

# ANU-UPNG

## State fragility in PNG

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# State fragility in PNG: A weak state and strong microsocieties

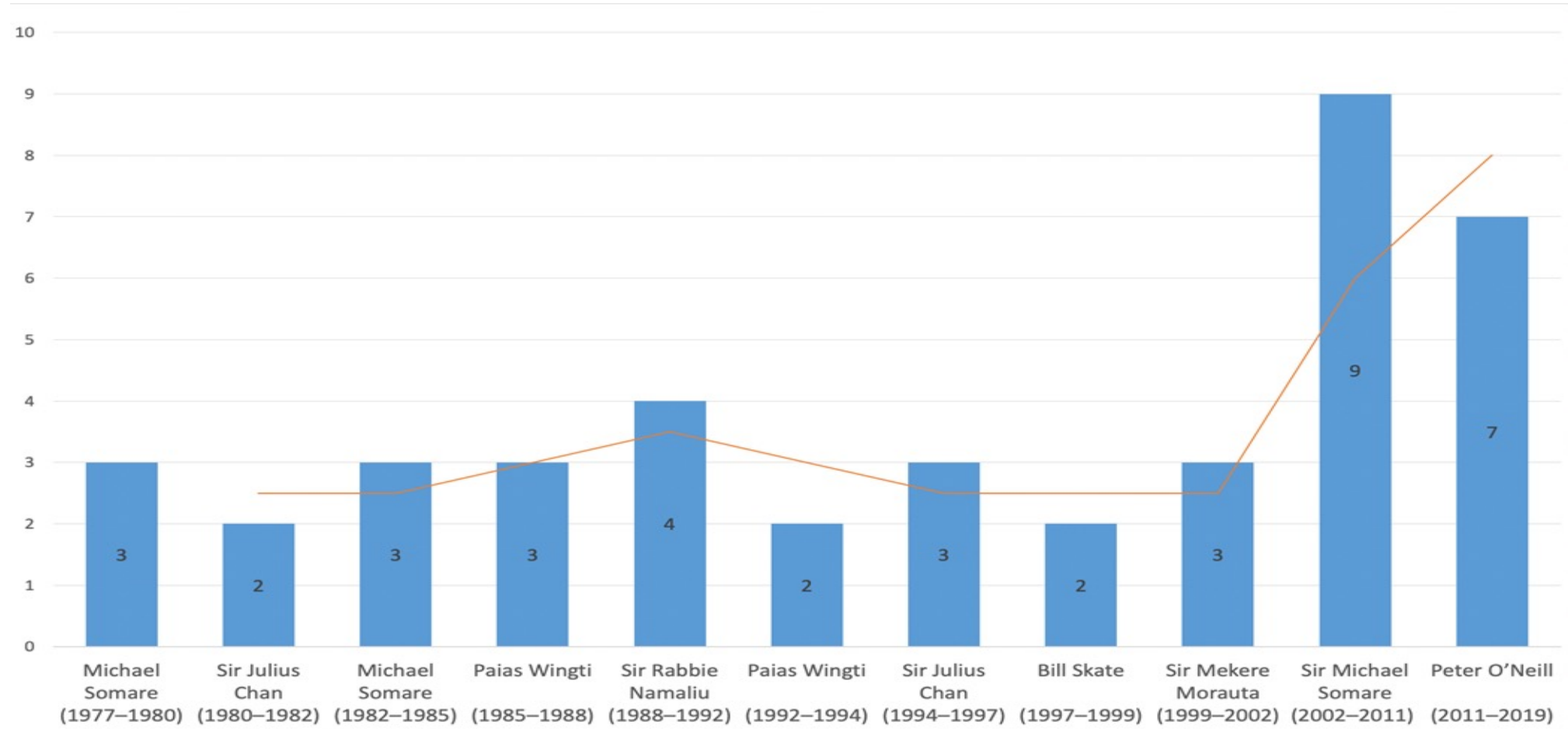
- Measuring state fragility?
  - A multidimensional approach to the study of fragility.
    - State authority
    - State capacity,
    - legitimacy, and
    - Economy and resilience
    - Context

# State fragility in PNG

- Observations

- State weakness and societal fragmentation
- Politics in this context shows a stable-fragile characteristic
  - Despite persistent political instability, democracy has survived in PNG since Independence
- While a resource rich country, benefits of the mineral boom were not turned into effective development outcomes,
  - High levels of poverty and inequality persist
- A low level conflict is also prevalent in PNG.
- How state fragility in PNG can be classified?

# Political legitimacy

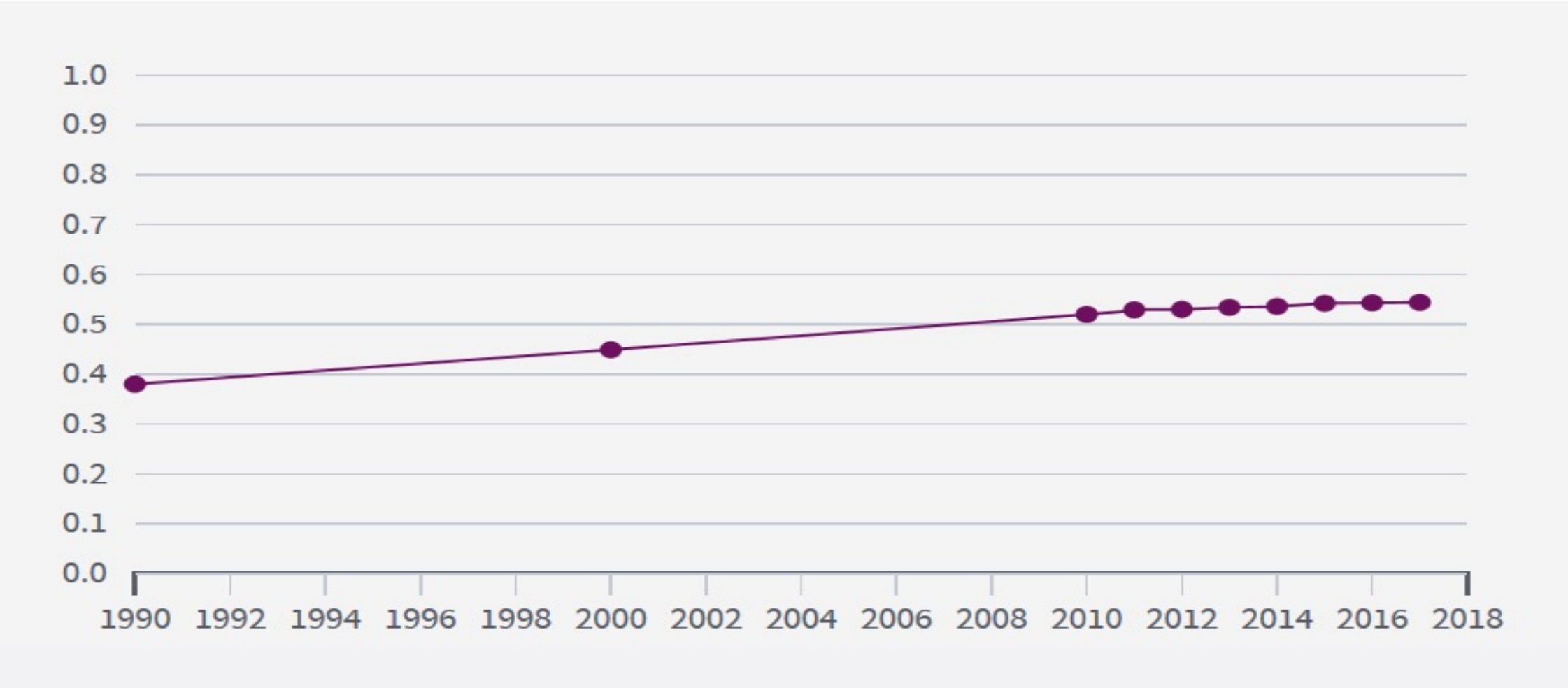


# State capacity

Year	Total	On Strength	Unattached	Vacancy
2008	81,318	77,739	570	3,009
2009	81,174	76,980	1,299	2,952
2010	95,757	91,480	865	3,412
2011	96,522	90,347	2,013	4,634
2012	10,4792	72,295	398	32,097
2013	99,262	94,807	76	4,379
2014	11,5321	107,657	657	7,007
2015	10,3837	89,814	1,446	12,577

Total government civilian and military staff, 2008–2015

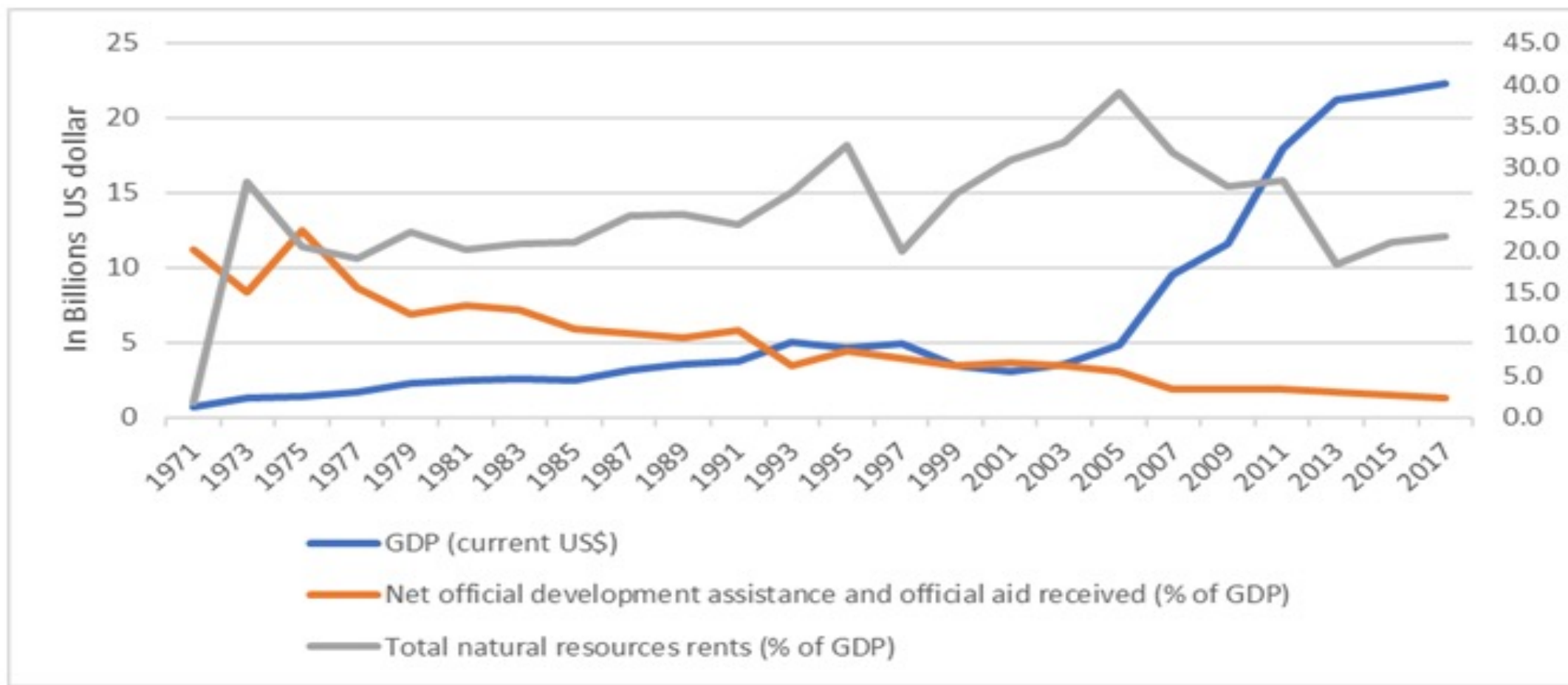
# The state of human development in PNG, 1990-2018



# Economy

- The PNG economy has four dominant features:
  - the existence of a large informal sector
  - high natural resource dependency
  - high inequality, and Poverty
- Over 70% of people live at a subsistence level and produce their own food, clothing, and shelter.
- The latter includes plantations that supply copra (dried coconut meat), coffee, cocoa, rubber, tea, palm oil, and cattle for exports, as well as mining.
- According to the World Bank, PNG is the tenth most resource-dependent economy in the world

# Aid and natural resource rents (% of GDP)

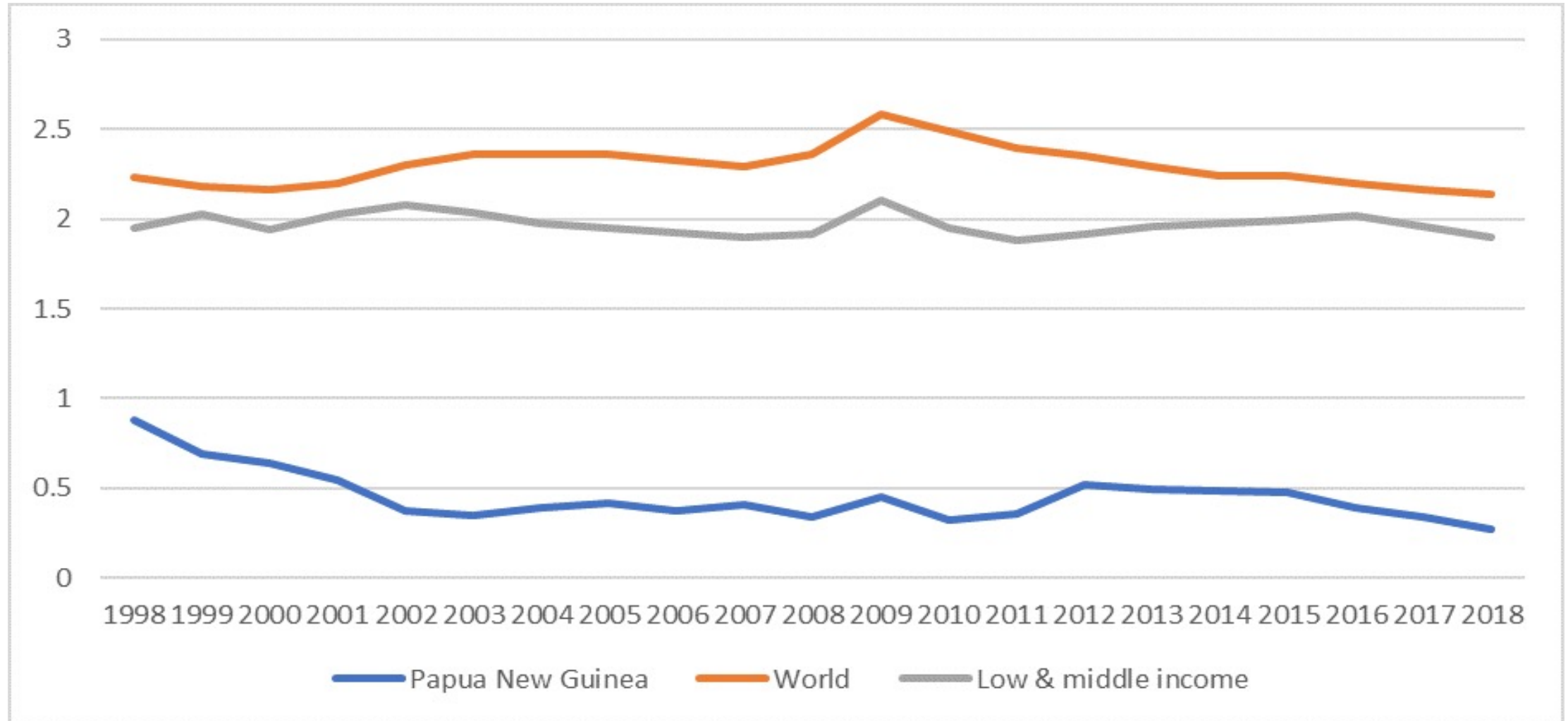




# Conflict and violence

- Large-scale violence at the national, or even regional, level in PNG is rare.
- While fragmentation is widespread, no group is large enough to pose a credible threat to stability.
- However, low-level violence is common
- The prevalence of crime and violence in PNG is reported to be among the highest in the world, especially in major cities such as Port Moresby and Lae.
- This situation presents a major obstacle to long-term development.

## Military expenditure as percentage of GDP, 1998–2018



# Community Resilience

- Communities, in particular, have shown greater resilience in offering informal social safety nets through *wantok* networks.
- This traditional mechanism of community self-help prevents starvation and encourages reciprocal cooperation among the members of the same community, either inside or outside concerned communities.
- The downside of this practice, however, is that it puts increasing pressure on the relatively small number of people who are employed.
- Political regime have also shown resilience in PNG.
- PNG is exposed to climate change and ongoing crimes.

# Concluding observations

- PNG has a number of features that have shaped a particular form of fragility which could be classified as stable-fragile.
- Deficiencies in state capacity is observed.
- There is also lack of state authority and legitimacy.
- In particular, clientelism can be seen as a fundamental driver of state fragility in PNG, and *vice versa*.
- There is also a mutually reinforcing relationship between fragility and violence: violence makes it more difficult for the state to operate, while fragility makes it harder to counter violence.
- In addition, PNG's historical resource wealth makes resource dependency possible, and state fragility makes it inevitable.