

# Uneven development and it's effects: livelihoods and urban and rural spaces in Papua New Guinea

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# Outline

- Introduction and background
- Uneven development and urban PNG
- Uneven development and rural PNG
- Conclusion
- Questions

# Introduction

## Motivation for the chapter

- Better assess challenges and opportunities for development
  - PNG rich nat. resources, but extremes of wealth & poverty
- Little written on uneven development in PNG (some exceptions: eg Connell, 1997)
- Most development assessments compare PNG to other countries or they rank subnational territories

In our assessment we focus on the **complexity** of development **processes**:

- highlight the importance of demography, geography and history for shaping uneven development

# Introduction

We examine the uneven nature of development within and between rural and urban spaces in PNG

Methodology: literature review

- Challenges
- Learnings: Collaboration, links to teaching.

# Background

- Development in PNG takes place in an environment that is extremely complex and challenging. The inextricably intertwined web of cultural, economic, political, environmental and social forces impact development.

It is important to note, uneven development has a **history** and a **geography**:

- Environmental factors (eg soil quality, rainfall) have shaped subsequent investment in infrastructure (see Allen et al 2005).
- Colonial period has also shaped development opportunities. Eg. Natural harbours in urban areas, establishment of various enterprises such as plantations.

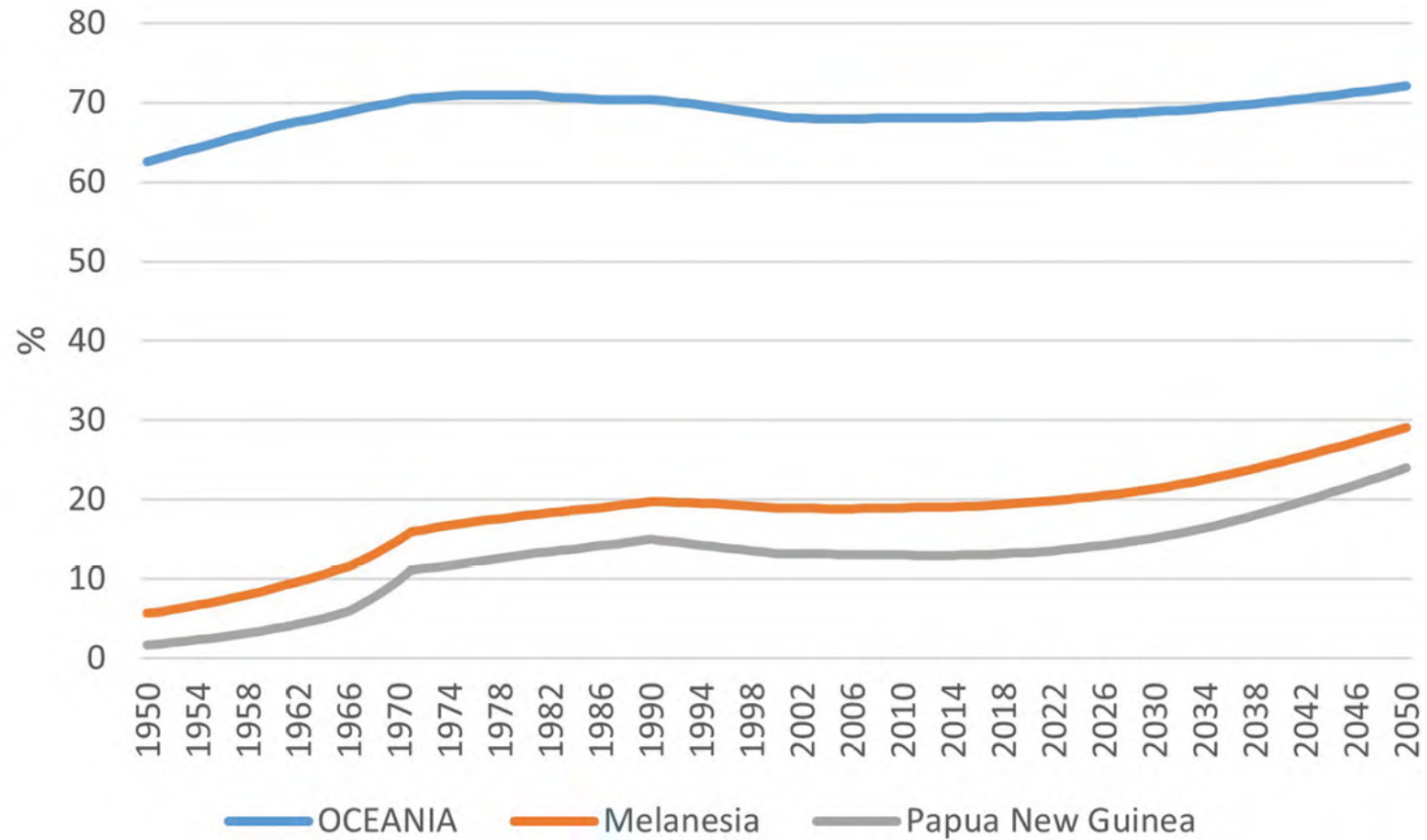
# Uneven Development and Urban PNG



# Urbanisation

- PNG is the least urbanised country in the world
- Around 13% living in urban areas in 2018
  - 40% living in urban areas not born in there
- By 2050, a quarter of PNG's citizens will live in urban areas (UN DESA, 2019, p. 35)
- This shapes the country's livelihood opportunities and, in turn, politics

# Urbanisation



# Urbanism

Urban areas home to better government services and economic opportunities

However, PNG's urban spaces face significant challenges:

- Security
  - High cost to business
  - Gendered dimension
- Settlements
  - 45% in POM live in settlements (UNHabitat, 2010, 9)
  - Inadequate services
  - Frequently cleared (little united ongoing response)
- Urban development can exacerbate inequality

# ‘Ambivalent’ Urbanism

Strong links between urban and rural spaces

- Economic links (eg buai trade, remittances)
- Social and cultural links
  - Retiring back in the village
  - Sending bodies home for burial

Many call cities/towns their home; however, expectation that PNG'ns do not rightly belong in urban areas.

- This attitude has a long history
  - Somare argued against developing cities (Connell, 1997, p. 187)
  - ‘ambivalent townsmen’ (Levine and Levine 1979)

# Uneven development and rural PNG



# Uneven development and rural PNG

- Can't assume "subsistence affluence"
- The history of particular places determines development outcomes and opportunities in rural areas
- Intergenerational legacies

# Rural and Community Development

- Service delivery seems to have stagnated in rural areas
- Development outcomes vary across provinces
- Early attempts to address systemic disadvantage have been abandoned and replaced by fragmented and small-scale rural development projects
- Not easy to tackle inequality (e.g. Tuition Fee Free policy reversals)



# Uneven development, inequality and social aspiration

- Uneven development and inequality shift social aspirations
- Patronage politics and the disparagement of elites
- Expectations of windfall gains (mining rents; fast money schemes)



# Conclusion

- Process of development in PNG is complex
  - Importance of rural politics: subnational development
  - Colonial history, geography & natural environment shapes where development takes place
  - Support networks and development enclaves
- Social and economic policies to focus on unique issues facing rural communities.
- Opportunities for social and economic development – focus on small scale livelihood opportunities.
- Opportunities and future directions from this collaboration

# Questions?

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