



Otonomi bilong wanem? Autonomy for what?: The interfaces of identity, development, and decentralisation in Papua New Guinea

ANU-UPNG Seminar

27 September 2024

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Acknowledge relationships

People

Land

Place



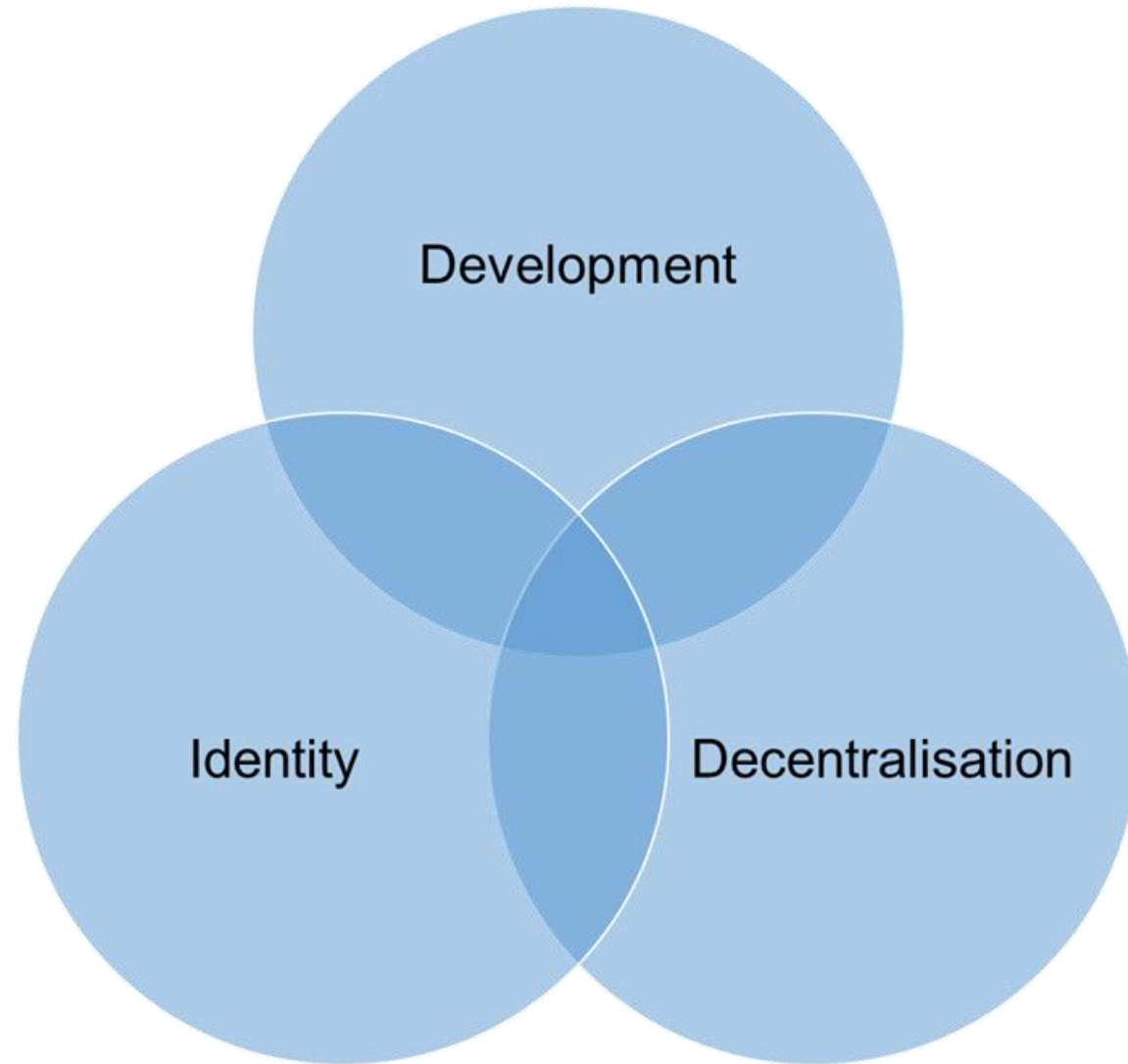
Grand Chief Damien Kereku

1935-2018

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Interfaces



Relational Methodology

Tok Stori

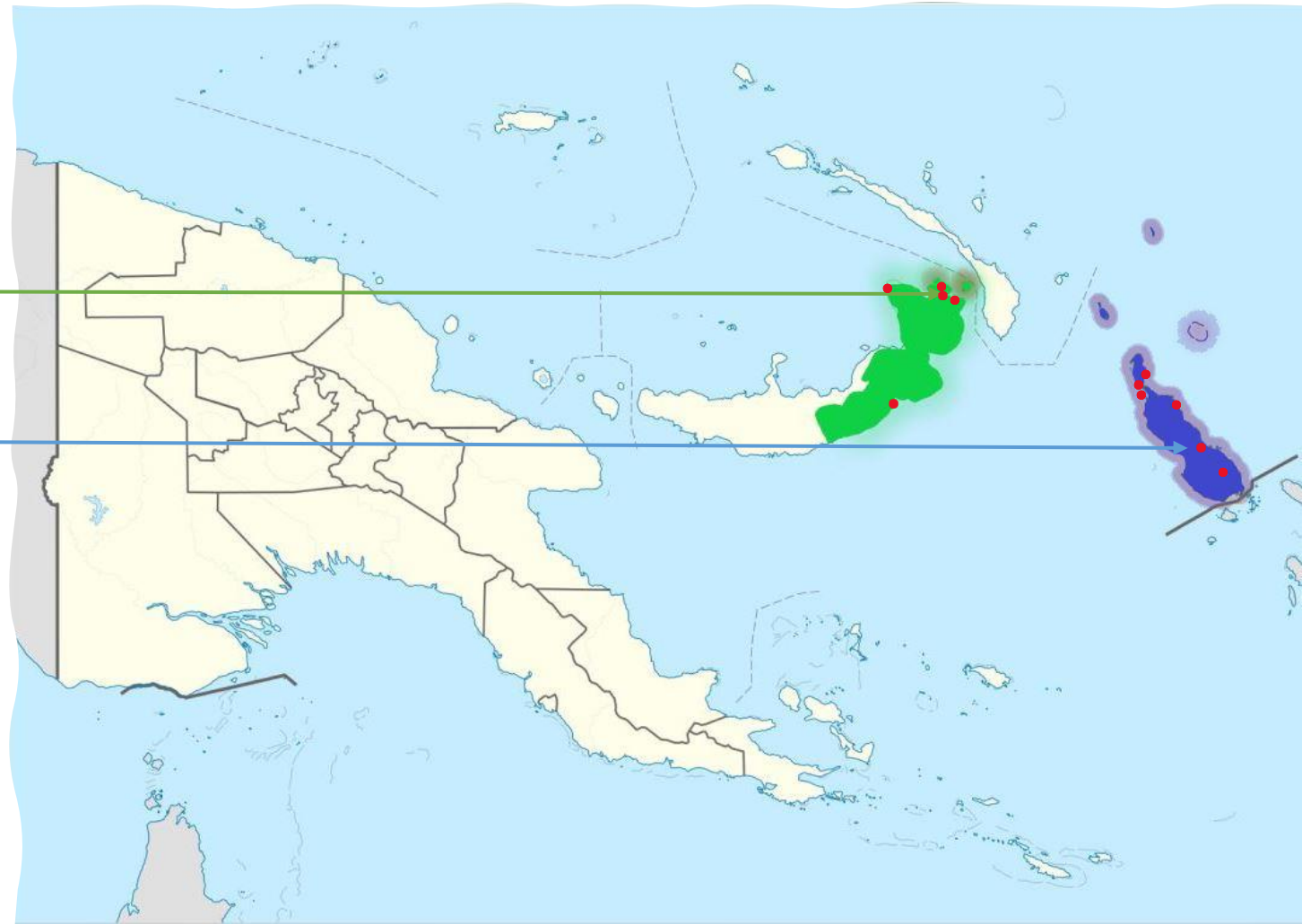
- Centred in **relationships**
- **Tok Pisin** and English





Study Sites

- East New Britain Province
- Autonomous Region of Bougainville



A Brief History of Decentralisation in PNG

1975 Independence

1976 Organic Law on Provincial Governments

1995 Organic Law on Provincial Governments and Local Level Governments

2001 Bougainville Peace Agreement

Many more!



Bougainville Profile

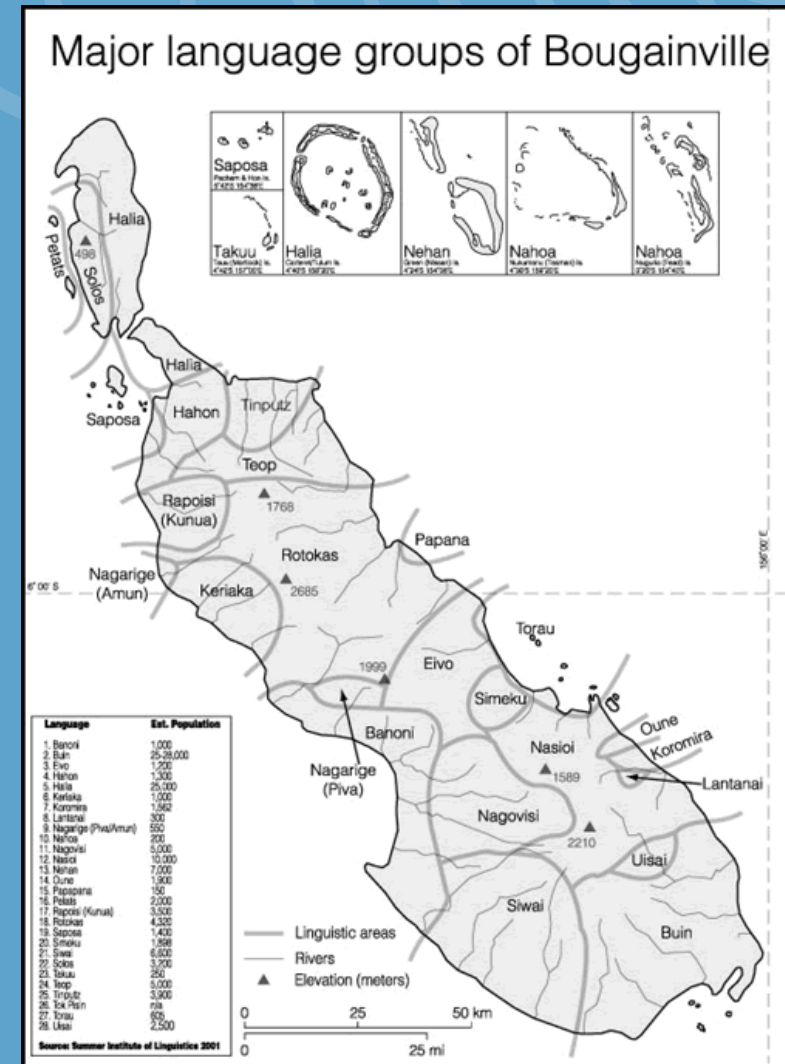
Size: 9,384 sq. km

Population: 642,000+

About 29 languages

Primary industries: agriculture, fishing, mining*

Crisis 1988-1998



Bougainville tok stori

Preliminary findings

Clan-centric identities

Jane: “Wantok em anybody”

Robert: “wantok em anybody, wan tokples but clan em narapela samting.

Jane: “yupela kamap long wanpela meri tasol na go go”

Robert: “I no koneksen long skin kala na toktok, em koneksen long blood”



Bougainville tok stori

Pan-Bougainville identity

- Identity plays a major role in independence aspirations
 - identities do not appear to be closely tied to Autonomous Bougainville Government

Steven: “Dispela karai bilong tumbuna long independens, em i no go wantaim mining...Mining em kam bihain...Dispela, ol lukluk bilong ol tumbuna bipo long independens em...bikos long identity bilong yumi. Mipela ol blak man. Mipela no wankala wantaim ol PNG. ...maybe Ol colonial powers bin putim mipela wrong hap, na problem ya em stap. Olsem na taim ol tumbuna bilong yumi ol karai long kisim independens bipo Papua Niugini kisim em...but kirap, Papua Niugini wantaim Australia ...na ol faulim mipela wantaim ol provincial gavman, na nau ol i usim dispela tupela samting long mipela stap isi. So, tingting bilong independens em i dai. So, bikos long kulchural identity long yumi, em ol lapun bin laikim independens long yumi...history save repeatim, so mipela ol lain nau, mipela laikim independens. Bikos kulcha tu em tok yupela ol narapela man. Na...way of thinking bilong yumi tu em narapela kain.”

Bougainville tok stori

Assertions of Bougainville identity



Bougainville tok stori

Development



Anthony: “mi laik tok tenkyu long...Papua Niugini olsem ...na dispela aid i wok long kam...long mipela long Bougainville. Sapos Papua Niugini no inap, mipela no inap gat rot long dispela samting. Bikos long tokorait bilong Papua Niugini gavman na samting i kam, na mi inap tok tenkyu”

“olsem long ples ol save tok, mipela independent pinis...Mipela lukautim mipela...na no depend tumas long gavman”

Bougainville tok stori

Decentralisation and Autonomy

- Autonomy → Independence
- Referendum result: 97.7% for independence, 1.7% for greater autonomy

Jack: “so, long sait bilong otonomi em olsem, ating mipela go according nem tasol, na tru tru bun bilong em, but mit bilong em mipela I no teistim. Mipela I no bin teistim mit bilong em.

Michael: Autonomy in its current state is NOT WORKING. The PNG National government is an unwilling partner

Bougainville tok stori

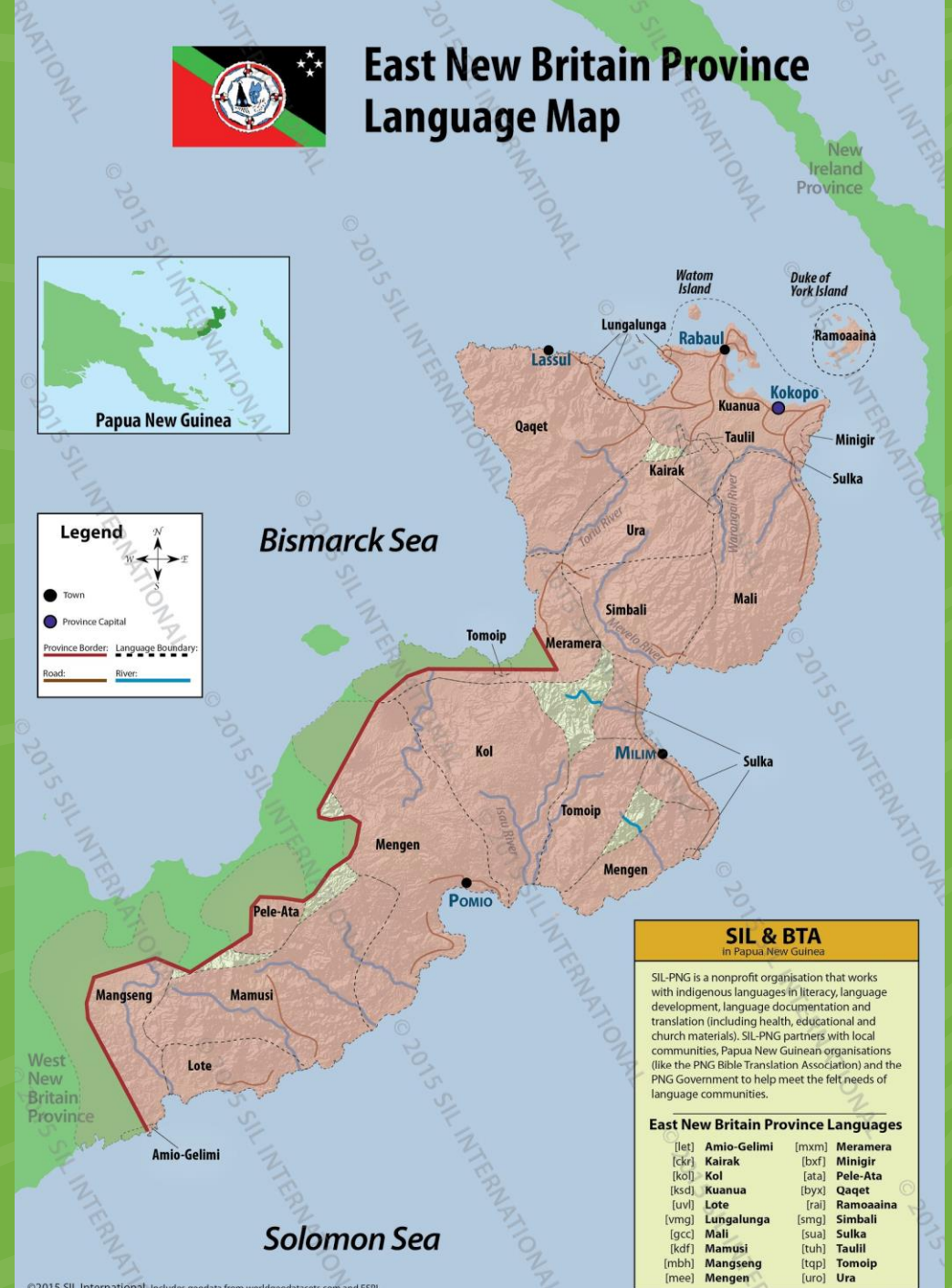
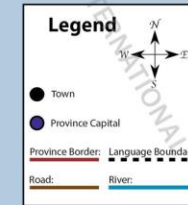


East New Britain Profile

Size: 15,816 sq. km
 Population: 460,000
 About 27 languages
 Primary industries: agriculture, fishing, forestry



East New Britain Province Language Map



SIL & BTA In Papua New Guinea			
SIL-PNG is a nonprofit organisation that works with indigenous languages in literacy, language development, language documentation and translation (including health, educational and church materials). SIL-PNG partners with local communities, Papua New Guinean organisations (like the PNG Bible Translation Association) and the PNG Government to help meet the felt needs of language communities.			
East New Britain Province Languages			
[let]	Amio-Gelimi	[mxxm]	Meramera
[ckr]	Kairak	[bxf]	Minigir
[kol]	Kol	[ata]	Pele-Ata
[ksd]	Kuanua	[byx]	Qaquet
[uvl]	Lote	[rai]	Ramoaaina
[vmg]	Lungalunga	[smg]	Simbali
[gcc]	Mali	[sua]	Sulka
[kdf]	Mamusi	[tuh]	Taulil
[mbh]	Mangseng	[tqp]	Tomoip
[mee]	Mengen	[uro]	Ura

East New Britain tok stori

Preliminary findings

Clan-centric communities, waning in some places

Demonstrated in “shell money” (Tabu)



East New Britain tok stori

Identity

Max: “East New Britain i nogat mining because Tolais don’t share well”

Stephanie: “mipela second-class”

Paul: “Wansait gavman...mipela ol second-class citizen”



East New Britain tok stori

Development



Paul: “Yu wokabout long Mosbi, bai yu ting olsem yu stap long narapela kantri overseas...Moni go long Mosbi na em pinis”

East New Britain tok stori

Development

George: "Otonomi no bai benefitim Pomio. Moni bilong logging long Pomio save go long Kokopo na go long nesinol gavman na i no save kam bek long Pomio."



East New Britain tok stori

Autonomy

Pushback against 1995 OLPGLLG

- political, financial, administrative
- right to maintain and distribute provincial resources

John: “Gavman I no tingting long ol Baining.” Toktok long otonomi “i go pinis nating...Em wok bilong ol politisen.”

Paul: “stori bilong ol taraiu bilong ol. Otonomi kamap long taim bilong eleksen, nogat mining-em stori tumbuna tasol.”

East New Britain tok stori

Autonomy

Charles: “The autonomy concept is good but not timely for people in rural areas of Pomio and Baining.”

Mark: “Spesol otonomi i nogat mining. Developmen i no luk gut tumas tasol mipela stap yet...Mipela yet developim ol liklik giraun”

East New Britain tok stori

Preliminary findings



Otonomi bilong wanem? Autonomy for what?

- **Local identities play large role, provincial identity only in Bougainville**
- **National government distribution of resources and development perceived as ineffective.**
- **Same word, two contexts, different meanings and end goals**

