The 2017 elections in PNG: what we can learn from election results

### Data Explorer

#### Papua New Guinea Election Explorer

Select an electorate and a year below to see the average list of candidates and trends in the electorate over time.

*Note: PNG used a ‘first past the post’ system in the 1977-2002 elections. The 2012 elections used preferential voting."

- **Abau Open**
  - **2017**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>Votes (First)</th>
<th>First Preference</th>
<th>Winner Vote Share</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Puka Temu</td>
<td>10,428</td>
<td>35.4</td>
<td>39.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evile Kala</td>
<td>3,631</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wari Iamo</td>
<td>2,496</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iati Ai</td>
<td>2,002</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kally Ono</td>
<td>1,701</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stanley Mikes</td>
<td>1,510</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kilroy Moibute Genia</td>
<td>1,457</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tipo Vuntha</td>
<td>1,258</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eric Enari Omuru</td>
<td>1,129</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wari Varago</td>
<td>631</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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### The 2017 election in Papua New Guinea

**Terence Wood and Maholopa Lavell**

**Abstract**

This paper draws on the Papua New Guinea Election Results Database alongside other data to study the 2017 General Election in Papua New Guinea. The paper shows that the 2017 elections suffered significant problems, even by the standards of other countries of similar levels of development. Amongst other issues, the paper finds worrying patterns of roll inflation in parts of the Highlands. In terms of election outcomes, we find some evidence that women candidates are becoming more competitive, although improvements are modest and trends uncertain. We also demonstrate that the relationship between candidate numbers and in number of re-election, first found by David Magpar in the 1980s still exists and is statistically robust. Finally, we conduct an in-depth study into the Limited Preferential Voting (LPV) system. We find LPV brought an increase in invalid ballots and a boost in women candidate competitiveness, but that many other anticipated changes appear not to have eventuated. However, importantly, in 2017 it appears some voters cast their second and third preferences along national lines as a protest vote against the Prime Minister’s party. Voting on national issues is thought to be rare in Papua New Guinea, and if LPV is facilitating it, the system may ultimately bring larger political changes, although this is far from guaranteed.

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**Discussion Paper 83**

July 2019

SERIES ISSN 2206-903X
Talk outline

1. The roll & turnout
2. Malapportionment
3. Did sitting MPs lose their seats more or less often than usual
4. What happened to women in 2017?

5. LPV reconsidered – spoilt ballots
6. LPV reconsidered – MP mandate
7. LPV reconsidered – does LPV help women?
8. LPV reconsidered – the PNC effect and national voting

9. Concluding thoughts
1. The roll & turnout
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9. Concluding thoughts
2017 nationally votes cast = 90% of est voting aged population
The Highlands

2017 Highlands votes cast = 110% of est voting aged population
2017 Islands votes cast = 57% of est voting aged population
1. The roll & turnout
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9. Concluding thoughts
Malapportionment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Open Seats</th>
<th>Provincial Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minimum</td>
<td>22,361</td>
<td>31,833</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>49,267</td>
<td>197,261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum</td>
<td>143,497</td>
<td>486,384</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ratio Max to Min</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>15.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. The roll & turnout
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3. Did sitting MPs lose their seats more or less often than usual
   4. What happened to women in 2017?
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9. Concluding thoughts
Percentage of sitting MPs who contested their seats and won

- 1977: 40%
- 1982: 52%
- 1987: 52%
- 1992: 46%
- 1997: 51%
- 2002: 26%
- 2007: 47%
- 2012: 44%
- 2017: 49%
Islands – incumbent wins seat

- 1977: 56%
- 1982: 75%
- 1987: 71%
- 1992: 67%
- 1997: 67%
- 2002: 50%
- 2007: 43%
- 2012: 63%
- 2017: 47%
Highlands – incumbent wins seat

- 1977: 37%
- 1982: 34%
- 1987: 50%
- 1992: 44%
- 1997: 43%
- 2002: 9%
- 2007: 40%
- 2012: 37%
- 2017: 53%
1. The roll & turnout
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   4. What happened to women in 2017?
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9. Concluding thoughts
Number of women who won seats in 2017

0
Did women become more competitive after preferences?

(Complement of) female after preference competitiveness score

2012: 0.29
2017: 0.37
1. The roll & turnout
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9. Concluding thoughts
Average percentage of spoilt ballots each election

- 1992: 1.2%
- 1997: 0.9%
- 2002: 0.7%
- 2007: 2.6%
- 2012: 2.0%
- 2017: 2.0%
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Do MPs win a majority with LPV?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Average women’s rankings went up after preferences, men went down.

Male, -0.01

Female, 0.28
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PNC first preference leaders versus PNC winners, 2017

PNC ahead after first preferences: 39
PNC wins: 28
Changes on preferences 2017, the three largest parties

National Alliance: 19

People's National Congress Party: 39 (Leader first preferences), 28 (Winner)

United Resources Party: 7 (Leader first preferences), 10 (Winner)
PNC first preference leaders versus PNC winners, 2012
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Basic</th>
<th>Incumbent</th>
<th>Major party</th>
<th>Top ten</th>
<th>Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PNC</td>
<td>-0.25**</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
<td>-0.19</td>
<td><strong>-0.26</strong></td>
<td>-0.09*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.04)</td>
<td>(0.46)</td>
<td>(0.11)</td>
<td>(0.02)</td>
<td>(0.09)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incumbency</td>
<td>-0.30***</td>
<td>-0.34**</td>
<td>-0.43***</td>
<td>-0.16***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.00)</td>
<td>(0.01)</td>
<td>(0.00)</td>
<td>(0.00)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region (vs Highlands)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islands</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>-0.13</td>
<td>-0.10</td>
<td>-0.35***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.96)</td>
<td>(0.51)</td>
<td>(0.65)</td>
<td>(0.00)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Momase</td>
<td>-0.00</td>
<td>-0.29</td>
<td>-0.26</td>
<td>-0.25***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.97)</td>
<td>(0.11)</td>
<td>(0.23)</td>
<td>(0.01)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>-0.29</td>
<td>-0.27</td>
<td>-0.32***</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.86)</td>
<td>(0.10)</td>
<td>(0.19)</td>
<td>(0.00)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0.19**</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.02)</td>
<td>(0.94)</td>
<td>(0.48)</td>
<td>(0.85)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.29*</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>1.89***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.75)</td>
<td>(0.92)</td>
<td>(0.07)</td>
<td>(0.10)</td>
<td>(0.00)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>2943</td>
<td>2943</td>
<td>382</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>275</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Other areas where LPV may have helped a bit (violence) and also areas where it hasn’t helped (quality of governance) but in our view the assistance to women and possible assistance of voting on national issues are reason enough to keep it.

But we would really like to see a good survey of the views of the people of PNG.
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