

Elections and Politics in Papua New Guinea

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Today's talk

Electoral quality in PNG? (Terence)

Electoral trends (Maho)

Women candidates (Geejay)

Voters' choices and their consequences (Terence)

MPs in parliament (Michael)

Conclusion

Electoral quality



Roll problems

Polling fraud

Vote buying

Violence

but...

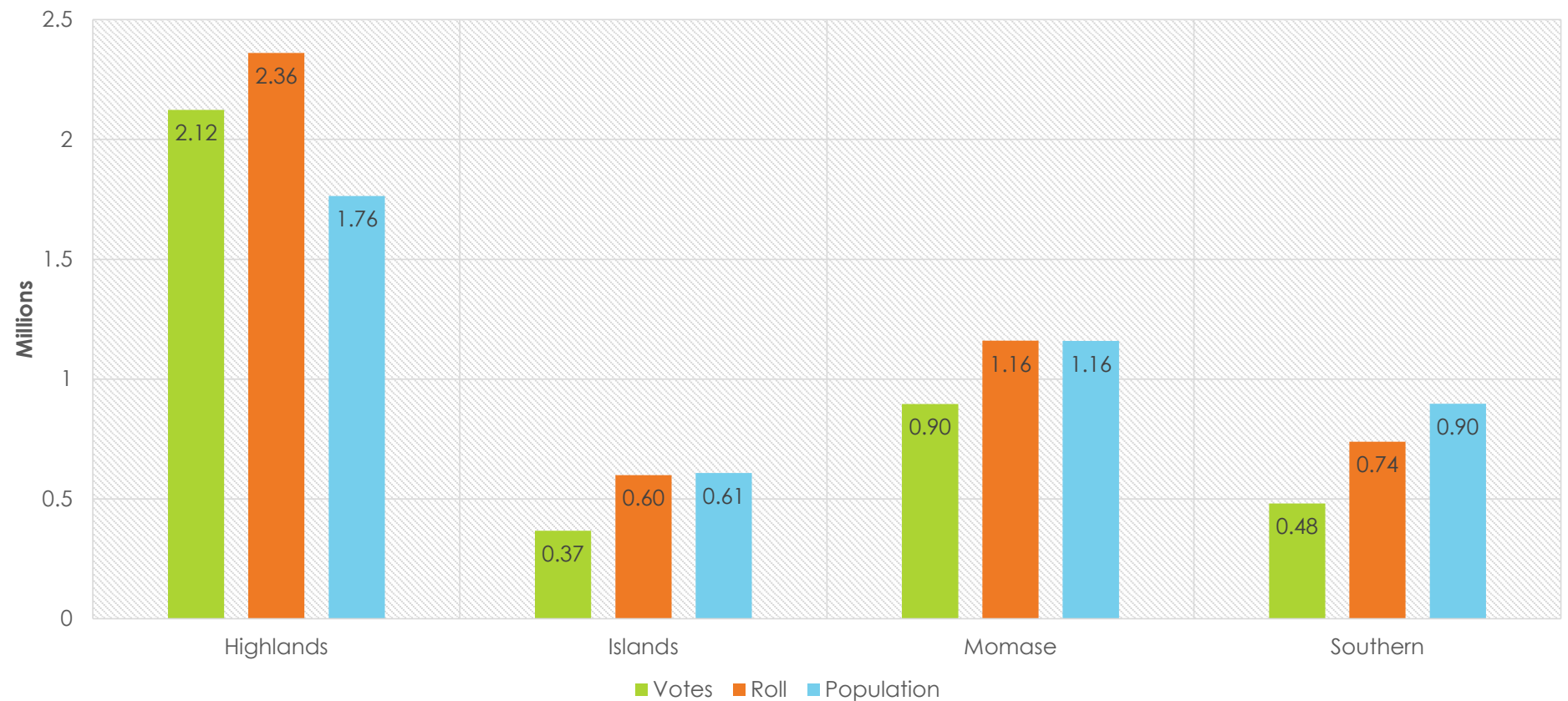
Not everywhere

Solomon
Islands, 57

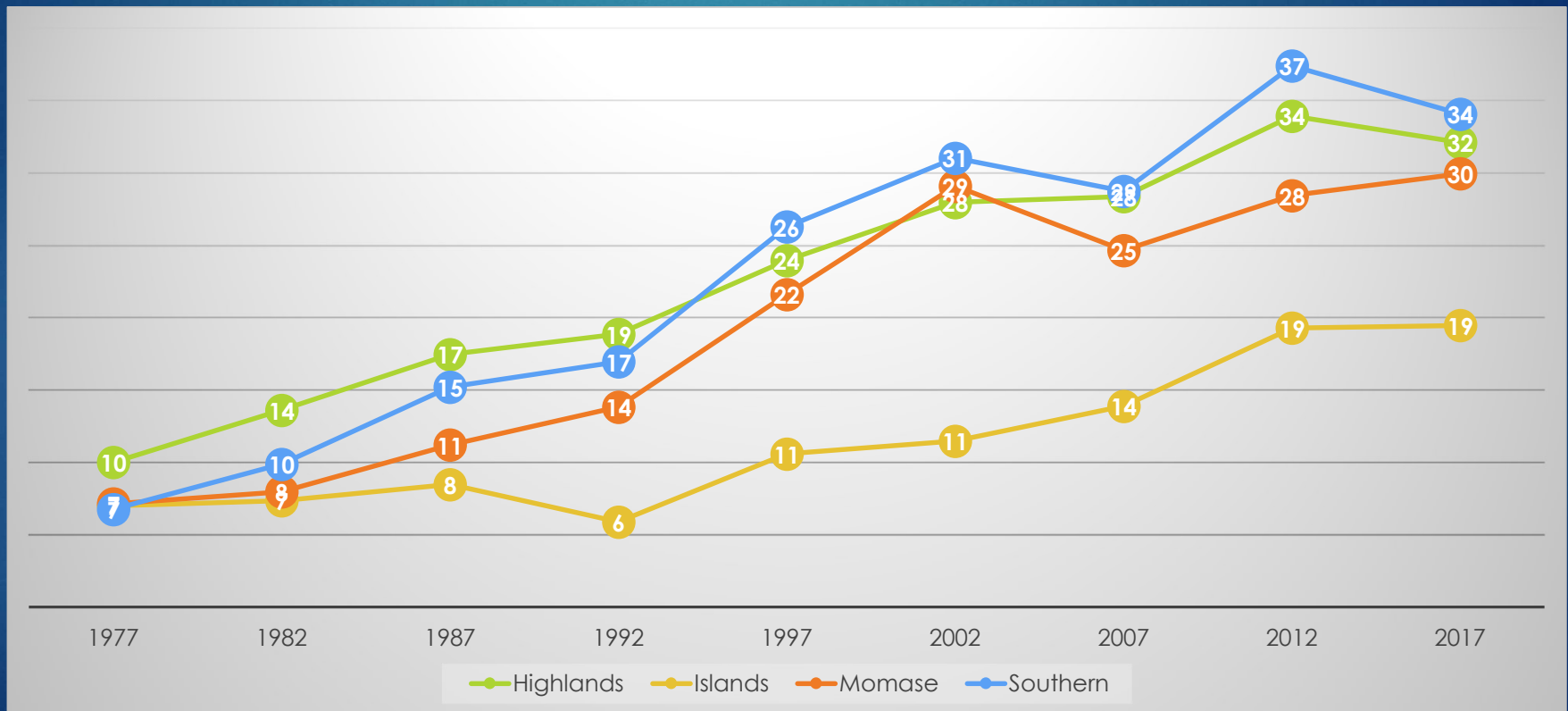
PNG, 34



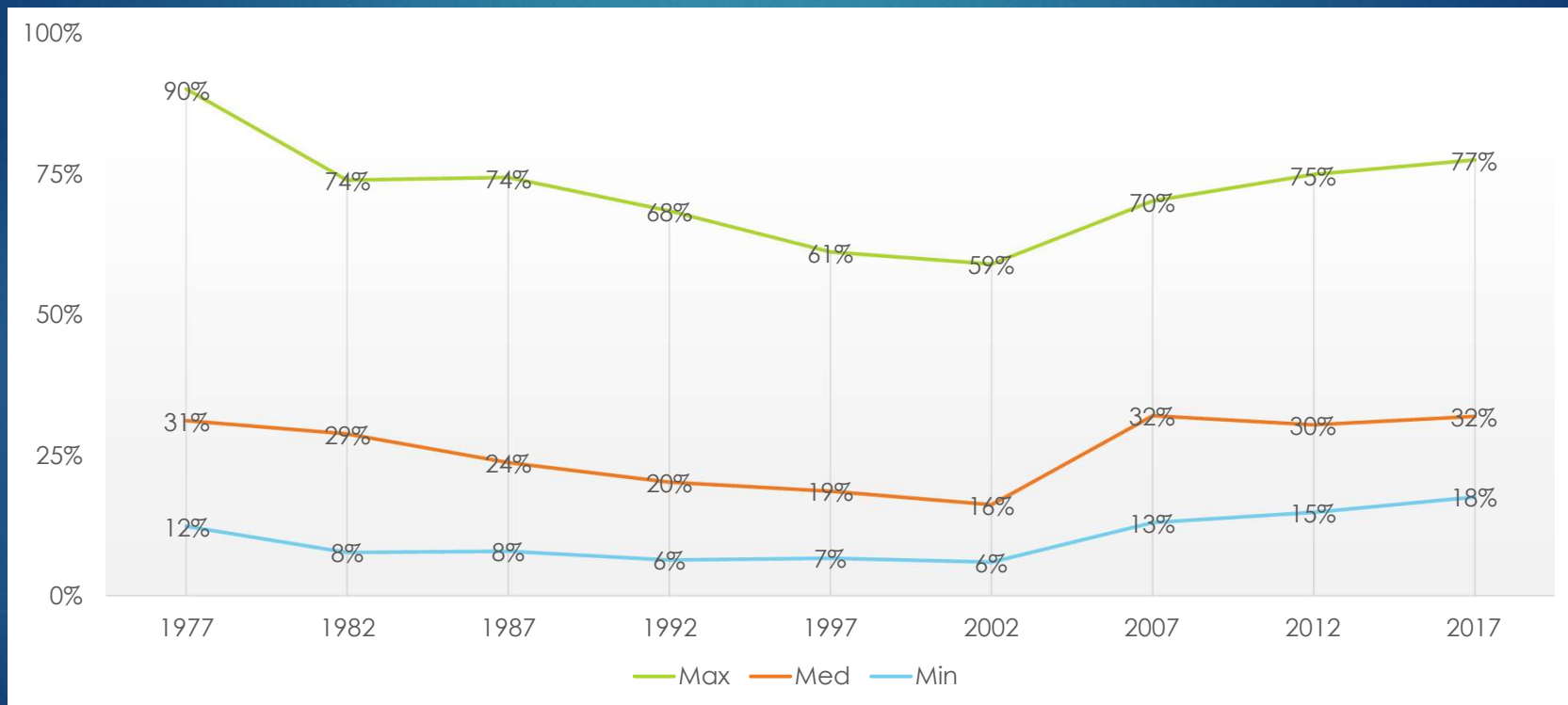
2017 Voter Participation by Region



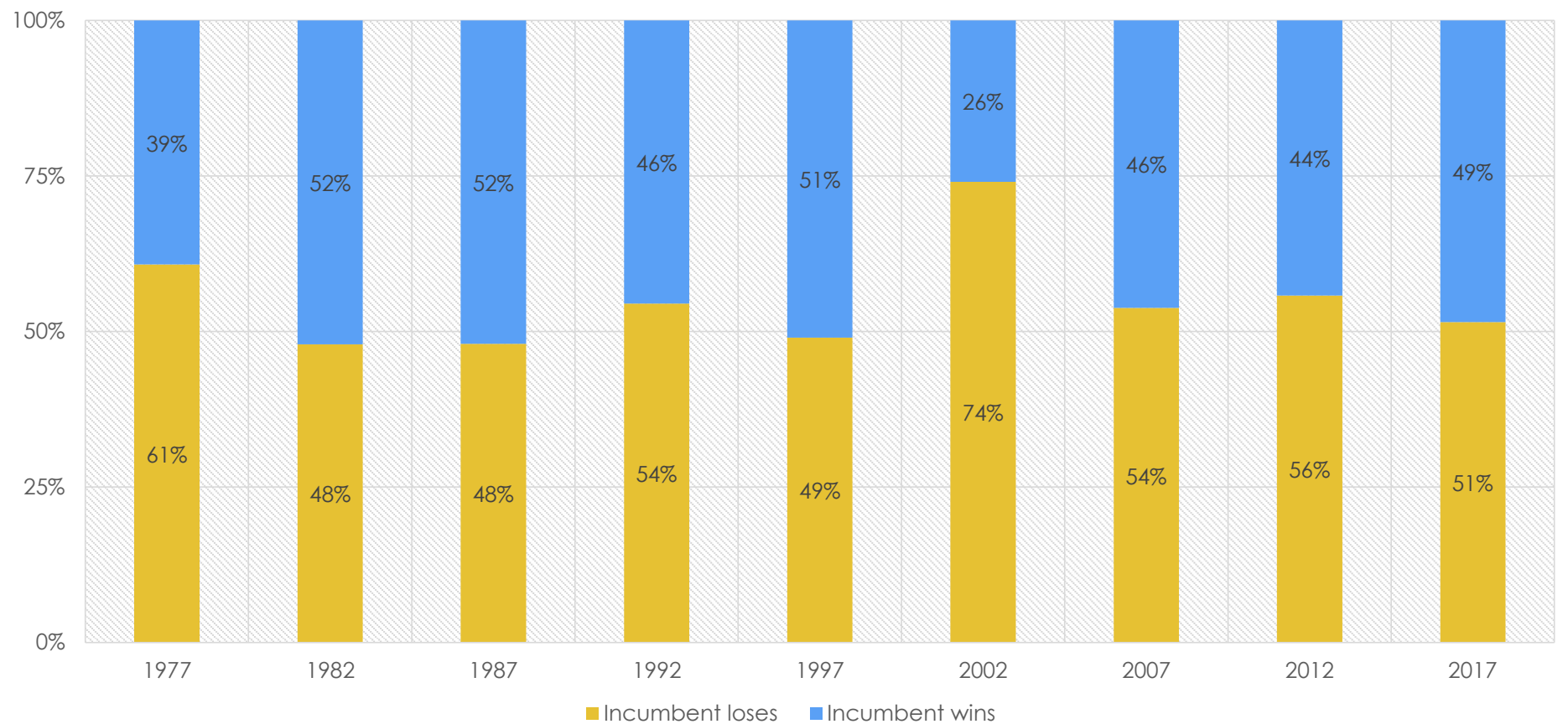
Average candidates per electorate by region



Minimum, median and maximum winning candidate vote shares over time

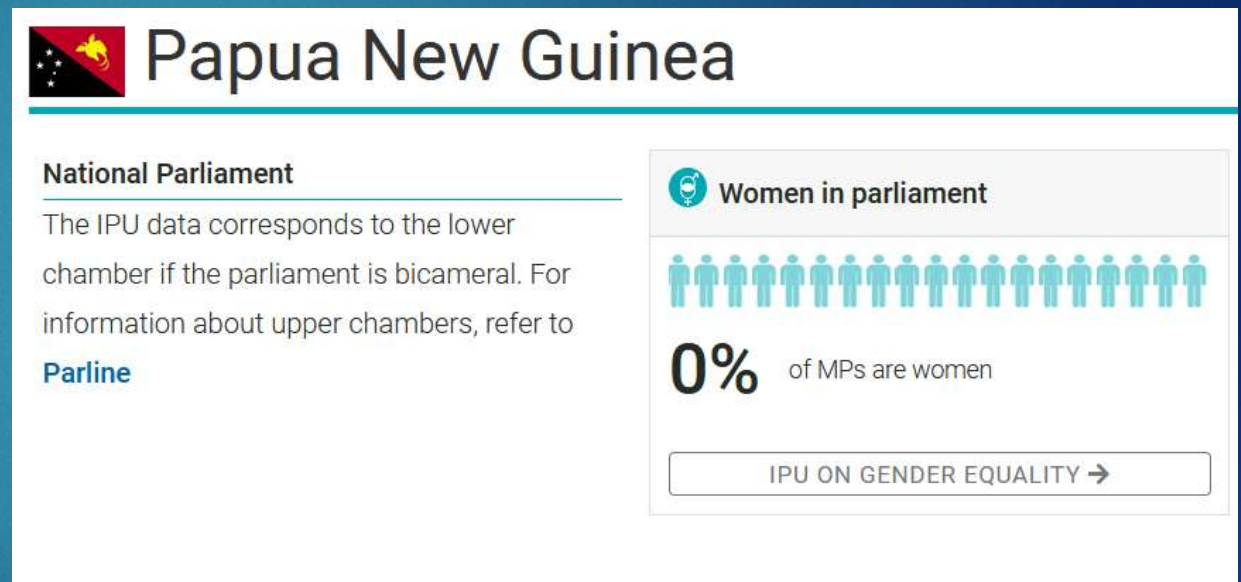


Incumbent turnover over time



Women's Political Participation & Temporary Special Measures

- ▶ Papua New Guinea's parliament currently has no women
- ▶ Three key impediments:
 1. Cultural factors
 2. Insufficient finance
 3. Violence and intimidation



Has Limited Preferential Voting helped women?

- ▶ One hope of LPV was to increase the election of women candidates
- ▶ Data impeded by limited research – information drawn from 2007, 2012, and 2017 elections
- ▶ Some encouraging trends:
 1. Increase of women competing elections
 2. Average performance tells more positive story

Temporary Special Measures – A way forward?

- ▶ TSM an alternate the government should seriously consider.
- ▶ Integrity of Political Parties and Candidates Commission increasing gender quota in political parties.
- ▶ Performance of women in Autonomous Region of Bougainville elections is encouraging.
- ▶ Endorsement of 5 regional seats.



2022 – Why more women should contest

- ▶ Ratio of female candidates compared to male candidates is low:
 - 2012 election: 3447 total candidates, 135 female candidates (4%)
 - 2017 election: 3332 total candidate, 165 female candidates (4.9%)
 - 2020 By-elections: Goroka Open 22 candidates, 3 female; Menyama Open, no women candidates; Bougainville Regional 6 candidates, 1 female candidate; Moresby North-West 42 candidates, 1 female candidate.

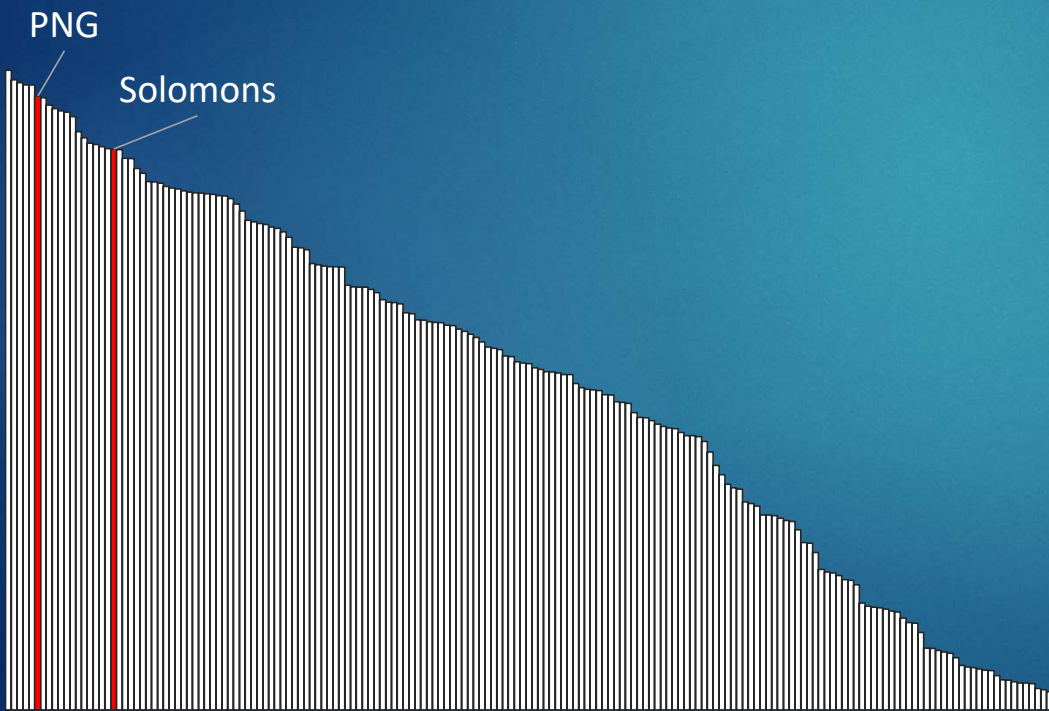
Voters' choices & their consequences

Clientelism

Sensible choice

but...

Selects and incentivises MPs to focus on their supporters not the country as a whole





Parliament term: 5 years

18 months


_After PM is elected: 18 months 'grace period'
_Vote of no confidence cannot be moved

30 months

_Period of instability
_Vote of no confidence can be moved against PM

12 months

Last 12 months before issue of writs for next election: vote of no confidence not possible



Somare (2002 - 2007) & O'Neill (2012 - 2017) are the only two PMs to complete first PM their terms as PM

How did O'Neil complete his term as PM?

Focus on O'Neill because he completes his term after OLIPPAC is declared unconstitutional, returning to the fluid politics

O'Neill's 5 years (2012 - 2017): Constitutional Amendments

30 months (previously 18)

Amendments to the Constitution:
ss. 145 (4): extended grace period
ss. 124 (1) :reduced parliament sitting days from (63 to 40)
ss. 145 (1): increased days for notice, and number of MPs to sign the notice for the motion for VONC

18 months (previously 30)

Opposition had 60 days in 5 years, to have 22 MPs to sign the notice for VONC, and submit it one month in advance

12 months

Last 12 months before issue of writs for next election: vote of no confidence not possible

O'Neill amended the Constitution 14 times: How was that possible? DSIP & PSIP? Ministerial portfolios?



Vice-Minister for Provincial and LLG Affairs, 2016:

"The reason [for the unsuccessful VONC against O'Neill in 2016] is because DSIP is there that's why we will be in the government and support the O'Neill-Dion government. It's not about your number of qualifications you have to lead the government, so long as you have the money, you will master the numbers...." (Freddy Mou, 2016).



2019 - 2021 in a nutshell

18 months grace period

18 months grace period

5 months window

12 months

O'Neill's 18 months (Aug. 2017 - May 2019)

Marape's 18 months (May 2019 - Nov. 2020)

VONC window: Dec 2020 - April 2021

Last 12 months begins April 2021

How did O'Neill lose influence?
All amendments declared unconstitutional in 2016
Economic downturn: DSIP and PSIP slashed?

Issue of writs: April 2022, which means April 2021 is the beginning of last 12 months:
VONC not possible

Conclusions & looking forwards

Election 2022!

Clear and compelling case for TSM

For other problems, laws don't always work

The solutions to the problems of clientelism and PNG's parliamentary dynamics require socio-political change.

Questions?