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

[Bar chart showing political legitimacy over time for various leaders with specific time periods and numerical values for each period.]
## State capacity

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

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.