

# Political Stability and Executive Accountability: Papua New Guinea

Pacific Update 2018

Michael Kabuni, University of Papua New Guinea

[michael.kabuni@upng.ac.pg](mailto:michael.kabuni@upng.ac.pg)

# Unbroken Democracy

- PNG's Unbroken Democracy – did not result in economic development usually associated with democracies (Reilly, 2001).....
- Political instability affects -
  - Governments to devise and implement policy programs to bring development,
  - Favourable climate for investment and economic development (Alesina et al., 1993)

# Counter Perspective: Political Stability

...in Melanesia, political instability is a result of MPs' struggle to access to executive office, control the resources (Regan 2006)

... Executive use bribery, coercion, and all kinds of malpractice to remain in power.

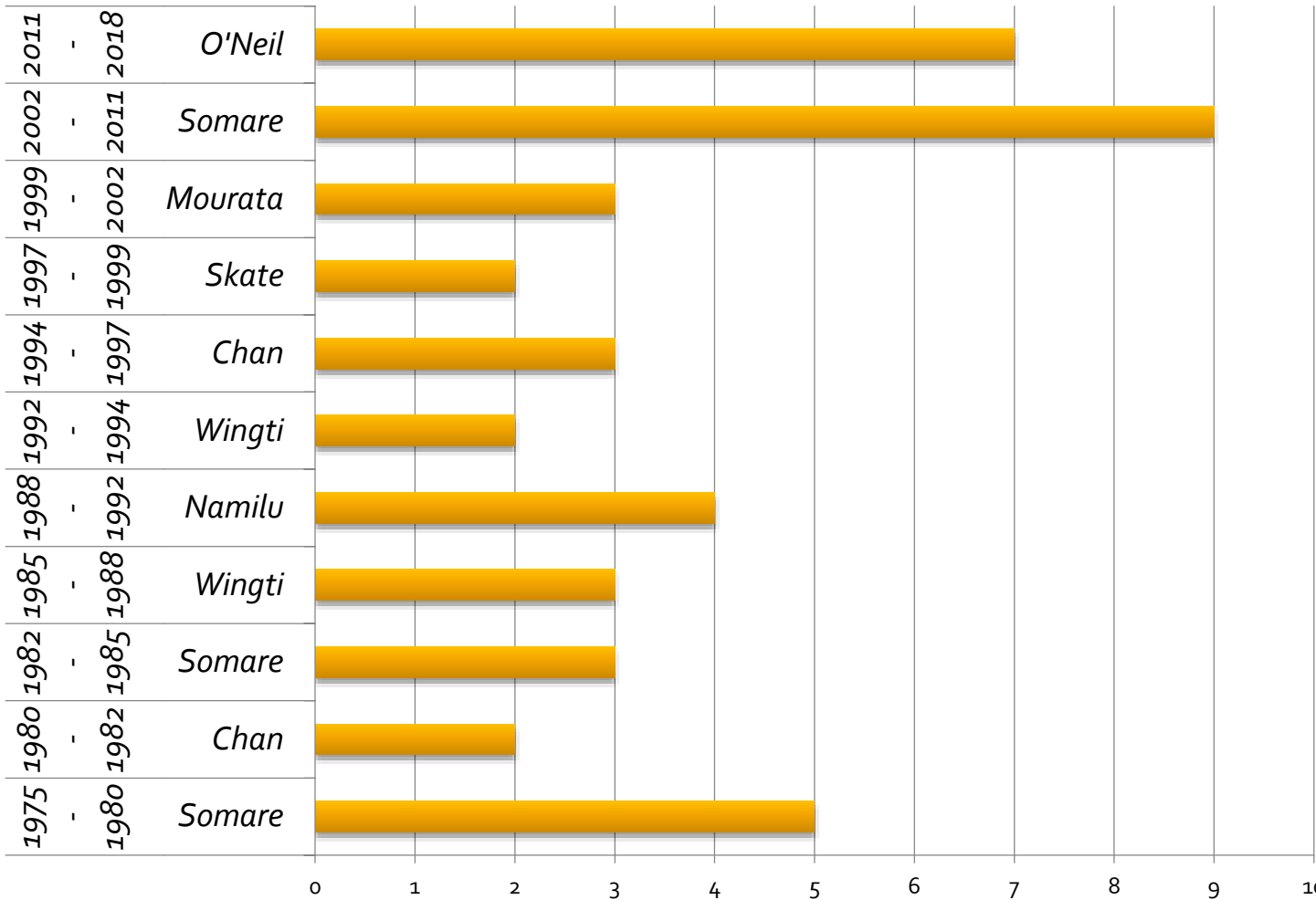
...Political stability would consolidate a reckless government to continue the malpractice instead of implementation of policies that drives growth.

# 2002 – 2017: Political Stability

Prime Ministers

Years in Office

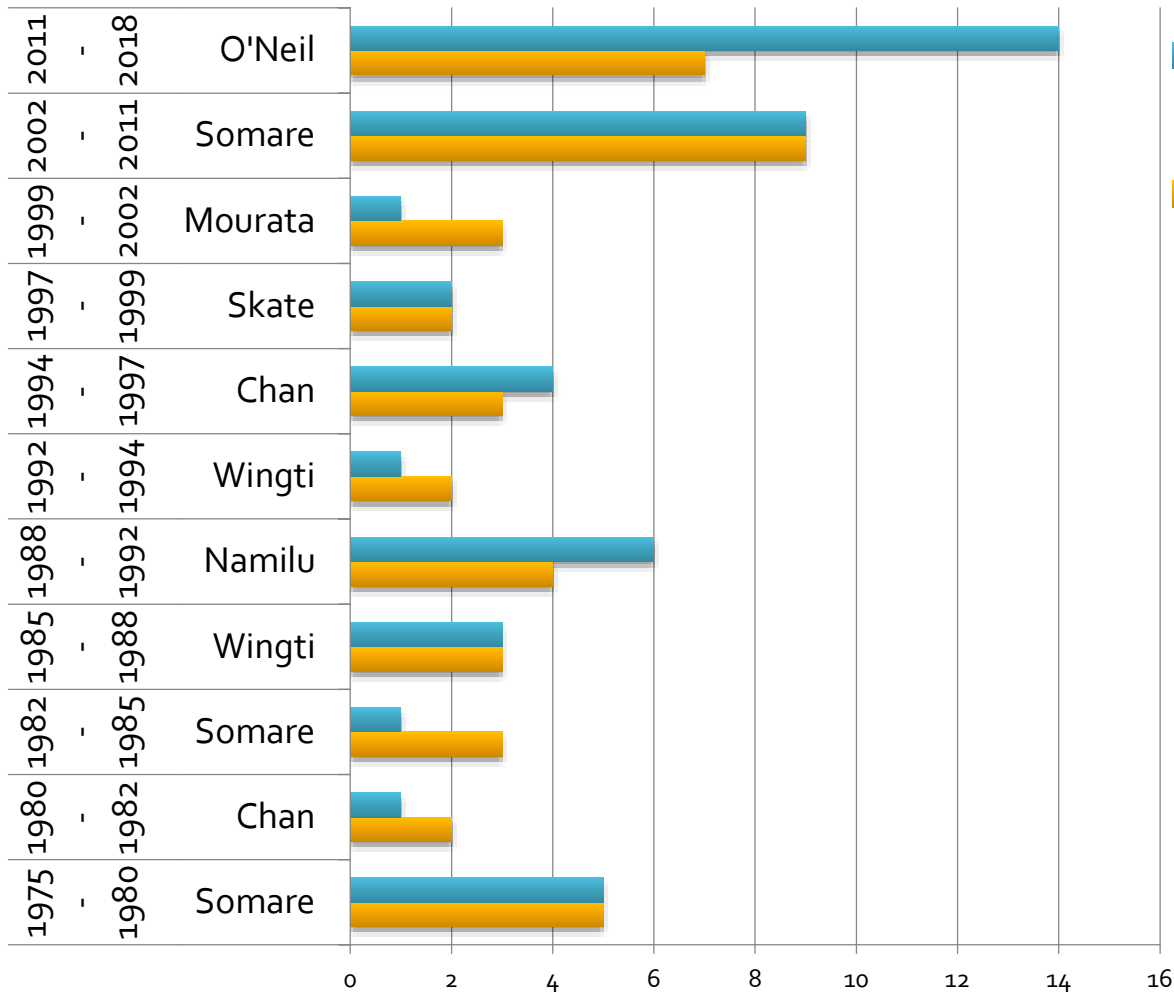
1977 – 2017.....



9 Elections,  
15 Prime  
Ministers

Since 2002,  
increasing  
political  
stability

# Constitutional Amendments



■ Constitutional Amendment  
■ Years in Office

Increasing stability in politics accompanied by higher number Of Constitutional Amendments

# Constitutional Amendments

- Extension of Grace Period from 18 months after election – 30 months (plus 12 months towards the end of the term)
- Limited parliament sitting days from 60 days to 40 days in a year
- Used a combination of extended grace period, limited sitting days, and adjournments to avoid votes of no confidence

# EDF & Portfolios: Discipline & Reward

August 2016, governor Gary Juffa claimed only K1 million of the K10 million for Oro Province was released (Similar claims from Basil & Namah)

Ministerial portfolios increased to 33 (currently 35)

Patronage-coalition induced stability

- PM offers EDF/Portfolios to MPs in exchange for loyalty
- MPs support their PM to access rewards (portfolios or DSIPs/PSIPs)

# Appointments of Departmental Heads

## ■ Political Interference

- Public Services Commission replaced by Ministerial Executive Appointment Committee, chaired by Minister responsible
- Political interference in the appointment & removal of Police Commissioners
- Police Commissioner prevented the arrest of the Prime Minister



# Conclusion

- PNG case: Political stability can consolidate an unaccountable regime
- Equal emphasis should therefore be placed on development/and integrity of institutions such as the courts, Ombudsman Commission