

# LPV & PNG: costs and benefits

Terence Wood, Maho Laveil & Michael Kabuni

## Preferential Voting: Popular participation in the elections and representative government

**COME ON! LET'S GO AHEAD! WE NEED THE VOTING SYSTEM CHANGED... WE NEED A SYSTEM THAT'S FAIR AND REALLY REPRESENTS THE MAJORITY PEOPLE... REPRESENTATIVE SYSTEM YES!**

**PLIS! ... LOU MELES BLO WE WE GATT PLAKTI PLANTI KENDEKETE YAH! ... HUSAT I KESIR LELIK PENDEK I VOTI DAN I WIN... EBANKI SYSTEM TRET YAH!**

**EM NAU YUNE SIKAG GAT WANPELA VOT SYSTEM WE WAKSILA INO DIMP WIN NAKTANG-AT?**

**MAU YUNE MAS KESIR DESELA 'PREFERENTIAL VOTING SYSTEM'... EM WONER 'FIRST PAST THE POST' HORSE RACE SYSTEM... ENETAM!**

**YAH... PLANTI KENDEKETE I SARAP SARAP SARAP NA BUKUM OL VOT OLSEN LEGE. HAP RESMET... NO LES LA... WE LAKE LUKUM VOTING SYSTEM I SENS... NA HUSAT I KESIR BUPELA VOT TRI EM BAI SARAP NEMBA REPRESENTI LAKE ALONG OL POPOL OLSEN WANPELA WOPA RESMET... INWETA!!**

**ME? I WANNA SEE THE VERY BEST VOTING SYSTEM FOR OUR KIDS' FUTURE. I TEACH KIDS TO BE FAIR, SO PLEASE LEADERS THINK FAIR AND DECIDE 'FAIR'. THIS REPRESENTATIVE VOTING WAY ITS TOO GOOD... ITS FAIR... ITS OUR CHANCE... YES OUR CHOICE... YES!!**

**EXCUSE ME OL LEADERS. TRUSDA OUT NEKS HENRESEN LA... NA FUTURE BELONG YUNE OL POPOL BELONG ING.**

**P.V. SYSTEM ITS GOOD. ALL LEADERS MUST WIN MORE THAN 50% OF THE VOTING PUBLIC... NOW THAT'S RIGHT!**

**LAU DEBA... LAU UBA SENISE BAKARA... INAT P.V. VOTE SYSTEM LA LONWE AT ERKE FUTURE BE DO LA NAWO MONOKANE... UMUJE KANONAD?**

**HELLO, MASTA MP, SIR... PLEASE HEAR THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE... WE'RE LOOKING FOR REAL CHANGE... YES, SIR!**

**WHEN THE PRE-FERENTIAL VOTE SYSTEM IT COMES IN, SOME GOOD LEADERS GOT CHANCE LA YOU SEE LEADERS THEY GOT TRUE HEART FOR THE PEOPLES. AHA.**

**THIS PREFERENTIAL VOTE SYSTEM ITS THE SMART THING TO DO... STABILITY IT CAN COME BUSINESS CLIMATE ITS SOON FLOURISH... AND SMART LEADERS WE WILL STAY IN PNG. OH YEAH!**

**NA SAPOS VOTING SYSTEM KESIR OVER-OL, BAZ MEPELA OL TARANGULAIN I HAMBAS TULONG VOT. YU LUKER HUPELA BELES I KAKAP TATAM MEPELA I GAT SANS LONG VOTEM. GUTRELA GANDEKETE.**

**The Proposed legislation to change the voting system from the current 'First Past the Post' to the Preferential Voting system was tabled in Parliament in August 2001 and on August 21st the First Vote was successfully passed.**

**80 Members of Parliament voted in support of the proposed changes to the Electoral Laws. We thank all the 80 MPs for supporting the First Vote.**

**The Second and Final Vote will take place anytime after November 2001, which if successful will result in these proposed changes becoming Law.**

**We ask all MPs to give their support again and vote for the passage of these changes in the Second and Final Vote.**

**Our appreciation is extended to the many people, individuals, groups and organisations that support the Preferential Voting system.**

**Please continue your support and lobby your MPs to vote YES to the Second and Final Vote.**

**Preferential Voting - Majority Support for Winning Candidate - Encourages Good Leadership and Responsible Government - Fairer and Better Representation by far.**

**Preferential VOTING**  
*Change for a better future!*

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**TI (PNG) Inc. and its coalition partners together with the Constitutional Development Commission and Electoral Commission bringing education and awareness on the constitutional reforms to the people.**

**SUPPORTED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION**

# Cost: Price of elections

Very hard to work out accurate electoral costs in PNG.

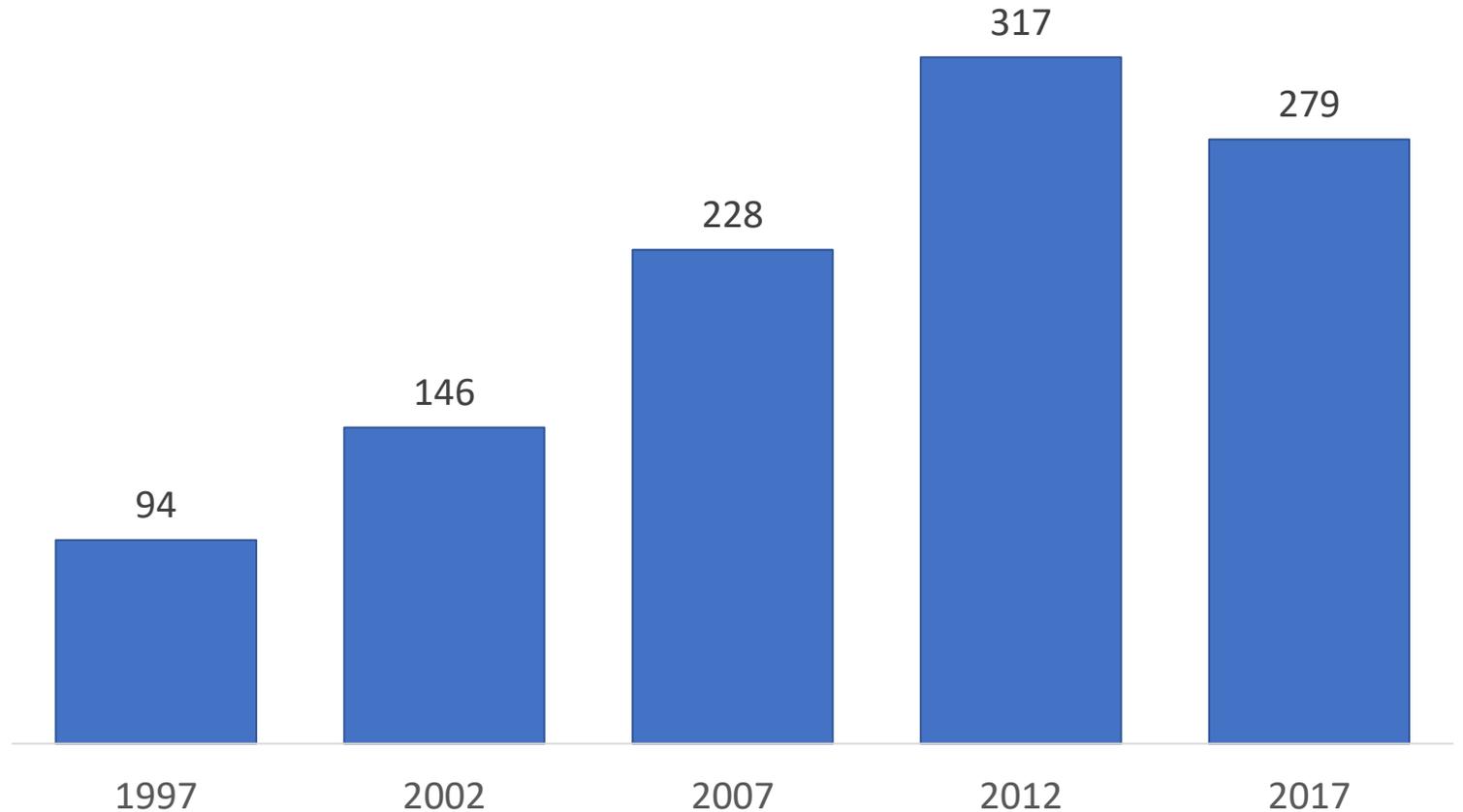
Costs up between 2002 & 2007.

But it was part of broader trend.

Real cost of election is polling not counting.

LPV a bit more expensive, but ok if it works.

Cost to electoral commission Kina (million 2017)



## Cost: Invalid Ballots

LPV more complicated.

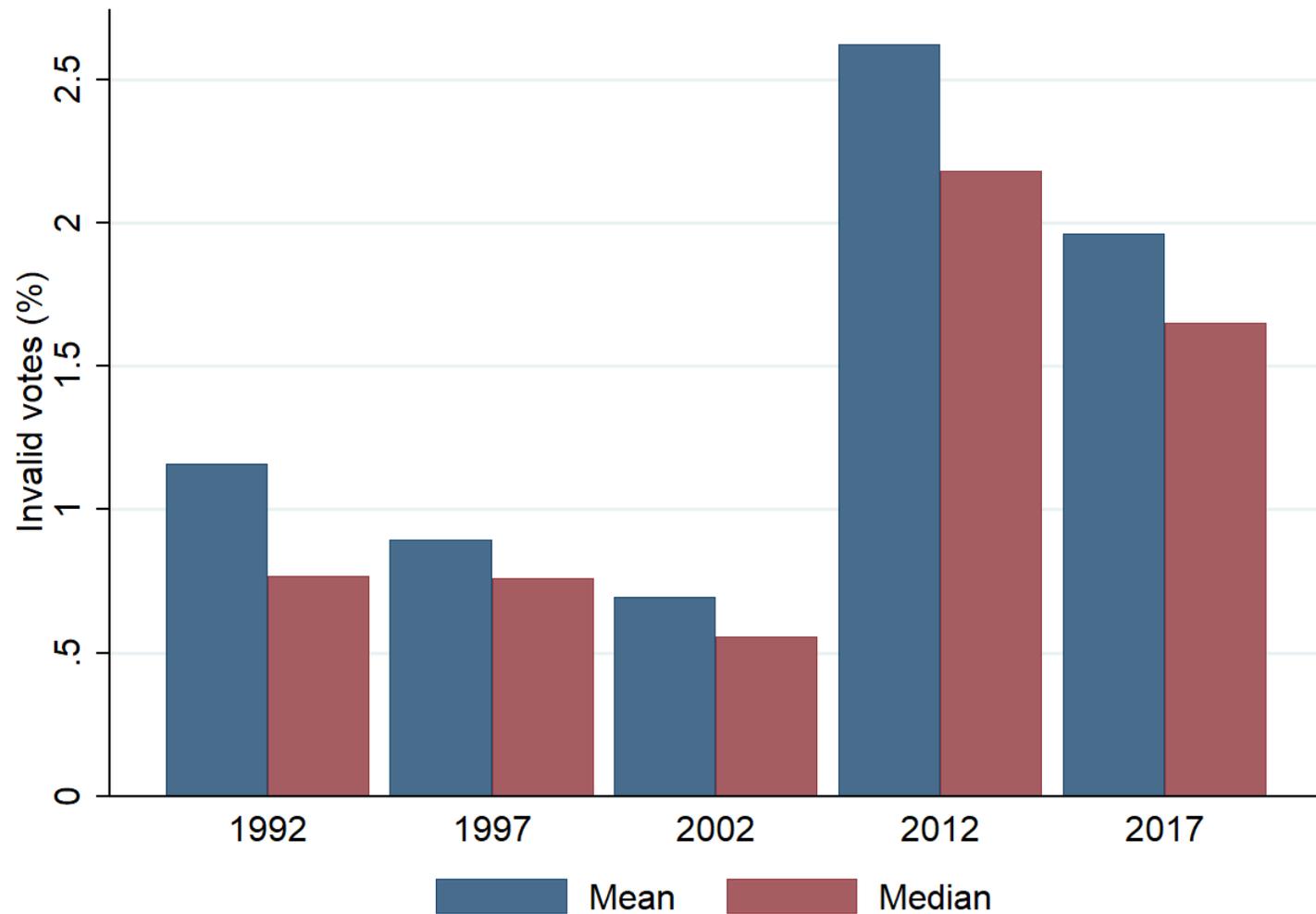
Definitely increased % of invalid ballots.

But magnitude of problem not big.

And possibly improving now.

This is a real cost.

But it is quite small.



## Cost: Vote Buying

It has been argued (Haley & Zubrinich 2018) that LPV has *caused* vote buying to increase.

By its nature it is hard to get good data on vote buying.

However, we agree with Haley & Zubrinich that vote buying has increased in the LPV years.

But we don't think that vote LPV is the main cause.

Vote buying has increased in Solomons with FPP.

Extractive industry money common to both countries.  
CDF/DSIP common to both countries.



## Benefit: Less electoral violence?

At first it seemed like LPV might have helped reduce electoral violence (2007).

Or at least stopped it in the campaign (2012).

But 2017 was a violent election throughout.

LPV has not cured the problem of electoral violence in PNG.

But given the general breakdown in law and order it is quite possible that violence would have been worse still without LPV.



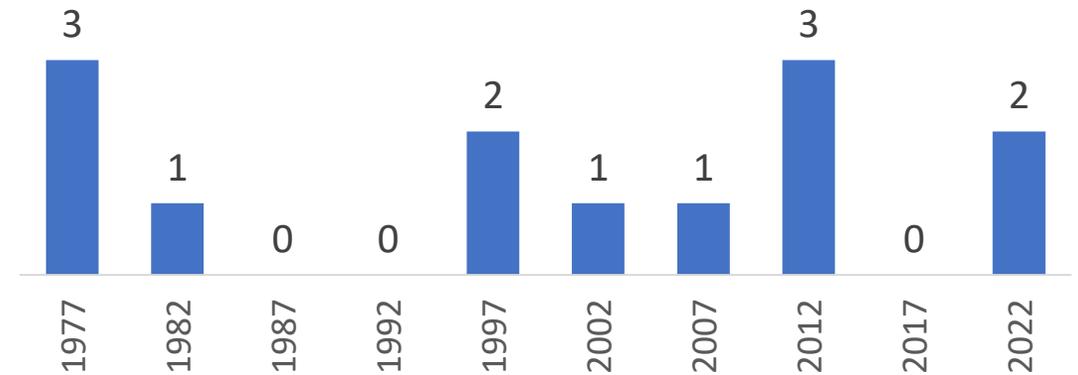
## Benefit: Women candidates?

LPV has not transformative (obviously).

Helped some like Toni, Soso, Sawang.

But hurt others like Gore (2012 and 2017).

When we look at all candidates not just winners women helped a bit more by preferences, but assistance not great.



## Benefit: Voters seem to like LPV

LPV “is all right. Why because as mentioned I can put “1” on the candidate I want and “2” and “3” on the other candidate that my family or clan want.” (Cook & Winn 2012, p. 34).

On the basis of existing anecdotal and small-n data, voters seem to like LPV.

Often for pretty basic reasons.

But if voters prefer LPV it is an important attribute that should be considered.

Yet we do need proper survey data to know if voters really like LPV.

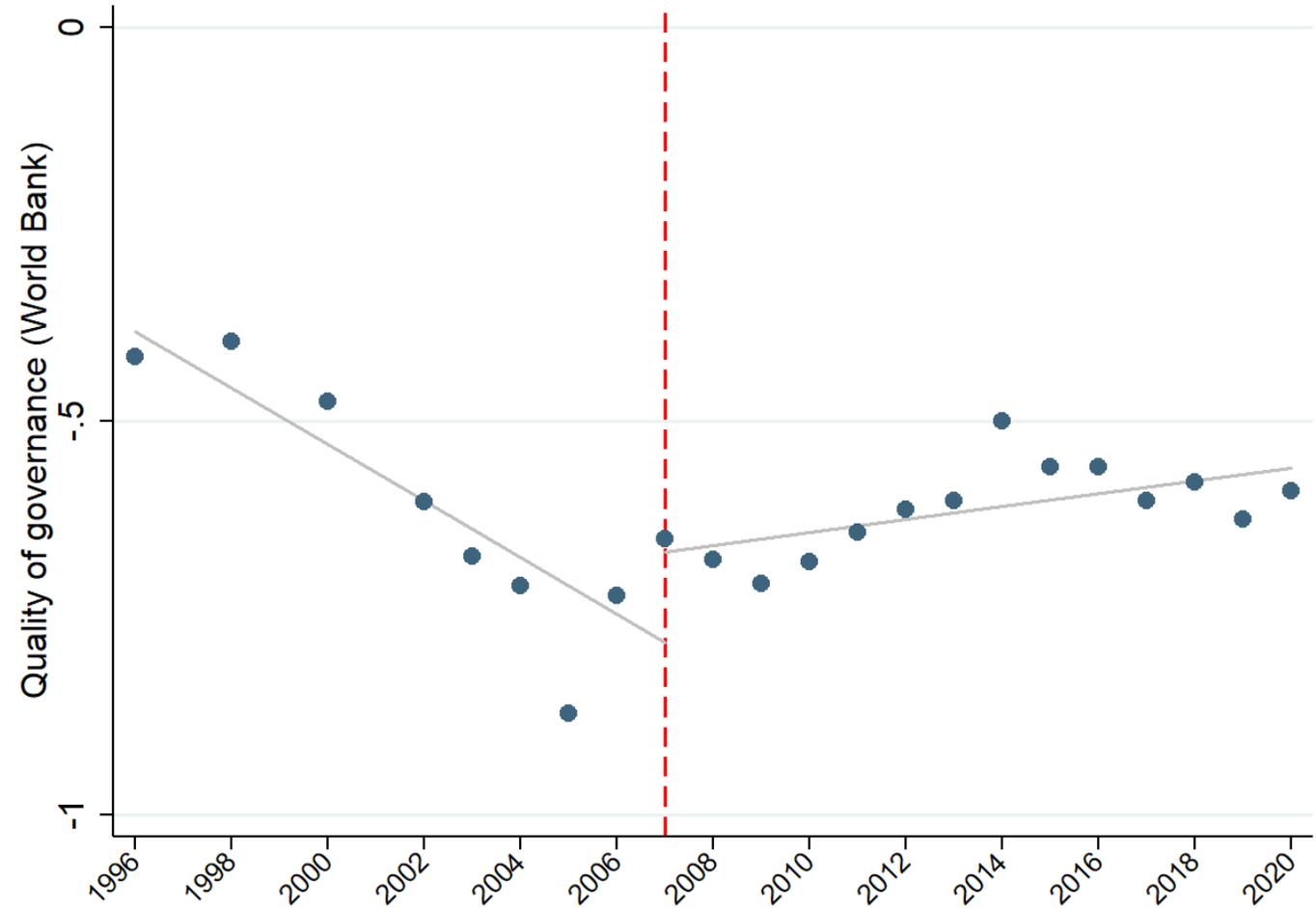
# Benefit: Quality of Governance

A bit better in LPV years.

But improvements start before LPV.

Probably thanks to Morauta reforms.

Governance worsening again post 2014.



## Costs:

- Price – real but comparatively small.
- Polling & counting complications – real but comparatively small.
- Vote buying – major issue, but not likely caused by LPV.

## Benefits:

- Less electoral violence – maybe improvement against counterfactual but no solution.
- Women candidates – helps but minor.
- Better governance – no.

## Small costs, small gains but...

- If voters value LPV, it is a major plus for the system. Need to get proper data.
- Maybe LPV is changing the nature of voter engagement? Watch this space!

# Questions?



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## What has limited preferential voting changed in Papua New Guinea?

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### Abstract

Limited preferential voting (LPV) replaced first past the post in the wake of the 2002 general elections in Papua New Guinea (PNG). The change was the source of high hopes of better electoral quality and political governance, particularly among policymakers, civil society and the international community. Among academic observers, the shift brought debate, with proponents and opponents disagreeing about whether something as simple as a change in electoral rules could overcome serious political problems. Twenty years on and three LPV general elections later, we take the opportunity to examine LPV's impact on electoral processes and outcomes, as well as governance more generally, in PNG. We find no evidence of large changes — either positive or negative — stemming from the shift in electoral systems. However, we do find some evidence of smaller benefits and costs, as well as tantalising hints of possible future potential. LPV has failed to deliver as was hoped, yet it has brought some change, and there remains a case for keeping the system in PNG.

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