtained from print and TV news reports, articles, texts and other correspondence related to the attack.

4.2 Positionality as a Researcher

I lived and worked in Lae, PNG between 2007 and 2011. As general manager of an Australian owned manufacturing facility I was involved in the *expat* community in Lae and became acquainted with the rich and diverse backgrounds of many of our Papua New Guinean

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[24] Arendt and McCarthy (1995) *Between Friends*: 295

employees. My role enabled me to travel extensively in PNG and spend much recreational time exploring the many villages and historical sites around Lae. One area was the township of Wau, some four hours' drive inland from Lae. Over several visits, I became friends with an expatriate family, who owned and operated a trade store and guesthouse in Wau, and local villagers who would provide guides and porters for trips along the Black Cat Track and to other local landmarks such as a crash-landed WWII bomber, remnant river dredges from the 1930s gold rush era, and small scale alluvial gold mines. One such villager and guide was Kerry Rarovu.[25]

In 2009, I walked the Black Cat Track over four days with my wife, daughter, sister and another expat from Lae. Kerry was our lead guide. On the evening before our departure, we stayed at our friends' guesthouse in Wau. In 2011, I ran the Track in the opposite direction with Christy King and two other expats from Lae, in preparation for a crossing of the Kokoda Track. [26] Again, Kerry was our lead guide and came with us to walk the Kokoda Track. My experiences walking the Black Cat Track and friendships with both Christy and Kerry underpin my interest in finding a deeper understanding of the motivations behind the attack.

I identify myself and am identified as both an *insider* and an *outsider*. I am no longer an expat in PNG but have lived long enough in Lae to feel part of the tight-knit expat community and was delighted to be able to renew many acquaintances while back in Lae. I am in no conceivable way able to call myself a PNG villager, but while conducting interviews in Kaisenik, my translator commented that some of the village children who had gathered around to watch what was happening referred to me as, "uncle Simon", because they had bestowed on me a *brotherly* relationship with Kerry. [27]

4.3 Qualitative Methodology

The case for this case study needs to be made. Case studies are ideal for exploring subjects where relationships may be ambiguous or uncertain (Gray, 2004: 123). This is an *holistic* case

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[25] Since the details regarding the attack are in the public domain, I use the actual names of people directly involved in the attack, if their names have been disclosed publicly and this adds clarity to the account. Research participants remain anonymous and no personally identifiable details are disclosed.

[26] The Kokoda Track is a foot trail that runs 96 km overland through the Owen Stanley Range in PNG. The track was the location of the battle between Japanese and Allied (mostly Australian and New Zealand forces) in WWII.

[27] The concept of personhood and complexity of kinship relations in PNG cannot be generalised and are whole studies on their own. Strathern and Stewart (1998), Sykes (2014) and Halvaksz (2006a) are good examples of some of the literature on these subjects.

study with both *critical* and *extreme* aspects (Robson, 2002: 182). Firstly, the level of analysis is a defined location - The Black Cat Track – a *whole* (albeit comprised of several smaller entities). The analytical unit provides a narrow focus to explore horizontal inequalities and their effect on conflict. Many prominent studies of civil war are large-N studies and beyond the scope of a Master's thesis. However, the established positive statistical relationship between consistent economic, political and social inequalities and onset of conflict among culturally defined groups can be explored qualitatively, on a small scale. The *critical case* provides a better understanding of the circumstances in which the theory holds. This is a classic experimental design, where a particular instance is studied in its context, rather than through the manipulation of variables. Close association with the location and familiarity with the people concerned can also provide insights on possible causal mechanisms underlying the statistical relationships. Observation of the effect of inequalities on the construction and solidification of identities is of interest in this case.

Secondly, as a qualitative study concerning a remote community in an unfamiliar jungle setting, it is also an *opposite* to many large-N quantitative studies of civil war. By investigating horizontal inequalities in this microcosm, we test the power of the theory to explain occurrences within unique or idiosyncratic cultures. We build confidence in the theory through the *if it works here, it will work anywhere* scenario. The cross-sectional elements, that involve interviews with research participants from along the Track, help to establish *truths* about identities imagined to be involved in conflict and how they might be positioned by social context. [28]

There is a great deal of discussion about the *external validity* or *generalizability* of case studies (Bryman, 2016: 62). Explicitly this is **not** a *typical* case from which inferences are intended to be drawn to all other kinds of conflict. However, the approach here does lend weight to statistical relationships established between horizontal inequality and conflict, and strengthens evidence for causal mechanisms embedded in the construction of identities. Choosing the Black Cat Track as a location for this study may show us that we experience the underlying machinations of conflict (and peace) just like any *other*.

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[28] *Truths* here refers to the *objective* and *subjective* versions of contested events that are often central to conflicts and reveal information about the social context and world views of those who promote them.

To determine whether horizontal inequalities were a proximate cause for the Black Cat attack, one approach would be to begin with this broad argument and devise measures that could test a hypothesis. However, such an approach may require assumptions about the identity of the conflicting parties to be made prematurely. Consequently, this later consideration – *Who* is this conflict between? – is central to this study. I am interested in what people along the Track themselves say about how life has changed, how those changes have affected them over time and whether these changes have any connection to the attack. I use conversations with the research participants, as well as accounts in the public domain to generate new data on which to base alternative explanations and qualifications. As such, this is a case study involving multiple methods of data collection and is an approach well suited to investigating phenomena within a real-life context (Robson, 2002: 177). It is broadly *interpretivist* in epistemological orientation, the emphasis being on how local inhabitants view their social situation (Bryman, 2016: 26).

An underlying assumption is that social reality is an ongoing accomplishment by social actors and not something external that constrains them. This *constructionist* ontology also implies the social categories used to make sense of the world are social products, established through social interactions, and lacking "built-in essences" (Bryman, 2016: 30). However, when discussing village experiences and the associated group identities, a social world that is *out there* and that has a formal objective quality is implied. Therefore, the findings also have something of an *objectivist*, rather than constructionist, character. This is the quasi-determinant feature of the social world that appears to have *tangible* reality to the actor. Different epistemological positions tend to support different theoretical paradigms and research methods (Gray, 2004: 22). However, utilising two different methods, as in this study, can have advantages such as permitting theoretical triangulation, broader research questions and more flexible design that engages with the participants' perspectives (Robson, 2002: 372).

Fundamentally, *positivist* and *interpretivist* epistemological positions are complementary. The positivist approach advocates methods of natural science to the study of social reality and maintains that true causes of social events can be found and tested by scientific standards of verification. A basic assumption is the existence of objective reality and facts. The interpretivist approach requires the researcher to grasp the subjective meaning of social action (Bryman, 2016: 11). It assumes that all versions of truth are shaped by the viewer's world view and perspective.

Geertz (1973) captured this subjective understanding in his definition of culture as the "webs of significance" man himself has spun (*Ibid.*: p.5). He claimed facts are "our own constructions of other people's constructions of what they and their compatriots are up to" (*Ibid.*: p.9). When versions of the same events are contested the researcher may uncover what these different versions reveal about the people who tell them, their social position and their cultural understandings (Roth and Metha, 2002: 132).

Contested events create methodological problems for positivist researches because of the contradictory and inconsistent foundations (data). Yet for interpretivists, the same data provides insight into social meaning. Using a combination of positivist and interpretivist approaches helps us analyse the two research questions:

Which identities are discursively positioned as antagonists in the conflict?

How do horizontal inequalities influence such discursive antagonism and its potential for violence?

An interpretivist approach can help reveal hidden aspects of the culture and worldview of community members, which may then inform investigations with a more explanatory approach to answer questions about causes of contested events. This combination of explanatory and interpretivist methods has similarities with Bhaskar's critical realist approach to the philosophy of social science (Robson, 2002: 30).

As the research questions have both positivist and interpretivist character and the research strategy primarily is constructionist, a qualitative research method was chosen. The study aims to understand the meaning that events hold for affected communities through an analysis of responses to semi-structured interviews (narratives). Narrative analysis focuses on participants' self-generated meanings within the broader social construction of the story, interpersonal, social and cultural relations (otherwise referred to as discursive acts). The role of the audience, including the researcher, is of interest in the constitution and understanding of such narratives. A central idea is that discursive acts reveal identities to which implicit and explicit rights and duties have been allocated.

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4.4 Example Using Positioning Theory: Subjugated 'Otherness' in Military Tourism, PNG

An example drawing on scholarly descriptions of tourism is used to illustrate how the academic discourse identifies operators, tourists and locals and associates them with conflicting rights and duties in PNG. This academic discourse is embedded in a broader set of discursive conventions we could label "*Wish You Were Here – The Wants of Western Wonderlust*". Meaning: the whole tourism framework presupposes that wealth and leisure time can be accumulated then spent later at will, and that a culturally sanctioned reason exists to travel abroad. Many options are available, but *spiritual* association with great sacrifices made in war, getting close to the curative and re-creative magic of raw Nature and befriending her least complicated (primitive) people goes some way to explaining the appeal PNG has for the military tourist.

In the "*Subjugated 'Otherness' in Military Tourism*" storyline (see brief outline with its main discursive elements: Table 1) the identities are defined by their functional roles and the needs they satisfy through participation in tourism. Rights and duties are allocated primarily by those with positioning power (the tour operators) and are in accordance with Western, neoliberal economic ideology. The social force of this positioning creates conflict when Westerners misconstrue the impact of tourism on local social structures. While many of the tour operators, who facilitate this experience, provide employment opportunities to locals and promote activities that help deliver basic services to the communities concerned they may inadvertently reinforce Western and colonial paradigms that alienate locals and create scepticism about the benefits these ventures provide. Ultimately, scholars argue, operators market a stylised product, featuring a commodified, objectified, discursively constructed, exotic other for the voyeuristic gaze, fleeting pleasure and individualized escape of visiting tourists (Wearing and Wearing, 2006: 151). Operators, tourists and locals would each have their own versions of the storyline that may position themselves and others differently. The existence of multiple storylines is at the core of many conflicts (Harre and Slocum, 2003: 112). The *Military Tourism* storyline is adapted from articles by Wearing and McDonald (2002); Wearing and Wearing (2006); Wearing et al. (2010); Sakata and Prideaux (2013).

Storyline	Identities	Positions	Social Forces
Military Tourism Melanesian military tourism ventures tend to emphasise the cultural superiority of 'Knowledgeable Westerners' leading to alienation of locals and scepticism about the development opportunities these ventures might provide. Western experts hold the knowledge and contacts to bring in overseas tourists interested in military history and sites. Tourists arrive with preconceived *idealised* expectations about the cultural experience and locals.	**Tour Operators** . Orchestrators of *stylized* cultural experiences. . Agents of the West . Satisfying business needs. **Military Tourists** . Consumers of *superficial, idealized* cultural experiences. . Satisfying leisure needs. **Local Participants** . *Others*, exotic. . Land owners. . Producers of real (idealized) cultural experiences. . Custodians of military artefacts, *sacred* sites. . Satisfying subsistence needs.	**Tour Operators** . Right to engage selectively with locals on *cultural content*. . Right to transact commercial agreement with selected locals. **Military Tourists** . Right to satisfy leisure needs. . Right to *escape*. **Local Participants** . Right to own way of life, livelihood. . Duty to provide access to customary land. . Duty to port for and guide groups. . Duty to engage *authentically* with groups. . Duty to remain *primitive*. . Duty to raise standards and be educated in Western ways.	Rights and duties allocated according to Western, neoliberal economic ideology. -> Promotes conflict when locals seek representation on equal terms, a greater share of benefits, hold alternative views on the definition or value of their culture and customary lands, wish to develop their culture or land in ways that are less compatible with tourism ventures, hold different ideas about what tourism (or the government) should bring to communities.

Table 1: Positioning analysis: *Subjugated 'Otherness' in Military Tourism, PNG.*

In brief, the broader discursive conventions (obvious to outsiders, but not necessarily to locals), the essentialization of local culture, the dominant Western cultural logic of profit and capital accumulation, the multiplicity of stakeholders and variety of different expectations about what tourism should bring leads to frustration and conflict among local participants, and with tour operators. The analytical framework provides a window through which a storyline can be viewed and discord over perceived rights and duties presented and interpreted.

4.5 Ethical Issues

The NSD requirement to anonymise data and ensure no identifying combination of background variables, such as place of residence, age and gender, remain that could be used to identify individuals involved in the study presents significant restrictions on the way in which conversations in small village communities can be reported and attributed. Every attempt has

been made to ensure that quotes gathered in these interviews and used in the analysis have been presented in a way that meets this primary objective, even to the extent of removing some specificity and context, where necessary.

The central ethical issue surrounding data collection through interviews is that participants should not be harmed in any way (Gray, 2004: 235). The subject matter of this research project presents an immediate ethical dilemma – the willingness and wellbeing of research participants to revisit and discuss a highly traumatic episode that remains unresolved between the villages concerned. Furthermore, many of the possible participants were themselves direct or indirect victims of the attack. As there were no practical options for providing in field support or trauma counselling, I remained sensitive to the emotional state of my contacts at all times and was prepared to abandon a line of enquiry or stop an interview, if necessary.

In investigating whether this research was possible or even desirable I have spoken with many people with knowledge of the incident, living in Lae and trekking in PNG - including Christy King, who was leading the group when it was attacked.[29] Dannielle Vincent, who assisted with the immediate response to the attack from Wau, is another. While all the individuals I have spoken with have been aware of the purpose of my visit to PNG and been generous with their time and thoughts, I did not invite everyone I spoke with to participate in the study. There was also extensive coverage in the Papua New Guinean, Australian and New Zealand media at the time of the attack and subsequent public commentary that constitute other explanations for the attack. I have drawn on this discourse, personal correspondence and my own personal experiences in PNG and on the Black Cat Track in the analysis.

An Ethics Approval Application was submitted to the NSD and the method was assessed and approved (refer: # 48317). An application for a Research Visa was made to the National Research Institute in PNG and a permit was granted (refer: VARN # 69990295841).

4.6 Document Review and Analysis

To broaden my understanding of the causes of conflict I explored the *greed* and *grievance* literature. This highlighted the limitations in both arguments and suggested another way to

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[29] Christy King's story of the attack was featured on the ABC Australian Story documentary, The Edge of the Mountain. http://www.abc.net.au/austory/specials/theedgeofthemountain/default.htm Subsequently, Christy was awarded the Star of Courage for her conspicuous act of bravery in an extremely dangerous situation.

understand group formation and mobilisation was through horizontal inequalities. I sourced questionnaires from researchers on horizontal inequalities to better understand the way in which typical quantitative studies were structured and how these questions might be adapted to a qualitative approach.[30] I extended this reading to scholarly articles specifically addressing ethnography, anthropology, economic development and tourism in PNG through UiT library database searches. I also compiled articles and news reports relating to the Black Cat Attack from internet sources. While in PNG I accessed documents and texts in private collections that provided useful background to the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial history of the area being studied. At all times I tried to maintain a balanced view, recognising that documents are "texts written with a specific purpose in mind, and not simply as reflecting reality" (Bryman, 2016: 561). As such, the *truth* contained in the documents was treated as one source among many in developing contextual understanding. The technique of triangulation was used to verify underlying and recurring themes related to causes for the attack and improve the rigour of the analysis. Data triangulation was achieved through multiple methods of data collection (observation, interview, documents), observer triangulation was achieved through engagement with multiple participants from different areas along the Track. Theoretical triangulation was also achieved through combining two theoretical perspectives to explore the causes of the attack. Throughout, I remained aware of my position as researcher, past resident and trekker in PNG and how my own views may alter or filter interpretations of what I was reading. I also engaged with my fellow students and informed *outsiders* to obtain valuable feedback on potential areas of bias.

4.7 Data Collection

The main data collection for this study took place in villages along the Black Cat Track in June - July 2016. Interviews occurred in the towns of Lae and Wau and in the villages of Kaisinik, Biawin, Skin Diwai, a hamlet near Bitoi, Wandumi, Komiatum and Salamaua. They involved representatives of the Biangai, Iwal-Kaiwa and Bong people. All interviews were conducted in English with the assistance of an interpreter fluent in English, Pidgin (*tok pisin*) or the local language (*tok ples*). Most villagers speak their local language and tok pisin, the *lingua franca* in Morobe Province and most of PNG. Because of the similarities between English and Pidgin and

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[30] Frances Stuart, Centre for Research on Inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity (CRISE), University of Oxford and Rachael Diprose, University of Melbourne provided me with copies of Horizontal Inequality questionnaires used in the field.

time I have spent in PNG previously, I can follow some conversations in Pidgin. However, I am not conversant in Pidgin and mostly relied on interpreters to translate my questions and the responses from research participants.

Dannielle and Tim Vincent, who had owned and operated Wau Adventures and the guesthouse in Wau, prior to the attack, arranged for my transport to and from Lae to Wau, a 4WD vehicle for accessing the villages around Wau and my accommodation in Wau. Their son, Chris, who had grown up in Wau, spoke Pidgin fluently and who was back in Wau while I visited accompanied me to assist with translation. The Vincents have invested much time and energy, over many years, to help establish trekking on the Black Cat Track. They were also interested in what villagers said about prospects for reopening the Track to tourists.

While in the surrounding villages I held ten interviews, generally with between one and three people present. Research participants were selected based on their connection to the Black Cat Track and knowledge of past and recent events. Typically, they were locally recognised as spokespersons for a village or family group. Most often one person answered my questions, sometimes with additional input from others present. In total 16 people were actively involved in the conversations. Most research participants were males except for a group of females related to one of the deceased porters. Interviews typically lasted between 60 and 90 minutes.

Dannielle had communicated my impending visit and on my arrival Welle from Kaisenik, a village close to Wau, greeted me warmly and made himself available to accompany me to other villages along the Track, arrange porters and assist with translating interviews with villagers. I had met Welle in 2011 when he and Kerry accompanied our group on the training run from Salamaua to Wau. Welle had also made several attempts to commence conversations between clan groups about resolving the difficult issues that underpinned the attack and the subsequent complicating expectations of inter-tribal compensation. [31] He was very helpful in identifying and arranging access to potential research participants.

Because the issues underlying the attack on the Track had not been resolved, and subsequent developments had left one of the alleged attackers hiding out in an area near the middle of the Track, we were unable to walk the full length of the Track from Wau to Salamaua (stopping to

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[31] These issues had still not been resolved at the time of the research and the track had not re-opened to trekkers.

interview villagers along the way) as originally planned. The first village, Skin Diawai, was a two day walk towards the coast from Wau (a day's walk past the attack site), and in safe Iwal-Kaiwa territory. Good relationships existed between the people of Skin Diwai (Iwal-Kaiwa) and the Biangai people from around Wau. Coincidentally, it was known that several church councillors from the middle villages of Mubo, Guadagasal and Wapaili (also Iwal-Kaiwa territory) were meeting in Skin Diwai over the next few days and might (subsequently did) agree to speak with me. This meant we would be able to avoid walking into an area that could put people at risk and still discuss the situation with knowledgeable representatives from the middle-track area. Later, I travelled to two villages at the bottom of the Track by returning to Lae and then taking a boat over to Salamaua (in Bong territory) and walking up the Track to Komiatum (in Iwal-Kaiwa territory, but still a good distance from Mubo).

While again my travel to and accommodation in Salamaua was provided by expats, Christy and Daniel King, my reception by villagers in Salamaua was more reserved than it had been in Wau. My guide and interpreter was a local elder, who also accompanied me to Komiatum, but we had not met each other previously. The suffering of the porters from Salamaua, who had been severely injured but not killed in the attack, was more palpable. My meetings seemed more controlled and guarded and I was unable to visit one porter I had previously met in Melbourne, when he was flown over for corrective surgery on his legs, after the attack.

Voluntary, verbal consent was obtained from all research participants including agreement to record our interview and take notes. Participants were also informed that no identifiable personal data would be recorded in my notes or in the resulting research report. Since mentioning village names would likely identify some participants, I have only identified research participant by cultural-linguistic group – each group being represented by several participants. Semi-structured interviews (see Appendix B) were conducted in locations conducive to open conversations and agreed with the interviewees. The interview approach deliberately began with questions and conversations related to the significance of long past events and gradually eddied towards more recent events and circumstances surrounding the attack, as participants expressed willingness to talk about these issues. Guides, porters and owners of village guest houses who assisted me in the field were paid the accepted daily rate for their services. Upon completion of

the interviews and return to Melbourne the recordings were transcribed and analysed with respect to the research questions.

4.8 Transcription, Translation, and Positionality as an Interviewer

Since it is impossible to reach an *end* to the detail that can be transcribed from recorded interviews (Esin et al., 2014), for practical reasons transcription was limited to the translations of spoken words in English. Other main features of conversation such as pauses, side discussions, clarifications and occasionally a pidgin word or phrase were incorporated where it seemed to capture an interesting point or sentiment. This level of detail was sufficient to retain the important meanings for the analysis. When necessary, transcriptions and original recordings were reviewed multiple times during the analysis, to ensure the accuracy of my descriptions and interpretations.

The value of being able to understand what others say was amply demonstrated in my first interview and my translator's astute observation on the surrounding conversations (p.30). However, I compensated for my lack of fluency in Pidgin through "methodological thoroughness and systematic cross checking of data and interpretations" (Borchgrevink, 2003: 107). My interpreters' knowledge of the local languages and the cultural contexts of my interviews helped me with accessing information, communicating, translating, and generally progressing my fieldwork.

Translation was conducted during the interview. This permitted clarification and elaboration as the interview progressed. Constructing a transcript from a translated interview involves interpretive decisions. Both researcher and translator play active roles and manage concerns about future readers (their audience) in the back of their mind. Undoubtedly, there is a risk that some meaning is *lost in translation*. However, there are positive possibilities as well; the process of translation helps reiterate and distil meanings such that the relevant aspects of a story, sequence, characters and meanings within a specific context can be retained for analysis.

Interviews are processes of construction in which the respondents co-create worlds of meaning and make sense of their experiences together with the researcher, and in this study the translator. The partnership shapes how the stories are told and heard. The raw material of interviews – spoken words, silences, shifts, pauses and non-verbal communications – has meaning that is

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altered by the interaction between researcher and research participant. In other words, respondents are not just sources of information; the meanings of responses need to be explored within the intersubjective micro-context of the interview.

I was conscious that conversations with villagers along the Track would not be random. In PNG society leaders, big-men, patriarchs, etc., tend to speak on behalf of many on matters of group concern. This was my experience and was most evident in the smaller villages. [32] Therefore, it was not possible to obtain an *everyman* view. However, one porter agreed to be interviewed and our hosts in one village also agreed to be interviewed. Both these discussions took place without any obvious sign of patronage or overt direction from village spokespersons. Their claims were broadly consistent with others. The women interviewed also seemed keen to discuss their perspectives, and while they were less inclined to talk about history and the attack, they were open about the effects of the attack on their lives and matters they thought would make life better for them, which were novel contributions in the mix. In other words, the women were adding something to what the men were disclosing.

It is possible the many people who helped me to access research participants and interpret for participants were also gatekeepers channelling me towards or away from conversations that may have provided alternative or contradictory perspectives. In this case, their presence in the discourses and positioning they attain or move others to were noted and discussed. Those conspicuous by their absence were also identified and discussed.

During the interviews, there was no evidence that my privileged position as a white, male researcher or friend of Welle or Kerry's created problems or resistance to the disclosure of information. Reassurance came at the end of one interview when a participant remarked,

> "We are very pleased to sit down and talk and we have never seen any white man that has done that before. Taken so much time out, they are usually in such a rush! One day we think we will see the benefits. We are happy to have you here."

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[32] However, this is also a cultural trope. For a more detailed discussion of various forms of village representation, including how women can renegotiate their social position, see Wearing et al. (2010).

This reduced fear that there may have been a forced agenda being presented, however the problem of intersubjectivity was not eliminated. Cross checking data from multiple sources, through the positioning analysis, proved to be the best way to locate divergences in meaning.

What was said in interviews was *post-conflict* and taken to present or explain the past in some meaningful way. It was evident that the presence of the translator could influence what was spoken about, or what could be freely said about responsibilities for the attack. This appeared to be because the traditional dispute settlement processes, where all grievances would be aired and compensation agreed, had not been concluded.[33] However, it was also apparent that there was much that could be said and the interview itself seemed to provide both an opportunity for some groups to air their grievances and for others to receive that information, in preparation for broader settlement discussions between clan groups. There was a sense that research participants were using the interview to redefine themselves as subjects, with their own power of interpretation, rather than objects of an external narrative.

4.9 Security

Operating in PNG entails certain risks. A detailed Field Security Analysis and Personal Security Emergency Contact Plan was prepared and submitted to the CPS, prior to departure. Due to basic precautions and the conservative approach to accessing the villages near the middle of the Track, at no stage did I feel unsafe while in PNG or concerned for the safety of the research participants, guides and porters who travelled with me. However, the limited time available for interviews in the field, the remote locations and extremely arduous travel into the less accessible villages, as well as risks associated with accessing some villages, meant that fewer interviews were conducted than ideal. Being able to talk with other villagers closer to where the attackers were alleged to have originated from would have helped balance perceptions from this area.

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[33] There is extensive literature about dispute settlement in PNG. For example, both Braithwaite, et al., (2010) and Boege (2009) provide detailed analysis of the dispute settlement and reconciliation processes in Bougainville, following the 10-year civil war.

Chapter Five: Analysis

"In Papua New Guinea time is wasted when one makes something for purely pragmatic reasons, because then nothing is honoured in the process; one creates an object without meaning."

Kira Salak [34]

5.1 Introduction

As a critical case, this study allows us to test one end of a range of conditions under which the horizontal inequalities theory holds. On a *communal scale,* it is possible to get acquainted with the context of conflict, including the long-term and cumulative impacts of change, historical discrimination and intergenerational transmission of inequalities. It permits an *ex post facto* assessment of empirical evidence that illustrates the role inequalities play in shaping identities.

However, as the scale of violence falls below typical thresholds for armed conflict, the attack and deaths forming the focus of this study could be more indicative of sporadic violence (or violent crime) (Østby et al., 2011: 386). [35] Therefore, this case also considers how the horizontal inequalities framework distinguishes communal violence from acts of crime.

As an extreme case, this study allows us to explore the meanings created by different or *exotic* people. Discursive practices are analysed to unpack possible causal mechanisms underlying the attack. The identities evoked in storylines reveal details about the social context and inequalities that surround them. Discursive triangulation, together with empirical evidence, lends strong support to one explanation for the attack. It also shows how an extreme case can also highlight the relevance of patterns present in other violent conflicts.

Brown and Langer (2010: 50) state that civil society is likely to play a crucial role in providing and contesting a public understanding of horizontal inequalities, beyond interpretations provided by political elites. Given the role of civil society is a relatively unexplored dimension of horizontal inequalities, this chapter now turns its attention to the *local* aspect and how multiple

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[34] Salak (2004) *Four Corners*: 313
[35] The Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) defines an armed conflict as a contested incompatibility that concerns government and/or territory where the use of armed force between two parties, of which at least one is the government of a state, results in at least 25 battle-related deaths in one calendar year.

observers relate different and sometimes conflicting accounts of an episode, to better understand the evolution of violence at close quarters.

<u>Case Study: Explanations for the Black Cat Attack</u>

The study uses Slocum-Bradley's (2009) positioning diamond to analyse discourse on the Black Cat attack (refer: Figure 1). The data for this study was gathered from conversations in the field, news articles and other sources such as books, websites and personal correspondence. The five principle storylines (below) have been arranged to make sense of events contained in the data:

1. Ancient Hostilities
2. Robbery (Gone Wrong)
3. Possessive Individual
4. Historical Injustice
5. Ethic of Total Retaliation.

In each case, the implications of the storyline and examples of discourse that evoke the storyline are provided. Then the storylines are explored to reveal the identities that mobilise for conflict. Finally, the degree to which these identities overlap with real-world economic, political, social and cultural inequalities is considered. However, multiple storylines are evident in most of the discourse samples. There is no *real* storyline. The storyline is simply a *tool* for making sense. The normative forms represented by the storylines are immanent in the (speech) acts of the participants and have been abstracted from the *cultural context*. The goal is to make explicit the narrative conventions, identities and ensuing rights and duties implied in each storyline. Consequently, the names for the storylines are arbitrary and can be modified without implication for the validity of the results. To assume otherwise would reify the conceptual category. The results of the analysis are summarised in Table 2.

Story Line	Identities *	Positions	Social Forces
Ancient Hostilities: "Tribal wars are timeless, ancient hostilities will inevitably causes further outbreaks of violence between rival clans."	**Biangai, Bong** (T): Invaders, intruders, aggressive, threatening, enemy. **Iwal-Kaiwa** (V) Vulnerable, victim.	**All clans:** Right to territorial sovereignty. Duty to respect clan boundaries. Duty to protect clan territory.	Rights and duties allocated according to *kastom* . -> Promotes conflict though territorial incursions and changes to the status quo.
Robbery (Gone Wrong): "Its law of the jungle, no body is safe!"	**Good People (Tourists, Porters and Guides)** (V) Innocent. Victims. Soft target. **Robbers** (T) Social vermin, criminal, drug users, nameless people. **Government** Spokesperson (for good people), boundary setting, (inconsistent) enforcer	**All (good) people:** Right to travel safely. Duty to uphold law and order. Respect others. Take care. **Robbers:** Right to do as they please. Duty to look after self at any cost.	Rights and duties allocated equally to all (good) people (assuming law and order). Criminal element accused of violating peoples' right to move respectfully and safely. -> Promotes conflict between robbers and good people.
Possessive Individual: "'Big Shots' should be more generous sharing their good fortune." or "Proprietor of self"	**Kerry** (T) Irresponsible, drunk, self-interested, exploitative, duplicitous. **Clansmen** (V) Exploited clansmen, relatives. **Expatriate** (V) Frustrated entrepreneur.	**Kerry:** Right to proprietorship of self. or Duty to comply with outside interests. **Clansmen:** Duty to accept patronage. **Expatriate:** Right to "direct" terms and conditions.	Rights and duties allocated according to notion of western individual, or Colonial - colonised -> Promotes conflict through failure to uphold *kastom* . -> Promotes conflict through failure to comply with imposed terms and conditions.
Historical Injustice: "The process of development is disruptive by nature. It creates winners and losers. No wonder some people feel aggrieved."	**Iwal-Kaiwa** (V) Poor, angry, by-passed, forgotten. **Other** (T) Colonialist, capitalist, exploiter. **Tour Operators** (V) Inconvenienced, victims. **Government** (T) Self-interested, ineffective, corrupt.	**All people:** Right to pursuit of self-interest, modernity and development. **Iwal-Kaiwa:** Duty to abandon *kastom* and develop. **Government:** Duty to provide universal services, law and order.	Rights and duties allocated according to western, neo-liberal notion of progress and development. -> Promotes conflict through unequal distribution of opportunity, lack of access to political and financial resources, pace of change, insensitivity to *kastom* and grievances.
Ethic of Total Retaliation: "Left-behind-people - with an ethic of total retaliation against an increasingly technologically advanced and changing world."	**The Progressive** (T) Exploiters. Denigrators. Traitors. **The Forsaken (disenfranchised alliance)** (V) No privilege. No status. Ready to burn it all down.	**All People (others):** Right to pursue self-interest, modernity and development. Duty to treat people with respect. **The Forsaken (disenfranchised alliance):** No rights. Others accused of violating duty.	Rights and duties allocated according to western neo-liberal notion of progress and development. -> Promotes conflict through inability to participate in progress, lack of influence or resource, erosion of traditional markers of status, jealousy.

Table 2: Positioning analysis and consequences for conflict (* T= Transgressor, V = Victim)

5.2 Positioning Analysis

Storyline 1: Ancient Hostilities

According to the *ancient hostilities* storyline, tribal wars are timeless. Ancient hostilities will inevitably cause further outbreaks of violence between rival clans through cycles of payback.

This storyline implies PNG is associated with the *savage*, *primitive* and *unexpected*.[36] It is mostly evident in Australian media accounts of the attack and attributed to experts associated with the PNG trekking industry. It is absent from local media accounts and explanations given by research participants. Typical accounts appearing in Australian newspapers immediately after the attack refer to tribes or other territorial group identities:

"… some reports suggest it could … be related to a disagreement between porters from PNG's lowlands and locals living in the highlands." *The Australian* (AAP, 2013)

"… those associated with the trekking industry in Papua New Guinea believe it could be related to a disagreement between porters from different areas in the country." *The Sydney Morning Herald* (Levy, 2013)

"Aiden Grimes, a veteran tour guide … said it was possible that the locals were trying to protect their own patch." *The Sydney Morning Herald* (Levy, 2013) [37]

"The incident is thought to have been sparked by an ongoing feud between tribes fighting over lucrative work as porters and guides." *The Daily Telegraph* (Black, 2013)

"Rivalries between tribes have long simmered in the Black Cat area." "Tribes will tend to act 'wild' and 'bloody primitive'." "Totally predictable." "No one should go there." *Herald Sun* (Carlyon, 2013)

"The motive appeared to be robbery, but Carl Hoffman knew something else was at work – ancient tribal patterns of violence that … would inevitably be avenged." (Hoffman, 2014: 1)

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[36] C*annibalism* in its extreme form. Accounts of cannibalism were one way colonialists created moral authority over and distance from the *exotic other* (Halvaksz, 2006b: 337). The aspect of patronizing cultural representations of the *other* is the subject of the critical text, *Orientalism,* by Edward W. Said (1978).

[37] Aidan Grimes is a tour guide and has previously served as the chairman of the Kokoda Ethics Committee. He is also Founding Director of Our Spirit Adventures. https://www.ourspirit.com.au/overview

"The idea of reciprocal violence – of balancing the world through constant warfare and the taking of what Westerners would call revenge and tribal people call payback – is nearly universal." (Hoffman, 2014: 8)

By contrast, where local media reported on the attack, the focus was on specific persons alleged to be responsible for the attack, the area they were from or the communities directly concerned:

"Police have arrested four men believed to have been involved in the killing of two porters and injuring others on the Black Cat Track. Three of the men from Wau, Bulolo district had surrendered to police. The fourth from Salamaua … was arrested in a dawn raid." *The National* (Gumar and Kakas, 2013)

"Black Cat Track communities between Wau and Salamaua … have apologised to the families of the two porters killed and those injured last Tuesday. They sent their apologies to the families through Iwal-Kaiwa clan chairman, Mewa Buimai." *The National* (Anon., 2013b)

My research participants do identify themselves as members of specific cultural-linguistic groups. Biangai villagers informed me that the first strangers encountered by the original Biangai ancestors on a hunting trip to the north were the Buangs. In the resulting confrontation, the first Buangs were killed, establishing them as tribal enemies. Later a stranger "wearing something similar to women's grass skirt" was encountered and killed further west, consequently establishing the Watuts as tribal enemies. However, encounters with strangers to the east, the Iwal-Kaiwa, established more productive relationships and trade with the Lababia people on the coast.[38]

None of the research participants suggested the attack was motivated by territorial or historical conflicts. There are also inconsistencies with the *ancient hostilities* account that have been glossed over in some reports. Hoffman (2014) identifies Matthew, the second porter killed in the attack, as a Biangai (*Ibid:* 17), which conveniently supports the tribe-against-tribe narrative. Matthew was Iwal-Kaiwa and on congenial terms with the Biangai, as were the rest of the Skin

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[38] Written background information: 'Early Historical Summary of the Biangai Tribe (People)', undated.

Diwai village, where Matthew lived. Similarly, the subsequent assault by Matthew's brother was also an attack of Iwal-Kaiwa on Iwal-Kaiwa (*Ibid:* 22). [39]

The main identities evoked within the context of the *ancient hostilities* storyline are the traditional Biangai, Iwal-Kaiwa and Bong tribal groups. Rights and duties are allocated on the premise that these tribes hold onto static social customs (*kastom*) that are vengeful and tightly bound to established tribal territories. [40] Transgressions of *kastom* or territorial incursions justifies (violent) payback by the offended party. Accordingly, ancient hostilities are savage, primitive and incomprehensible to Westerners. Positioning the attack as an ancient tribal concern establishes moral distance from peaceful, modern people while maintaining the cultural superiority and authority of developed, Western societies and experts associated with travel writing and the trekking industry.

Little information can be gathered regarding horizontal inequalities in this storyline because the storyline relies on an *essentialised* oversimplification of the relationship between adjacent cultural groups.

Storyline 2: Robbery (Gone Wrong)

According to the *robbery (gone wrong)* storyline, its law of the jungle – no body is safe.

This storyline draws on representations of the *exotic* and preconceptions of systemic law and order problems.[41] The storyline has many proponents and largely serves to morally distance criminal actions from those of good, law-abiding people. It implies that the events are an aberration and places the blame (social force) on *bad apples*. It is possible that robbery was the primary motive and the murders and other serious injuries inflicted on the porters were unintended. Conflating the motives of robbery and murder establishes a broader *criminal* identity.

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[39] The National newspaper consistently reported that Mathew Gibob was from Skin Diwai village and of Iwal-Kaiwa origin at the time. This was also confirmed in interviews with research participants.
[40] *Kastom* refers to the normative practices that constitute local approaches to dispute management and social regulation in the small and relatively insular rural communities where most Papua New Guineans live. These practices take their legitimacy from a claim to some form of 'customary' or 'traditional' authority, rather than from the state. In effect, they are fluid and hybrid practices that reflect years of engagement with other regulatory systems, including Christianity and the state (Dinnen and Peake, 2013: 573).
[41] The Australian Government routinely advises travellers to exercise a high degree of caution in PNG because of the high levels of serious crime. http://smartraveller.gov.au/Countries/pacific/Pages/papua_new_guinea.aspx

Such criminal action was portrayed as *without excuse* to the rest of the world by the Prime Minister of PNG, Peter O'Niell. Only the harshest punishment was appropriate for the guilty:

"The incident was totally unacceptable to our way of living in our society." *Prime Minister O'Niell, The Daily Telegraph* (Black, 2013)

"No possible excuse for the brutal crimes against visitors to PNG and those acting as their guides. These are appalling crimes, and they attract the death penalty …" *Prime Minister O'Niell, The Sydney Morning Herald* (Blackwell, 2013)

Elsewhere in the Australian media, where the motive of robbery seemed more plausible, the robbers were also described as locals, bandits, thieves and escaped convicts.

"Robbers attacked a group trekking in Papua New Guinea, reportedly hacking to death two of the group's porters." *Radio Australia* (Fox, 2013)

"Local MP Sam Basil … said he believed the group was made up of locals and escaped convicts. Three of them are believed to be escapees from Wau police cells and others from the local areas." *The Daily Telegraph* (Black, 2013)

"This is a savage and unprovoked assault by what may have been a gang of thieves." *Tanya Plibersek, The Daily Telegraph* (Black, 2013) [42]

"Its early days but robbery would appear to be the motive – after all, they took everything." *Mark Hitchcock, The Sydney Morning Herald* (Murphy and Robertson, 2013) [43]

"This is .. an isolated incident that shocked us all. Totally out of character for the track." *Mark Hitchcock, Radio Australia* (Fox, 2013)

Furthermore, the Black Cat attack was not reported as an isolated case of crime in PNG, or revealed to be entirely unforeseeable at the time:

"Crime in PNG is rampant, including the capital Port Moresby where in June four Chinese nationals were hacked to death, with one reportedly beheaded and the others dismembered." *ABC News* (Anon., 2013a)

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[42] Acting Foreign Minister, Australian Government.
[43] A spokesman for tour operator PNG Trekking Adventures.

"In April, a US academic was gang-raped while she was trekking along a jungle trail with her husband and a guide." *ABC News* (Anon., 2013a)

Violence, or at least the threat of it, has been experienced by Australians on the Black Cat trails before. Only in March, amateur historian, David Buckwalter, was ambushed by four men about four hours from Wau. They got off with cash and gear." *Herald Sun* (Carlyon, 2013)

Similarly, the potential for robbery was understood well before the attack:

"We were all quite lucky to be alive at this stage as on the previous day the preceding P.M.V. to ours … had been held up, the driver shot and 4 passengers wounded." (Frewer, 1987) [44]

"There was one recent event where a security scare stopped a tour operator from conducting the tour. The issue was that one village was unhappy for the group to pass. However, this appears to be based on miscommunication between a village and a particular company." (EcoSustainAbility, 2008: 12)

However, the risk was perceived to be low:

"The need for an independent Statutory Body like the Kokoda Authority is not clear. It would appear that an incorporated association with the key villages etc. as members can achieve the required outcomes without the need for legislation." (EcoSustainAbility, 2008: 22)

Local media presented the robbers in a more sympathetic light with one witness to the attack suggesting that the robbers attempted to reign in some of their own excessive violence.

"The porters outnumbered the attackers 2:1. Seeing the threat, the attackers began hacking indiscriminately at the porters' legs and heads. … And then as if shocked by their own brutality, the other members of the gang told one of the men who was continuing to hack at the porters to stop." *Porter, EMTV* (Waide, 2013)

Other witnesses confirmed the appearance of a deliberate, brutal and coordinated robbery:

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[44] Track notes from expatriate trekkers arranging their own walk along the Black Cat Track (Bitoi branch) in 1987, as was often done by many people living and working in Lae. A *P.M.V.* is a Public Motor Vehicle, typically a 16 seater minibus.

"… three or four people ran in in balaclavas yelling and that's when the attack started." *Christy King, Trek Leader* (Jones, 2014)

"The three I saw one had a shotgun; the other two had bush knives." *Pete Stevens, Trekker* (Jones, 2014)

"A couple of porters were trying to get away so they started hacking at their bodies as well as their heads and their hands." *Jon Hill, Trekker* (Jones, 2014)

"And then they started asking for the leader; who's the boss and where's the money?" *Christy King, Trek Leader* (Jones, 2014)

"There was a clinical efficiency to the attack. Kerry was attacked again and again. He had his hand over his head protecting himself and his hand was cut many times. The rest were being knocked down or immobilised so the packs could be looted. As the attack wore on the leader could be heard yelling, 'Enough Now'." *Christy King, Lae* [45]

In the interviews with research participants from each of the villages along the trail, there was acknowledgement of prior misdemeanours and arguments, but consistent disbelief that such a violent attack could have occurred. The robbers were also characterised as *drug takers* and *inhuman, non-people*. That is, the alleged perpetrators no longer had names - they were mostly just referred to as *criminals*.

"We used to pick out porters from Wau to Salamaua, but this is the first time in history the Kiawa have caused this trouble. These young boys made the trouble, use drugs and don't think." *Bong Research Participant*

"We had an issue about a year before the attack, when we walked through without porters from Mubo. We explained to them that we can't communicate with them. Some teachers from the primary school were there and stopped things getting out of hand." *Bong Research Participant*

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[45] Christy gave explicit permission to be quoted in this instance.

"There was a solar system up at Mubo, but that was taken by somebody, so we could no longer communicate. That is why they are left out from porting jobs." *Bong Research Participant* [46]

"The attack is too extreme, there is fear to talk about it. It has destroyed the reputation of the Kaiwa people." *Iwal-Kaiwa Research Participant*

The last sentiment was also reflected in local news at the time:

"This inhuman and barbaric act truly tarnished the name of the Iwal-Kaiwa … This has shocked everyone because Iwal-Kaiwa people are simple and humble." Mewa Buimai, Iwal-Kaiwa clan chairman." *The National* (Anon., 2013b)

Robbery, aggravated assault and murder demands an immediate and proportionate response. Local and Australian newspapers recorded ensuing developments and the government's reaction:

"A man accused of harbouring six men implicated in the killing of two porters … has been killed by the relatives of one of the porters." *The National* (Gumar and Kakas, 2013)

 "The Prime Minister … directed the Commissioner to dispatch a mobile unit in there immediately to take control of policing, not only the incident area but the greater Wau area so that law and order is restored." *The Daily Telegraph* (Black, 2013)

"There is little or no chance of them escaping or getting out alive if (the remaining suspects) do not turn themselves in. (He) thanked villages along the Black Cat Track from Wau to Salamaua, and especially the villagers of Bito and Mubo, for their support. (He) also appealed to the relatives not to take the law into their own hands." *Morobe Police Commander, Philip Lame* (Anon., 2013c)

"The (seventh) suspect arrested over the weekend is from Goilala in the Central Province. Police say the suspect is also wanted for a series of armed robberies, rape and murder." (EMTV, 2013)

"Police have charged 10 men in connection to the robbery." *ABC News* (Donovan, 2014)

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[46] The Black Cat Tourism Development Plan (2008) suggests Mubo has not had a functioning two-way radio for some years. Salamauan research participants think the radio tower was installed around 2006. Sometime later the solar panels disappeared.

The somewhat ambivalent nature of *bush justice* and an explanation for the disparity between witness accounts of the number of robbers and number of men eventually charged in connection to the robbery emerges in later descriptions and interviews with research participants.

"On Sunday, the day after … a (Biangai) gang arrived in Wapali with a police patrol, three men surrendered in exchange for being whisked away in a helicopter." (Hoffman, 2014: 22)

"The police went to the villages and started harassing people and people started giving up names. In Waipali they started to kill animals, burn houses and chop down fruit trees." *Bong Research Participant*

Within the context of the *robbery (gone wrong)* storyline the main identities evoked are *robbers* and *good people*. Authority figures – the Australian and PNG Government and Tour Organisers – also appear as spokespersons for good people. Good people are positioned as law abiding, respectful and embodying rights to move freely among other, law abiding good people. By implication (and direct caution - smartraveller.gov.au) the state imposes a duty on good people to exercise utmost caution when moving beyond the bounds of state established norms for law and order. Also by implication the state retains the right, on behalf of good people, to reassert law and order whenever it appears to break down. Robbers are positioned as the antithesis of good people (if you're not one of us, you must be one of them). This characterisation helps all good people, regardless of cultural, linguistic and genealogical heritage, unite as one against a common enemy and facilitates taking matters into their own hands, if required.

A further effect of the *robbery (gone wrong)* storyline is that it creates impunity for ineffective governance and a heavy-handed response to crime. The absence of effective control creates uncertainty over *if or when* the state will enforce law and order. Such conditions embolden criminal behaviour. Research participants admitted:

"Most people fear the criminals. If they report someone, the police cannot protect them. The criminals come back and attack them." *Bong Research Participant*

Conversely, the possibility of a few extra people (criminals?) being caught in reformatory action seems to be *collateral damage*, at worst. As Foucault observes, "the guilty person is only one of the targets of punishment. For punishment is directed above all at others, at all the potentially guilty" (Foucault, 2007).

Vertical inequality is more likely to spur violence that lacks a clear political basis, such as the taking of something from one individual by another (Østby, 2013: 217). Outwardly, there is little information in the storyline regarding horizontal inequalities. However, research participants draw attention to the *unprecedented* nature of the attack ("first time in history") which indicates an ethical discontinuity or shift may have occurred in response to real or perceived changes in identity or equality. The way in which the state maintains or restores law and order may also reveal political and social inequalities. The account of Biangai working together with the special mobile unit to identify and apprehend alleged perpetrators makes this connection.

Roscoe (2014) also argues that what is often misleadingly defined as crime, when viewed through the lenses and legal frames of the state, is in fact a return to tribal warfare in densely jungled lowland PNG terrain. The resurgence of tribal warfare in the highlands in the late 1970s was easy to recognise, because it involved open battle and conformed to Western notions of what war should look like. [47] Firm, open landscape of the kind typical in the highlands also allows an aggressor to impose battle unilaterally. By contrast, the densely-vegetated rainforest terrain typical of the lowlands allows a reluctant foe to refuse battle, leaving protagonists seething. Consequently, lowlanders rely on small-scale ambush and surprise attacks. Because it is small-scale violence, asymmetric, offensive warfare by one side, it does not resemble the state's way of war. This language may also indicate positioning. Here, reference to *criminals* by the state serves to undermine the political nature of these conflicts. The possibility that what on the surface appears to be robbery is a manifestation of a deeper underlying tribal animosity should not be rejected.

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[47] Roscoe (2014: 328) refers to Burton (1990), Gordon (1983), Podolefsky (1984), Strathern (1977) and others for comprehensive accounts of the resurgence of tribal warfare in the PNG Highlands.

Storyline 3: Possessive Individual [48]

According to the *possessive individual* storyline, there is no place for 'Big Shots'. Traditional 'Big Men' earn their respect by giving and creating mutual obligations. To clansmen, a 'Big Shot' needs to be more generous and not be *stingy* with his good fortune.

This storyline implies that Kerry Rarovu (one of the murdered porters) had overstepped an acceptable mark in some way, incurring the wrath of clansmen or other *outsiders*, who see the attack as a justified extension of their own dealings with Kerry. The storyline is evident in some of the speculation about causes of the attack. It illustrates the difficulties often experienced when negotiating interactions and expectations between different cultures.

In my experience Kerry was forthright, honest and engaging. He, and many other Biangai villagers I have met, treated me as an equal and did not appear to be fazed by my status as an expat, General Manager, white man or trekker. This also marked him as different to many other Papua New Guineans, who in my view often appear to supress what they might like to say or think in my presence, probably for a variety of cultural and personal reasons.

From around 2006, when development of the Black Cat Track as an alternative destination to the Kokoda Track began in earnest, the Biangai have maintained that the main beneficiaries of trekking will be the lower villages that obtain revenue from both porting and overnight stops at village guest houses. Consequently, they formed a development company that expected to see some fees from each trekker. A guiding principle of early plans was that porters would change at each village boundary to help share the revenue from porting work (EcoSustainAbility, 2008: 18, 27).

When we walked the Black Cat Track in 2009, we stopped at Skin Diwai; the Biangai porters who started the trip with us returned to Wau and the porters from villages lower down the Track

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[48] Martin (2007) credits Macpherson as defining the social identity, known in Western European political theory as the *possessive individual*, as "proprietor of the self, owing nothing to society". This autonomy gives the individual the moral right to assert agency in various social spheres. Anthropologists have argued that possessive individuals are constructed by advertising, education, law and business developments that introduced new ways of acting, following decolonisation in PNG. To understand the moral quandaries surrounding an individual's many conflicting obligations, one must understand who is obliged and who obliges others to act in particular ways. 'Big Shot' is a somewhat derogatory local term that captures the essence that such individuals fail to meet at least some of the traditional expectations placed on them.

continued the next day. This was the agreement we had made at the outset, but we took an extra overnight stop on the way to Skin Diwai (an extra day's pay for the Biangai porters) and Kerry was involved in lengthy discussion with the new porters that evening. While we were mildly concerned, this episode simply seemed to reflect sensitivities over boundaries and the state of negotiations at the time.

Other arrangements may also have been instigated by other tour operators:

> "(Skin Diwai village) men and men in villages below Skindiwai village had walked up to the highlands, picked up the trekkers and then walked back down to the coast along the track." *Nikki George, Trek Leader* (George, 2010)

How do these anecdotes position identities, establish underlying rights and duties, or otherwise explain causes for the Black Cat attack? What further information can help establish the storyline and social forces involved?

There are many indications that Kerry's fellow Biangai saw him as a great man, and that his status as an emerging leader may also make him a target for criticism:

> "Kerry was a star, an example of what a smart, motivated and ambitious Papuan villager could do. 'We saw Kerry as our leader.' says his cousin." (Hoffman 2014, p.14)

> "(Kerry's) stature in his home village rose, as did his affluence, slight though it was. He built a wooden plank house in his village, opened a store in its front rooms, was becoming a big man providing for his two children and extended family." (Hoffman, 2014: 14)

> "(Kerry) … had also gotten a little cocky and apparently had started drinking too much." (Hoffman, 2014: 15)

> "King was surprised to notice that Rarovu smelled of alcohol." (Hoffman, 2014: 17)

Martin (2010) provides an insightful description of the possessive individual (Big Shot) and its implications in PNG society. He draws a distinction between the traditional Big Man and emerging Big Shot. The Big Man makes himself Big by extending and drawing upon gift-debt relations, must constantly prove his ability as a social organiser and make himself valuable to his followers, who are indebted to him. The term Big Shot contains a moral critique of new forms of identity and social inequality emerging in contemporary PNG. The Big Shots are the new elites

with access to power and money and eschew *kastom* in a manner many villagers find morally repugnant. Money power separates Big Shots from the grassroots, because it gives them capabilities and aspects of identity that the grassroots are not part of constituting and for which the Big Shots are not accountable to them (Martin, 2007: 293).

Martin (2010: 8) argues that criticism of the role of emerging local elites in village life is nothing new. Aspiring leaders walk a fine line, balancing traditional demands with those of market capitalism. In contemporary Melanesia, those who wish to conduct themselves autonomously have to fight the claims made by others on what they seek to present as their own capacity (Martin, 2007: 286).

It is possible that Kerry, in freeing himself from the *will of others*, entering relationships based on his own interests and exercising his own agency to acquire wealth and influence, has upset clan members. On its own, this may not explain why he was singled out in the attack, or why Matthew (Iwal-Kaiwa from Skin Diwai) was also murdered and six porters from Salamaua (Bong) were seriously injured in the same attack (Lionel Aigilo later dying in hospital from his injuries), but expectations of reciprocity may exist, even from neighbouring clans, where distant genealogical ties to the alleged attackers are plausible (in both Kerry and Matthew's cases). During this study, it has not been possible to carry out more detailed genealogical research or interview those directly involved in the attack, so the motivations in this case are speculative.

However, by inhabiting the identity of *possessive individual*, Kerry may also be primed for conflict in other ways. If some expat entrepreneurs had already evoked a different identity for Kerry (say the identity of a *colonial subject*, with limited rights and a duty to accept proposed contractual conditions) such an oppositional positioning could have led to conflict. Undervaluing Biangai ambition, labour or ownership of access to the head of the Black Cat Track, may have led outsiders to seek alternative local collaborators, or circumvent Biangai involvement in the Black Cat Track development entirely.

Characterising Kerry as self-centred, cocky, a tall poppy, a drunk, a thief or unreliable, positions him (and other would be *proprietors of the self*) as a bad person, at the margins of influence, and makes room for more cooperative or trustworthy *players*. On the one hand this storyline is a representative, or a typical case, exemplifying the effect of vertical inequalities generating jealousies between one individual and others, and lacking any clear political basis. On the other

hand, this storyline illustrates uniquely Melanesian elements, where an extended family group, with imagined or felt horizontal inequalities, becomes an identity around which people mobilise for conflict. Or more broadly, identities locked to *kastom* are responding figuratively to the growing economic inequalities, redistribution of social and political power and threat Kerry's Westernised character represents. Alternatively, and/or additionally some elements of the storyline are symptomatic of relatively privileged expat entrepreneurs responding to a redistribution of political power by *locals*.

Storyline 4: Historical Injustice

According to the *historical injustice* storyline, the process of development is disruptive by nature. It creates winners and losers (and may ultimately be a zero-sum game) so no wonder some people feel aggrieved.

This storyline implies that development requires that participants abandon tradition and embrace progress. First movers have an advantage. Others risk being left behind. The government bears some responsibility to ensure there are checks and balances, national priorities are met and some resources go to where they are needed most.

Starting with recent history, the *historical injustice* storyline is evident in the accounts of PNG trekking experts' views on causes underlying the attack, in the Australian media. Typically, these expressed a disadvantaged persons' perspective on Government inaction regarding regulation and development of the trekking industry.

"There's been a lot of development gone into the track since 2005." *Mark Hitchcock, The Australian* (AAP, 2013)

"We have been let down by the PNG Government, we've been let down by the tourism industry and we've also been let down by the Australian Government." *Aidan Grimes, The Sydney Morning Herald* (Levy, 2013)

"The local people … are the custodians of the land that's sacred to us, and therefore we have to ensure that they get shared benefits out of the emerging trekking industry. When they don't

get shared benefits, they get angry and then it explodes." *Charlie Lynn,*[49] *The Sydney Morning Herald* (Levy, 2013)

"The idea was to engage local people, to work with them, to establish the industry and then that model should be moved to other areas that Australians go to, such as the Black Cat Track … We have comprehensively failed to do that." *Charlie Lynn, The Sydney Morning Herald* (Levy, 2013)

"The bureaucrats have ignored the landowners and … perhaps it's little wonder that they take matters into their own hands." *Charlie Lynn, The Sydney Morning Herald* (Levy, 2013)

"I believe that what has happened is a direct result of the failure of the Australian government … They have a duty of care to ensure (it is safe) and that the wartime integrity … is protected." *Charlie Lynn, The Daily Telegraph* (Black, 2013)

Given the coverage provided by Australian news agencies to tour operators' grievances at the time of the attack, it is also instructive to explore how storylines express locals' views on their historical lot.

The Biangai's ancestral narrative is one of overcoming the odds (floods and landslides), adapting and thriving (defeating the enemy, embracing the missionaries and modernity etc.). [50] Kaisinik earned an early distinction of *Model Village* within a decade of first contact with European people.

"Kaisinik: Model Village in Place of Cannibal Den. In what was once a cannibal village, not a warrior remains. The peacefulness of the agrarian scene is completed by the village church, which is the largest building in the place." *Pacific Island Monthly* (Robson, 1936)

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[49] Charlie Lynn is a veteran Kokoda Track trekking company operator and NSW Liberal MLC. In these quotes he expresses sentiments felt by many in the PNG trekking industry.

[50] There was little similar information found in the academic literature or provided by either Bong or Iwal-Kaiwa research participants. Such history had either been forgotten, or was insignificant in the context of my interviews. However, some detail was provided on the settlement and fortunes of Skin Diwai village.

When the gold rush came, Biangai worked as porters. Some eventually took-up their own mining leases and became extremely wealthy. [51] They have become one of the largest ethnic groups in the Wau area and hold strong views on education, development, modernity and the capabilities of their neighbours. [52] In the words of research participants:

> "There was mostly mutual respect on contact with Europeans. Biangai did not choose a side and remained neutral in the war, but some joined the police force." *Biangai Research Participant*

> "There are two distinct tracks. Most porters come from Guadagasal and Mubo. Wapali and Bitoi are left out. All these issues have to come out in discussion. They (Bitoi) are often not educated enough to understand these issues and are very stubborn." *Biangai Research Participant*

> "Village life is different from the changes that are coming. There are no short cuts in the village. No easy way to grow coffee or mine gold. You have to sweat. Outside village life ... you don't see the effort that goes into growing crops and just want the cash." *Biangai Research Participant*

> "Education has changed my life. It makes it easy to understand people, communicate. A person with education can look inside themselves and know how to act with self-control. When you have self-control, you make wise decisions." *Biangai Research Participant* [53]

Iwal-Kaiwa tend to identify colonial powers as extracting benefits from the land and not providing adequate compensation to the land owners in return. A recurring theme in discussion with research participants was the positioning of porting jobs as an extension of colonial indentured labour practices. Landowners see the need to be treated justly and fairly in relation to

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[51] I was given a copy of a story outlining the remarkable life of Wau land owner, Sara Sabu, who was of mixed Biangai and Biaru parentage, saw the first gold prospectors arrive, was trained as a police boy in Rabaul, helped evacuate Europeans from Wau to Port Moresby when the Japanese attacked, held the first environmental protest to stop the dredging of Bulolo River and, as director of Wandumi Holdings, employed a European pilot to fly fresh vegetables from Wau to Port Moresby in their own aircraft. Gold Toksave (1995: 6)

[52] Biangai number some 10,000 people in total, according to the National Statistics Office of Papua New Guinea, National Population and Housing Census (2011).

[53] Grace Memorial High School in Wau taught up to Grade 10. Until recently, students had to travel to Lae for years 11 and 12.

future dealings. Their narrative is predominantly a disadvantaged person's perspective on development.

"All the resources of this country and Australia, you can see. … All this big money comes out from Wau – Bullolo. Sometimes maybe you walk up and you can see the dredges sitting there, and nobody cares about those dredges. And Wau-Bullolo is sitting the same from the beginning, until now." *Iwal-Kaiwa Research Participant*

"The life of the Iwal-Kaiwa people must be improved through balanced socio-economic development." *Iwal-Kaiwa (Letter) Research Participant*

"Chemicals from wartime made it difficult to make gardens on the ridge around Waipali." *Iwal-Kaiwa Research Participant*

"What things are going to change by tourism? Change is very small. I would like to see more. We want to see education, electricity, hospitals etc. but don't see that in the village. Gold brings more money than tourism." *Iwal-Kaiwa Research Participant*

"Old culture has not helped … willing to leave much of that behind to learn new ways. Because we are villagers, the Government ignores us, but we want to change." *Iwal-Kaiwa Research Participant*

"Corruption has stuffed things up." *Iwal-Kaiwa Research Participant*

"There is *heavy* here. It was a criminal act, caused by money (greed) and anger. They were thinking back to when Papua New Guineans were slaves and saw porting as the same thing. If they attacked the tourists, they thought they could stop the 'slave trade'." *Iwal-Kaiwa Research Participant*

"White man comes but nothing benefiting Bitoi. Taking the gold and leaving behind bare rocks. When the first miners came they just used the locals as labourers. Payment was just 50 cents and tobacco. Taking the gold to Australia and leaving no wealth behind." *Iwal-Kaiwa Research Participant*

"After the war, Australians took over administration, but nothing came from the Government – nothing like roads, hospital, education, bridge, water, hydro." *Iwal-Kaiwa Research Participant*

"After Independence, there was another 10 years until the first school with grade one was established in Mubo. Still very difficult to get teachers to stay in such a small village.*" Iwal-Kaiwa Research Participant*

"Tourists tend to stop some way from Waipali. We are out of the loop. The only thing we get from tourism is carrying bags. Just like our forefathers, we get paid 50 cents and tobacco. That's the only benefit we get. Nothing else has happened. So, is that development?" *Iwal-Kaiwa Research Participant*

"Missionaries changed traditional life and brought peace to the area. They changed traditional ideas and lifestyles. Development also means spiritual change. But this is different to physical development and resources. Not enough of this has taken place." *Iwal-Kaiwa Research Participant*

"If you give me 50 kina a day, what can I do with that? I have kids at school, it doesn't pay the school fees. The track is good, but the value of the reward is not enough to pay for the things I need." *Iwal-Kaiwa Research Participant*

"Those who carried out the attack – for such things to happen – the villagers have to have general grievances to allow them in. When the war was fought along the ridge of Guadagasal, many things were destroyed – land and animals were damaged. What happened in the past has never been addressed by the Government. No sorry has ever been made. So, when the trekkers pass through, it causes some sad feelings and feelings of regret about the past. *Iwal-Kaiwa Research Participant*

"The first change was when the German missionaries arrived. They brought shirts and trousers. The next change took place when the gold rush began. Development accompanied that but not everyone benefited. The royalties from Wau, Bulolo, where did they go? What did we see for that? No change to the village, just people passing through with supplies. The third change came with tourists. Development began to take place, but only for those directly involved. We need things like aid posts and schools for the whole community." *Iwal-Kaiwa Research Participant*

"Those companies that operate on this track must provide some training. They just take only money and don't bring services, or help with self-reliance and independence." *Iwal-Kaiwa Research Participant*

Clearly, some elements of the storyline are intended to be allegorical and not literal. For example, "50 cents and tobacco" was a repeating motif and does not correspond with the unit of currency used during the relevant post-war colonial period (shillings). [54] However, it is important to understand what substance might lie beneath a narrative of chronic marginalisation.

Further insight can be obtained from kiap patrol reports taken immediately following WWII. Each report provides a detailed account of village conditions, health, numbers and other issues related to the reestablishment of normal life following such dislocation. A benevolent colonial interest in promoting the welfare of inhabitants and qualitative differences between the Biangai and Iwal-Kaiwa were evident, even then.

"All villages in the (lower) Kaiwa area were totally destroyed by bombing and straffing, mostly by Allied aircraft, between Jul 42 when Mubo village was occupied by the Japs and Sep 43 when Salamaua was recaptured by Allied troops … Waipali and Guadagasul natives were evacuated to Wau when army ops became aggressive towards the end of 1942; other villages existed as best they could in the bush. All physically fit, and many unfit, natives who could be contacted were conscripted for work as casual labourers with the Army carrying rations, stores, ammo, etc. to forward troops and camps. They have now all been paid in cash at 10 /- per month for the period of employed." (Bell, 1944) [55]

"The people of this (lower Kaiwa) area have suffered a great many hardships during the past two years and course of events has left them completely bewildered. They have lost heart and do not know what to do or where to turn… They have a very scraggy and scrawny appearance due mainly to the lack of community life." (Maguire, 1944) [56]

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[54] PNG adopted the PNG kina and toea as currency just prior to Independence in 1975. PNG currency replaced the Australian dollar, which decimalised (replaced the Australian pound) in 1966.

[55] The census indicates that the villages of Mubo and Guadagasul are heavily recruited for indentured labour at 40.3% and 33.3% of effective adult males respectively.

[56] The census indicates that the villages of Mubo and Guadagasul remain heavily recruited for indentured labour, at 45.3% and 60% effective adult males respectively.

"Each (Biangai) village has moved to a new site and building of houses is not complete. Taking into consideration the destroying of villages and gardens by Japanese plus a complete rebuilding of villages and gardens, these people have done a good job. The sub-area is now recruited to 20% of the total male population and it would be unwise to further recruit the area. Contact with these people is constantly maintained, they are industrious and easy to control." (Carruther, 1944) [57]

"The employment before the war of only twenty-five to thirty percent of the adult males was undermining the whole social structure." *Report of an Investigation of Native Labour in New Guinea, Colonel Ian Hogbin, 1944* (Gray, 2000)

"... Australians are being asked to shoulder quite substantial burdens for New Guinea. To be sure they are financial burdens, not blood and labour, but if the time comes when Australians show reluctance to continue this help, it will be useful to know precisely what the New Guinea people did for us during the war for five or ten shillings per man per month." *Peter Ryan, paper presented to Waigani Seminar, 1968* (Gray, 2000)

Here in lies some of the social context from which identities may be drawn. A practice of indentured labour recruitment, understood to be necessary to achieve colonial aims, but also recognised to be detrimental to the maintenance of social order in villages, persisted for some time after the war. While remunerated, it did little to address the underlying inequalities between the colonialists and the colonised.

Coming back to the present, it is worth asking whether a history of industry or chronic marginalisation is reflected in the way villagers are discursively positioned towards tourism opportunities today.

A telling indication might be how the inhabitants of the Black Cat Track are portrayed in the *Black Cat Track Tourism Development Plan*. Curiously, while several representatives from villages along the Track were consulted in the preparation of the plan, the Biangai, Iwal-Kaiwa and Bong cultural-linguistic groups are not mentioned. The history of the Black Cat Track begins with the heading: *Pioneers – Gold Fever* (EcoSustainAbility, 2008: 10). This may be due

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[57] 12 months later it is reported that food is moderately plentiful for all villages and recruiting figures show slightly under 40% of effective adult males absent. (Patrol Report Number 4, 19th – 22nd April 1945)

to the focus the plan has on its intended customers' interests, but it also bears an unfortunate similarity to an early application for a local gold mining lease that refers to Mt Kaindi land as 'Crown Land' with 'occupiers: none' – an extraordinary absence of native owners prior to the discovery of gold [58] (Burton, 1995a: 4). The social force of a storyline that begins by omitting the presence of key protagonists is that the rights (and duties) of such people also fail to exist. The dominant group has revealed itself through its power to produce social knowledge, making some storylines more prominent than others. [59]

However, would-be pioneers of commercial trekking along the Black Cat Track are quick to point to the opportunities they bring to the Track and its (unseeable) people.

> "Pam informs me I haven't seen poor before until I see the villagers on the Black Cat Trail. All these people live in hope that I can make a difference to their lives as I have done to so many re the Kokoda Trail." *Kokoda Trekking Organiser, Website News Forum* (Aussie, 2005)

> "We plan on sending ahead … some of our fittest boys to talk to villagers and help them clean up the trek so it is more jungle friendly than in its present state." (Blackcat, 2006)

And if impressions count, I'm on the same page as Christy King with regards to Mubo. [60]

> "(Mubo) had given her a bad feeling." (Hoffman, 2014: 19)

Mubo is a relatively large village for the area, but both times I have passed through Mubo I have avoided camping there. It is hot, marshy and malaria prone. It also left me with a somewhat unsettled feeling. Then again, both times were with Kerry - but we are not the only ones.

> "We stopped there (Mubo) to sign the visitor's book but were glad to leave the village which had a strangely cold feel about it." (Frewer, 1987)

This positioning could indicate the longevity of *historical injustice / disadvantage*. And, as for the future:

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[58] The ramifications of which are still being contested in Court today by the Biangai and Watuts.
[59] Another example is the doctrine of *terra nullius*.
[60] A reminder I am not just a dispassionate observer, but a party to the creation of social meaning through this discourse.

The fortunes of Wau township have been intimately linked with the development of gold mining in the region. Wau emerged in the 1920s as an administration outpost, complete with an airstrip and commercial flights that bypassed difficult terrain and perceived cannibal villages. In recent years, Wau has been in an advanced state of decline – a "cowboy town" (Halvaksz, 2006a).

The *historical injustice* narrative positions protagonists as either *winners* or *losers* on the path to modernity. The identities may be self-ascribed and ascribed by others. However, positioning one's own group as disadvantaged may have long-term implications. This is because, while being disadvantaged may confer some immediate benefits, such as being temporarily allocated some special privileges or rights and spared certain duties that would otherwise apply, the consequence is that *disadvantaged* and *non-disadvantaged* groups remain on different moral standings (Slocum-Bradley, 2009: 91). This inhibits attainment of the desired equality.

The perspective from which relative privilege or lack of privilege is being viewed may also be pivotal. Slocum-Bradley (2008c: 135) emphasises that "inequality in the distribution of rights, without a concomitant distribution of duties and/or identity status that is perceived as justifying the difference in rights, is fertile ground for conflict." The contentiousness of *affirmative action* programs lies in whether the status of the beneficiary (for example, the *underprivileged*) deserves that differential treatment.

The *historical injustice* storyline establishes ample grounds for a variety of economic, political and social horizontal inequalities, i.e. inequalities among culturally defined (or constructed) groups.

Storyline 5: Ethic of Total Retaliation

According to the e*thic of total retaliation* storyline, there are people who feel left out and foment retaliation against an increasingly technologically advanced and changing world. [61]

This storyline implies that people who have lost all status are literally prepared to do anything to regain some control over their lives. They may identify with one or several linguistic, cultural,

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[61] The name for this storyline comes from an article by Susan McWilliams in The Nation: https://www.thenation.com/article/this-political-theorist-predicted-the-rise-of-trumpism-his-name-was-hunter-s-thompson/

genealogical or social groups. In the world they inhabit, their traditional skills and virtues are meaningless. They maybe illiterate and uneducated. They feel they have no place in the modern world – they are strangers in their own land. What's more, in a game that appears rigged against them - they are literally facing extinction. Instead of gracefully exiting (stage right) they feel they need to stick it to the world. Therein lies the *ethic of total retaliation*: if you can't win in this game, you may as well spoil it for everyone else. They are people who might be labelled "deplorables" in another political discourse. Hunter S. Thompson met a similar group in the 1960s and wrote a book about them – Hell's Angels (Thompson, 1966).

The *ethic of total retaliation* storyline is evident in renditions of previous trouble on the Track (indication that all was not well), anticipated in the Black Cat Track Tourism Development Plan (2008) and touched on in Hoffman's (2014) summary.

"Another Kokoda Track tour operator, Brian Freeman, set out to walk the Black Cat Trail in 2005. Among his porters was Kerry Rarovu, one of the two killed on September 10. Freeman had some porters from outside the area. He was two days into the trek when he was warned to expect trouble ahead. He abandoned the trail and has not returned." *Herald Sun*, (Carlyon, 2013)

"The Highlanders were feeling robbed, they came down a few hours before the trekkers arrived in Skin Diwai and chopped (the) posts of the new guest house." *Nikki George, Trek Leader* (George, 2010)

"The Kaisenik and Biaweng communities may be disaffected if trekkers all stay in Wau then pass through the communities before starting the track. Similarly the Salamaua communities and the guesthouse see little real benefit as the trekkers have completed their ordeal and are already contemplating cold drinks, showers and fine dining in Lae." (EcoSustainAbility, 2008: 25) [62]

"Three brothers were career criminals who'd done jail time for robbery and murder. They … knew of the envy and resentment of their fellow Iwal, and knew of the cash the party would be carrying. Robbery and payback coincided, mated." (Hoffman, 2014: 23)

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[62] Note: these are not the communities in the middle of the track that appear to be disaffected for different reasons.

Within the restrictions of an interview environment, research participants also struggled to express the uneasy give-and-take inherent in the trekking arrangements and voice something they could barely comprehend themselves.

"Biangai people are fierce looking people. Kaiwa are docile people." *Iwal-Kaiwa Research Participant*

"The people in the village, how can they do this? Who advised them? Who give you the plan to do all these things? Because I can't trust you, you are a very small guy from the village. But you did it, you hit all over the world." *Iwal-Kaiwa Research Participant*

"Mubo and Komiatum groups benefit more, as they get overnight fees. Kaiwa get the most benefit. There is no point attacking the group. Solar comes from tourism." *Biangai Research Participant*

"Qu: The village (Skin Diwai) here in the river valley has solar panels. But it didn't when it was up on the track. Why? Ans: Gold brings more money than tourism." *Iwal-Kaiwa Research Participant*

"Now it's the association's responsibility to come down and explain how they spend the money so we can be satisfied. But there are some things that must change." *Iwal-Kaiwa Research Participant*

"If I just take your watch, how do you feel? Lost something – sad. Now suppose the track runs through my heart. So, if someone comes and takes from the track, when the trekkers pass through, something needs to change." *Iwal-Kaiwa Research Participant*

"They thought their communities were being left out, they thought it was their job to carry out the attack to stop being left out." *Bong Research Participant*

"The track fees we agree upon and paid in an account. We have plans to develop the track and clear the track, build toilets and guest houses. That was on our plans, but has not gone ahead because of the attack. Every village has a representative. It has been quite a while since the last meeting." *Bong Research Participant*

It is very unusual for close family to be in conflict like this – the first time. Everybody was shocked. That there was so much hatred. We don't want this type of thing to happen. We want to benefit. It is really very painful." *Iwal-Kaiwa Research Participant*

However, it is possible all these uncertainties and disagreements about who should lead groups, which villagers should port for groups, where porters should be changed, who coordinates trek bookings, how villages are notified of forthcoming trips, where they should stay, how many days they should take to walk the Track, who received the trek fee, what is done with the fee and ultimately whether trekking and tourism really has any possibility of meeting the many and varied demands and expectations placed upon it, were in some way balanced. An unsteady, workable, far from satisfactory *détente* existed – or appeared to exist - for the decade or so the trekking business was developing. The constant efforts and accommodations of many village, church and clan leaders, willing guides and porters, guesthouse owners, local councillors, government agencies, the Black Cat Track Authority, NGOs, trekking companies, tour leaders and trekkers made it so. But for a narrative of retaliation to work, something must have triggered a change to this *status quo*.

Less than five months prior to the attack a large group of trekkers (26) including two Australian MPs together with an Australian TV network reporter and camera crew walked the Black Cat Track.[63]

> "When (Australian) federal politicians Jason Clare and Scott Morrison trekked the Black Cat trail in April (2013), they had fine chaperones. Two PNG police officers. Two SAS soldiers. A paramedic. The presence of local police had nothing to do with Clare and Morrison's status. Everyone gets them on Our Spirit tours, as well as the protection of the shotgun and the pistol they carried. Just in case." (Herald Sun, 21st September 2013)

The subjects of conflicts – those who's rights are being transgressed, and those who are doing the transgressing – are constituted by evoking identities. The identities in this case are a seething, disenfranchised *in-group* (*the forsaken*) and an uncaring, exploitative *out-group* (*the progressives*). Allocation of rights and duties is based on the premise that all people have the right to pursue self-interest, modernity and development. Might is Right. Those who have

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[63] I am aware of only one other smaller group that completed the trek in May 2013, prior to the attack in September.

power and influence should use it to further their advantage. Being disadvantaged, underprivileged and disenfranchised is symptomatic of disinterest in personal wellbeing and development. The poor deserve to be poor. The *forsaken* have no rights. (Their duty is to get with the program or get out of the way.)

In the hands of capable political entrepreneurs - who reject this positioning and can articulate a narrative encompassing tribal animosity, villainous others, the righting of historical injustices and victorious spoils - "we the people" is a call to arms to a sympathetic audience. It should be no surprise that in this storyline, *the forsaken,* with little else to live (or die) for but the vainglorious praise of agitators (pursuing their own agenda of fear and control) identify themselves with this cause and as the agents to accomplish it.

Such positioning may be insidious, go unnoticed or escape explanation, if there is no reaction to it. However, positioning people as *forsaken* may be catastrophic if political entrepreneurs articulate the identity in a way that exposes transgressions of rights or failures to fulfil certain duties and an opportunity arises to change the way the game is played.

The *ethic of total retaliation* storyline assumes that horizontal inequalities are present and obvious to the *in-group*. It also goes further, proposing how being *left out* becomes the seed around which a new identity crystallises.

The effect of economic, political and social inequalities, their relationship to salient identity groups and risk of violent conflict will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter Six: Discussion

"(What's So Funny 'Bout) Peace, Love, and Understanding"

Nick Lowe [64]

This chapter explores the material connections between identity and horizontal inequalities in the preceding storylines.

In the *ancient hostilities* storyline outsiders position indigenous people as primitive, harbouring ancient animosities. It is a stereotype that reduces the cause of the attack to a simple binary; one tribe against the other, or cycle of revenge; one tribe against the other, forever. If inequalities are part of the equation, it is not evident what they are or how they are distributed. Further, local reports and research participants' accounts do not corroborate the *ancient hostilities* storyline. Oversimplifications also make aspects of the storyline counter-factual. Consequently, the ethnic identities evoked in the storyline– essentialised Biangai, Iwal-Kaiwa and Bong tribes – are unlikely to define the groups mobilised in the Black Cat attack. Care should also be taken when interpreting economic inequalities based on these groupings. Representatives of these groups all appear to support trekking because it contributes to greater economic equality. Gold is identified as another source of income that is accessible in both Biangai and Iwal-Kaiwa territory and already contributes more money than tourism. [65]

In the *robbery (gone wrong)* storyline good people morally distance themselves from the actions of bad people. There is some suggestion that the robbers were acting on what they perceived to be the grievances or wishes of communities that supported them, but broadly their actions were universally condemned, thus creating an out-group of *everyone* against the robbers. Robbery reflects vertical (inter-individual) inequality. It lacks a common identity among the deprived and therefore a broad basis for mobilization (Stewart, 2014: 51). Robbery is justified (in the robbers' view) by the right to do as they please. This is clearly in conflict with everyone's right to travel safely. However, if the attack was an example of tribal warfare, like in pre-colonial times, the

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[64] Nick Lowe (1974) (Song popularised by Elvis Costello and the Attractions.)
[65] Note: the original Black Cat Track runs through the Bitoi valley, in Iwal-Kaiwa territory.

group boundaries, underlying inequalities and motivations are not obvious (as in the *ancient hostilities* storyline).

Villagers from all along the Track ultimately worked together to apprehend the robbers, and *put to right* this unprecedented occurrence. Villagers were also praised in the media for the assisting police to arrest the suspects. What is more difficult to grasp is the possibility of political motivations being masked by the language of criminal behaviour. Had police more overtly sided with one group against others in the search for culprits, more evidence of horizontal political inequalities may have been evident. However, the polarising nature of criminal behaviour creates both separation and scapegoats. Villagers' frustrated desire for greater representation in local affairs, or the modern world generally, may have been expressed vicariously through the actions of criminals. A cultural inequality is constructed in the extreme and barbaric nature of the criminals' behaviour. We (readers and bit players) position ourselves with the outgroup – as docile, civilized, reputable people. We need to hear that these people are not like us, and that we are not complicit in any grievances that may be present. Then, the state may also have an interest in disguising challenges to power or moves towards greater political representation though the language of criminality.

The *possessive individual* storyline introduces the Big Shot whose primary interest is in bettering himself and who is at odds with traditional cultural obligations among clansmen. The storyline pitches Kerry Rarovu against his relations. The conflict centres around Kerry's right to amass private wealth and his cultural obligations to share his wealth with family members. While Kerry was well connected with Westerners and influential people within local government and the Black Cat Track Authority, this storyline mostly reflects differences in vertical inequality, or one individual's position relative to another's. Vertical inequality lacks a common identity around which groups of people mobilise for conflict (Stewart, 2014: 51). However, genealogical ties may provide one locus for cohesion between disaffected persons in this uniquely Melanesian case. Another possibility is the generalised Western identity that Kerry represents is being attacked by adherents to *kastom*, for the threat this identity presents at social, political and cultural levels.

A further possibility is that by simply being entrepreneurial and assertive, Kerry may have found dealing with Westerners problematic, particularly if there was an expectation that he facilitate or

further *outside* interests, rather than his own or Biangai interests. These related narratives position Kerry as someone with potential to create enemies, but do not explain why the attack, Kerry and Matthew's murders and the other aggravated assaults occurred *when* and *where* they did – unless everyone else was just in the wrong place at the wrong time. **Note:** no link between those the *possessive individual* has possibly offended and the alleged attackers has ever been suggested or established.

In the *historical injustice* storyline, the haphazard nature of circumstance has favoured some groups over others. In the absence of counteracting national policies, modernity and development are forces beyond the control of locals. They sweep all in their path and tend to accentuate differences, through the nature of technology (e.g. mobile phones and telecommunication networks making the outside world more visible) or bringing the new and the old into proximity with each other. Identifying as *disadvantaged* may have long term consequences. Rights and duties ascribed to the disadvantaged may entrench long term inequalities. The physical distance and general inaccessibility of some villages also limits the possibility of joining the outside world. This includes participation in political processes, civil service, police, army and local government, employment opportunities, higher education and access to health services. The stigma of chronic disadvantage accumulates. These inequalities are inherently characteristic of geographically or culturally connected groups of people and are economic, political, and social in nature. The right to develop is negated by structural and cultural settings. Better positioned groups have a natural advantage when competing for access to development opportunities. This creates conflict between those who would (or want to) change and those who won't (or cannot change). Large and insurmountable inequalities are the cause of group grievances. Conflict is likely when people define a common identity to mobilise behind and such mobilisation is stimulated by sharp horizontal inequalities (Stewart, 2014: 51).

Among villages along the Black Cat Track there is ample evidence of relative disadvantage, but also plenty of support for trekking as a means of improving access to cash income. Substantial guest houses have been built in the Iwal-Kaiwa villages of Skin Diwai, Guadagasal and Komiatum and in a jungle clearing at Charlies Rest. A British Adventure Company, Trekforce, provided volunteer labour for several months to help with some of the construction and other

trekking related developments in 2008 and 2009. [66] This assistance was appreciated by the Iwal-Kaiwa villages involved, and more assistance of this nature was encouraged by research participants.

In practice, there may be little material difference between villages along the Track. Each village provides adequately for a subsistence lifestyle in its own way. When asked about the difference between the middle villages and other villages, one research participant responded,

> "All three (villages) are just the same, no real difference." He didn't really know what the effects of development had been on Salamaua and Wau. "They are too far away." *Iwal-Kaiwa Research Participant* [67]

There was also strong support from the middle villages for a system where trekking groups exchanged porters at clan boundaries, as a way of ensuring the benefits (wages) were shared equitably. Research participants did not see trekking as a cause of economic inequality *per se,* and were broadly in favour of more trekking to enhance economic opportunities.

Historical injustice and inequality was more clearly depicted in the narratives of damage to customary land during WWII and stigma attached to indentured labour. Both grievances were repeated by research participants residing in Iwal-Kaiwa villages nearer the middle of the Track. Trekking was associated with revisiting an (uncompensated) open-wound, in the first instance, and the act of porting reinforced how little had changed since colonial times, in the latter. The suggestion that the villages needed to hear a formal apology from the respective governments is interesting as it *elevates* the villages, in terms of respect, to *national importance*, reducing real (or perceived) social and cultural inequalities. It's a subtext for what is *not* being said about historical injustices. A woman related to one of the deceased porters expressed a similar wish. The most important thing she wanted to hear was an apology.

> "Some good words." *Iwal-Kaiwa Research Participant*

Another *historical injustice* (which implicates trekking as an insufficient source of funding, but is typically a responsibility of government) is the lack of access to health services, schools,

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[66] Trekforce built a sawn-timber guesthouse and drop toilet in Komiatum and a bush materials guesthouse at Charlie's Rest. Welle helped to complete the roof on this guesthouse after Trekforce left.

[67] The research participant was from one of the Iwal-Kaiwa middle villages and referring to Guadagasal, Mubo and Skin Diwai, which are the villages on the Black Cat Track.

roads, electricity, telecommunication services and (potable) water. These services are most acutely lacking in the villages near the middle of the Track, and this grievance was most evident in conversations with research participants from these areas. That the national government has failed to provide these services to remote villages, when they are (or perceived to be) available in Port Moresby, Lae and even Wau and Salamaua,[68] are acutely felt economic and social inequalities.

In the *ethic of total retaliation* storyline, development and modernity have forsaken a group of once proud and self-sufficient people. Facing imminent oblivion and ruing better times, some realise that their personal fortunes are tied to all out retaliation against everyone and everything that condemns them. The storyline is a tinderbox awaiting a match. Trekking groups are the modern world intruding into their darkness. They illuminate the isolation and the powerful connections, education and social skills forsaken people lack. The spark, a particularly large group with its own entourage, politicians, TV cameras, reporters, SAS soldiers and police with guns – just in case. In case of what? In case you need to prove you are particularly powerful and you need to use lethal force? (That's real positioning power!)

In the *ethic of total retaliation* storyline, *forsaken* is the identity around which people mobilise for conflict. Membership is self-ascribed and ascribed by others – both those who see themselves as similarly affected and those who distance themselves from the beliefs and values being espoused. It is a constructed identity that overlaps linguistic, genealogical and social groupings. The *out-group's* identity likewise overlaps linguistic, genealogical and social groupings. This configuration helps explain why Biangai, Iwal-Kaiwa and Bong were all victims of the attack. It may also suggest why the attack takes the form of an ancient tribal ambush, rather than a robbery *per se*. Group members become more self-conscious about common bonds and interests, which further solidifies boundaries and identities. Grievance and opportunity operate in conjunction with shared identity, claiming the right to pursue self-interest on its own terms. 'Conflict entrepreneurs' motivated by political inequality (i.e. the inability to participate effectively in decisions that matter about their future and wellbeing) use economic and social inequalities to mobilise people into action. They also hold necessary assets (like

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[68] Where villagers must go in a medical emergency, or if they want any sort of higher education.

sophisticated weapons) and manipulate support by accentuating commonalities and denigrating the *out-group*.

Violent conflict is unlikely, even in the presence of sharp social and economic inequalities, where group leaders are included in political power. As Petersen puts it "resentment is the feeling of being *politically* dominated by a group that has no right to be in a superior position" (Østby, 2013: 216). Forsaken leaders and followers see themselves as being *left out* of decisions about who will provide porters (no communication), who can guide groups (no education) and how Track Fees will be collected and distributed to landowners along the Track (no participation). The political and social inequalities being equal to, or more important than, the economic inequalities. Where economic and social inequalities are not high, political exclusion is not sufficient to provoke conflict (Stewart, 2010b: 11). There needs to be consistency in all realms, if they are to lead to conflict.

Those controlling access to the Track (at either end) maintain a real or perceived monopoly on *judicial* power. Recall, one feature that distinguishes the horizontal inequalities explanation from relative deprivation explanations is that the relatively privileged may also rebel if they fear an assault on their political power. There is evidence that some Biangai tightly control their authority along the Track in the video footage and account of a vandalized guest house at Skin Diwai (George, 2010), and few outward signs of how Track Fees have been allocated along the Track in recent times. The Track terminates in Salamaua (Bong territory), on the coast, where there is direct access to many expats from Lae and only a short boat ride to Lae where Provincial government is headquartered.

A decision also appears to have been made early in the development of the Track, to route it via Skin Diwai, rather than the direction some stakeholders had wished for, via Bitoi.

> Pam Christie has reviewed this route (the old Black Cat route) and suggests that it is not
> suitable for trekking. (EcoSustainAbility, 2008: 21) [69]

Whether this decision was reached via consensus, majority or other arrangement is unknown, but it may also reveal a bias in favour of influential groups at either end of the Track. I was unable

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[69] Pam Christie is "essentially the commercial pioneer of the Track" and Managing Director of PNG Trekking Adventures (http://pngtrekkingadventures.com/content/detail/tour_guides).

to access the villages of Bitoi and Waipali (on the old track) to hear how they interpreted this decision.

Simple proximity to expats creates a cleavage that reinforces underlying structural and cultural disadvantages. Biangai view porting jobs and contact with tourists as another way to learn about Western culture and ideas such as environmentalism, practice English, develop skills and take on new responsibilities. They have been actively renegotiating their sense of self (identity) with the West, since first contact. One research participant listed *movies* as the second most important influence on their lives, after missionaries. In the 1970s, Wau had a cinema where labourers from all around PNG (working in the gold fields and forestry industries) met together for the first time, shared stories of their birthplaces, became friends and developed a national consciousness in a way that would have been impossible in pre-colonial times.

The *ethic of total retaliation* storyline aligns horizontal inequalities with salient identities around which people mobilise for conflict. The descriptions from people along the Track paint a detailed picture of life events and circumstances that shape perceptions of identity. They undermine the simple trope of *ancient tribal hostilities* (so widely reported in Western media), and that of *disadvantage and injustice* (which is shared by so many people in developed and developing countries) pointing to more complex causes of conflict. In difference to Hoffman (2014), it is *neither* tribal or robbery. These are simply easy-to-digest proxies that mask what is really going on.

That the opposing identities might not be obvious is an interesting idea. In large scale studies, armed conflict is between well-defined parties (one of which is the state). In communal conflict, we must dig deeper. The meanings generated in the discursive *webs of significance* inform the way we think about the identities in conflict. The horizontal inequalities framework also shows us where to look for significance in those webs. Moving iteratively between the two frames raises questions about the relativity of truth. It shows us that we can know both something about the facts and the motivations behind peoples' actions, but this also reveals something about the source – or what people say to preserve their self-image.

Where does this leave the researcher? Narratives are always part of a broader discourse, and so is mine. The researcher (my participants' audience) and future readers (my audience) are just two of the many contextual factors that influence the way the story is told. This is one reason

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why it has been important to gather and present data from narratives presented to so many different audiences. But what does my telling of the story reveal? Four of the five storylines engage strawmen – near mythic characters: Tribes v West; Good v Evil; Collective v Individual; Empire v Subject. They are more obviously populated and positioned by others, not me. The fifth storyline is more subjective. Its protagonists are harder to nail. More human? There is a desire here to articulate positions that might be more easily *un-positioned* and transformed through a new narrative with complementary rights and duties. A storyline where the details have so far not been too deeply entrenched. There is also a pragmatic logic behind this, as inequalities are something that can be addressed through creative policy and imagination.

The participants and researcher have co-created this *world of meaning*. I hope I have done them justice. It is possible they disagree with the storylines or can think of others. That would be good. Storylines may be ephemeral and contested. Their longevity and validity lies in how well they position identities and apportion the rights and duties that explain social forces. These storylines provide a deep insight into mechanisms by which social processes produce the content and boundaries of groups. The final storyline – *ethic of total retaliation* – is strongly aligned with the type of inequalities associated with conflict onset, and violence socially constructed as *ethnic*.

Exploring the narratives of social episodes has exposed the dense and sometimes contradictory logic of conflict in hindsight. The conversations also suggest there may be more to gain by studying the relative importance of economic, political and social inequalities in cases like this and from unpacking the differences between objective and perceived inequalities. Furthermore, they invite enquiry into the reverse causality of violent conflict on inequalities. However, the same approach may also be used as a window through which prospective violence can be foreseen and prevented. Discursive analysis reveals who holds the positioning power and on what basis that power is allocated. Conflict can be avoided by renouncing conflicting narrative positions and creating new positions with compatible rights and duties. That is, "if a conflict can no longer readily find expression (in narrative form) … it ceases to exist" (Harre and Slocum, 2003: 100). It would be interesting to revisit this approach in reconciliation discussions on the Black Cat Track.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion:

"A first difficulty of the Arab movement was to say who the Arabs were. Being a manufactured people, their name had been changing in sense slowly year by year. Once it meant an Arabian. There was a country called Arabia; but this was nothing to the point."

Thomas E. Lawrence [70]

This thesis explores the relationships between inequality, perceptions of identity and conflict. Situating the locus of the study on the Black Cat Track and among the people directly affected by violent conflict brings the underlying causes of conflict into sharp relief.

Following a narrow history of change to the lives of people along the Track allows us to appreciate the impact of major events and disruptions. The short overview also introduces ways that narratives and circumstances begin to create social context and identities, and alludes to the persistence of some of these marks.

Contending perspectives on the different motives for violent conflict are presented and discussed. A reformulation of the debate, with a focus on inequalities between groups of people who share a common identity, presents new purchase on an old problem. The relevance of identity, together with political entrepreneurship, is shown to be important in inciting collective violence. Severe horizontal inequalities are shown to be strongly associated with the onset of conflict and may also contribute to the emergence and solidification of identities. Ways identities can be constructed through discourse are presented. Positioning theory is described as a framework for analysing meanings in social life and the social forces that arise through allocation of rights and duties.

The methodology chapter makes the case for why this case study was chosen and outlines the advantage that focusing on a confined location with unique characteristics provides for engaging with the theoretical perspectives. It explains how the *critical* and *extreme* aspects of the case can help demonstrate the applicability of the horizontal inequalities theory to a small-scale conflict setting and a strong and reflexive association between inequalities and identity. The positionality of the researcher and implications for this study are also introduced.

[70] Lawrence (1922) *Seven Pillars of Wisdom:* (Ch2)

The Analysis and Discussion chapters directly address the problem statement and research questions. Evidence presented suggests that there are many interdependent factors that influence the perception of identity, including the ways in which selves and others perceptions' draw on social context, historical circumstances, the audience, as well as relative deprivations and inequalities. In turn, these perceptions may underpin grievances and be manipulated by others who wish to mobilise groups for conflict. Five principle storylines are presented to make sense of events in the data and describe the identities that are discursively positioned as antagonists in the conflict. Each storyline shows how conflicting rights and duties can generate social forces that promote conflict. Through theoretical triangulation it is shown how horizontal inequalities can contribute to discursive antagonisms and fuel potential for violent conflict.

In summary: I contend that we experience underlying patterns of conflict (and peace) just like any other. Conflict is a universal affliction, rooted in local and day-to-day interactions. By examining a violent conflict on the Black Cat Track in PNG we are drawn to the minutiae of real-world issues that underpin meaning in social life. We learn about the nature of the boundaries that are important to people and that form the basis of discrimination between groups. By listening to voices that have effectively been silenced by the conflict we hear how conflict can arise discursively, through (mis)allocation or transgression of rights and failure to uphold duties. We discover that the machinations lying behind conflict in an exotic location like PNG are fundamentally like those the world over.

Likewise, the narratives reveal something about the real and perceived economic, political and social inequalities that exist between groups. Major inequalities among culturally defined groups are associated with increased risk of violence. This study shows that these relationships, typically derived from large-N quantitative case studies, may also be present at small scale. The direct impact of inequalities on people's wellbeing is evident in narratives and forms a part of the identities they disclose.

When we find consistent economic, social and political inequalities aligned with cleavages, where rights and duties are also contested, we have identified when and how particular identities become the identities around which groups of people mobilise for conflict.

Appendix A: Hamsun [71]

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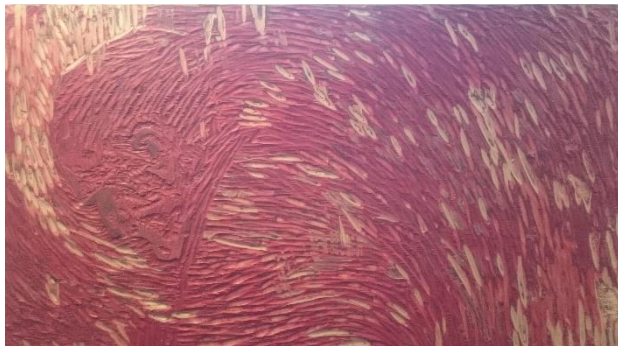
[71] Art installation, Tromsø Public Library. (Photos: Author)

Appendix B: Guideline for Semi-Structured Interviews

Possible Chronology of Significant Events	Impact on individual, family, clan.	Impact on identity (political, social, cultural and economic inequality).
What are the two or three significant events that changed [life for you] the way of life around here? Why?	What effect did this event have on individuals? Why?	How are individuals defined / identified?
What significant events do you associate with modern times? Why?	What effect did this event have on family groups (clan)? Why?	How are family groups defined / identified?
How long have [you] been here? / ... associated with the area?	What effect did this event have between clan groups? Why?	How are clan groups defined / identified?
Who do you regard as 'outsiders'?	Did this event effect some people more than others? Why?	Who do you include in family groups and clan groups? Who do you exclude? Why?
	Did this event effect different people in different ways? How?	Who made important decisions regarding this event? What were they?
* What local events, not involving *outsiders*, are identified as significant?	What impact did this event have on men?	Who acted (behaved) differently because of this event? How? Why?
* What weighting is given to more past and more recent events?	What impact did this event have on women?	Who benefited from this event? How? Why?
* Does one event make a bigger difference than other events?	Did this event effect the role played by [older] people? How?	Who was negatively affected by this event? How? Why?
* Did something else happen prior to this event? What is the connection?	Did this event result in more or less conflict? Why?	How have these matters been dealt with in the past?

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