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An analysis of voter's participation in
Papua New Guinea 2022 national general
election:

The nature of women's participation in
Port Moresby Northwest electorate

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Introduction: Context of elections in PNG

Elections in PNG is often described as volatile, dangerous and unpredictable. Posing risks to voters in participating in the even

Current women political participation focus on Women contesting and running for office.

Women contesting the seat (highest level) vs Women casting a ballot (lowest level)?

Factors limiting or preventing voters (women) to participate in casting a ballot during national elections.

Research Methodology and Methods

Research Methodology

- Qualitative Research Methodology
- Phenomenology – describes an individual's lived experiences. Only those who have lived the phenomenon can best describe how it affects them

Research Methods

- Semi-structured interviews
- Sampling – random and purpose sampling

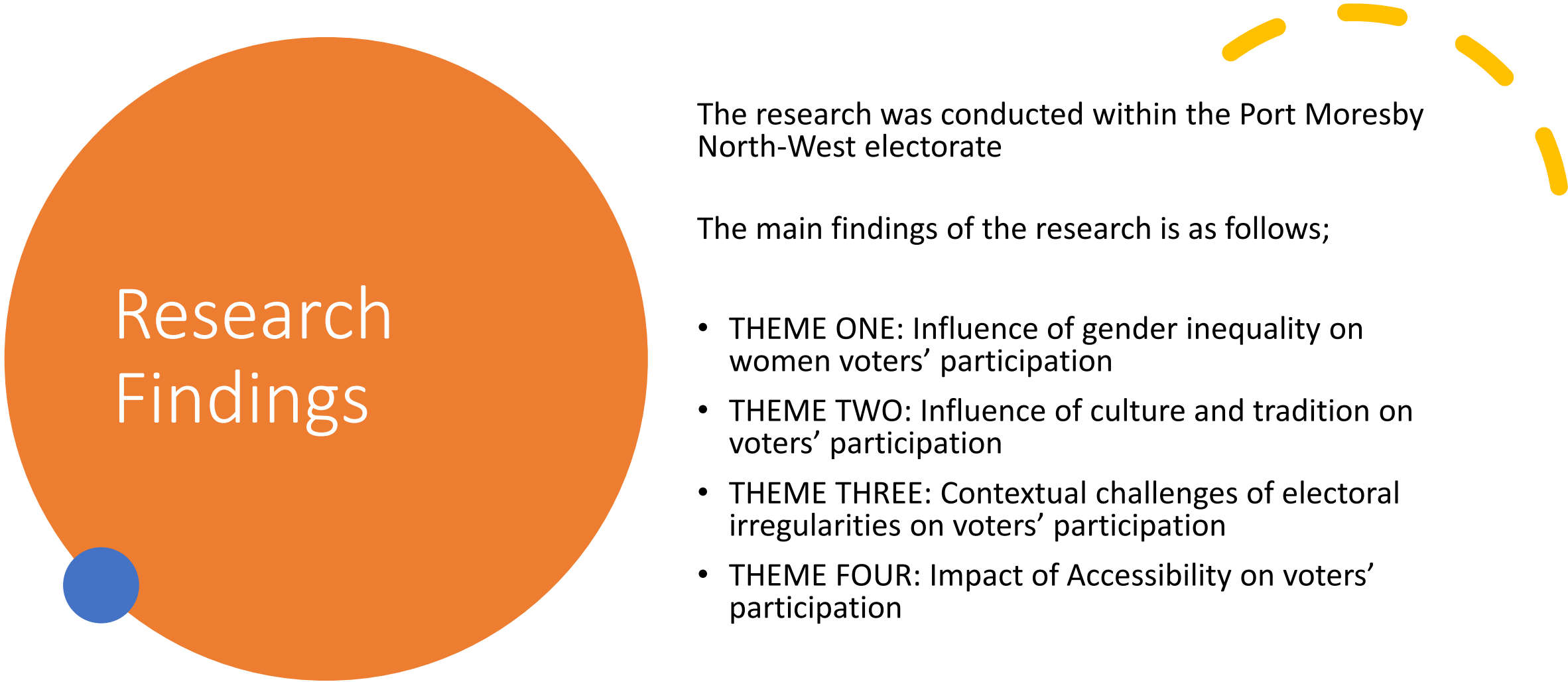
Theoretical Framework

- Voter-turnout – Harder and Krosnick (2008)



Data Collection - Targeted Participants

- There were 3 targeted groups of participants in this research (inclusive approach)
- One-on-one semi-structured interview with voters, both men and women. Those who were able/not able to cast a vote (10-20 proposed participants)
- Semi-structured interview for electoral officials, both men and women (2 – 5 proposed participants)
- Semi-structured interviews with those in leadership/policy making positions at Electoral Commission (2-3 participants)
- Total number of participants was 8 participants (in-depth interviews that capture nuance and complexities of the nature women voter's participation)



Research Findings

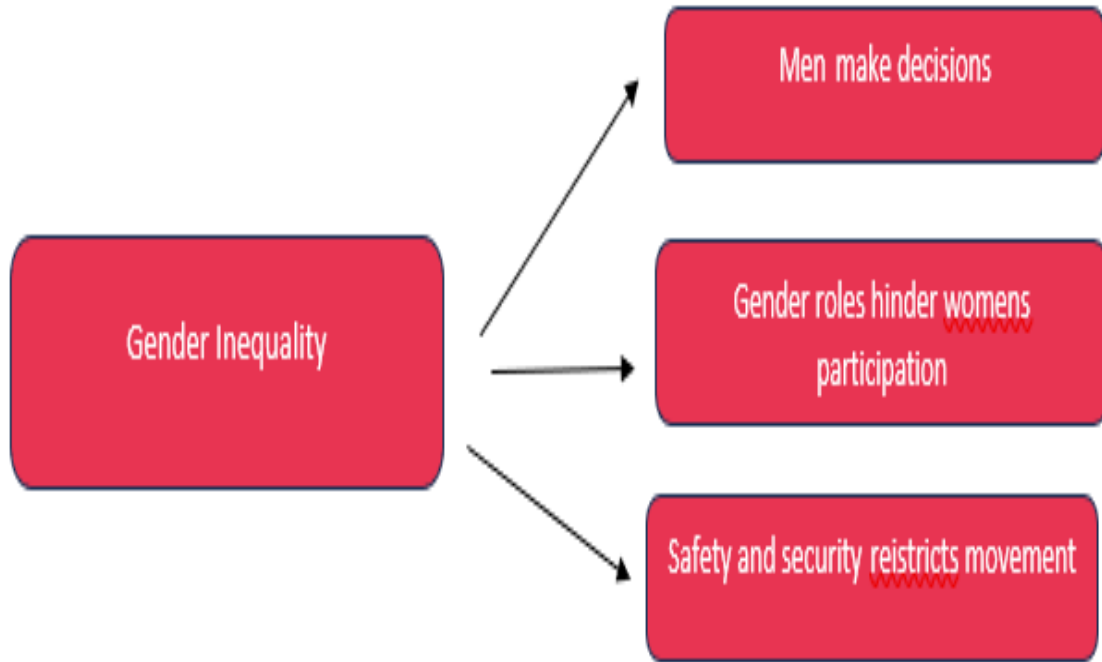
The research was conducted within the Port Moresby North-West electorate

The main findings of the research is as follows;

- THEME ONE: Influence of gender inequality on women voters' participation
- THEME TWO: Influence of culture and tradition on voters' participation
- THEME THREE: Contextual challenges of electoral irregularities on voters' participation
- THEME FOUR: Impact of Accessibility on voters' participation

The Meaning – Discussion and Impact

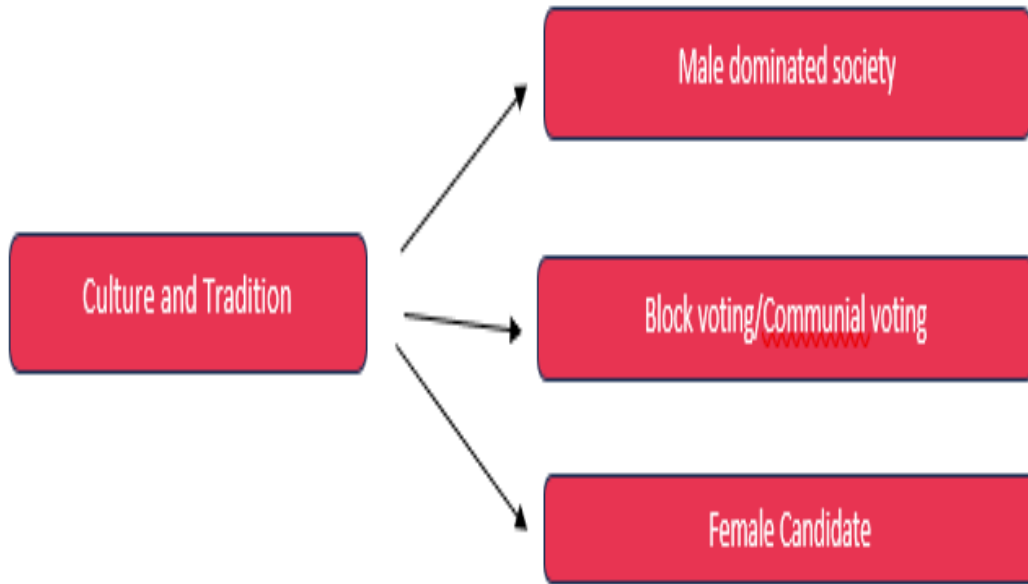
1. THEME ONE: Influence of gender inequality on women voters' participation



Author's Analysis

- The majority of PNG societies is patriarchal where women are seen as inferior to men and men have dominance over women (Vali, 2010. pg. 91).
- In this society women generally, do not have the ability to exercise their rights, **make decisions**, and participate in opportunities for self-development, including participation in the political space, even at the simplest level of casting a ballot.
- **Specific gender roles and responsibilities in PNG societies clearly points out the various roles and responsibilities expected to be carried out by men and women, respectively.**
- Elections in PNG is usually violent and volatile. Despite most **women knowing their democratic rights to participate, they are willing and able to participate**, they are often hindered to go the polling stations and cast their votes because of grave safety and security concerns.

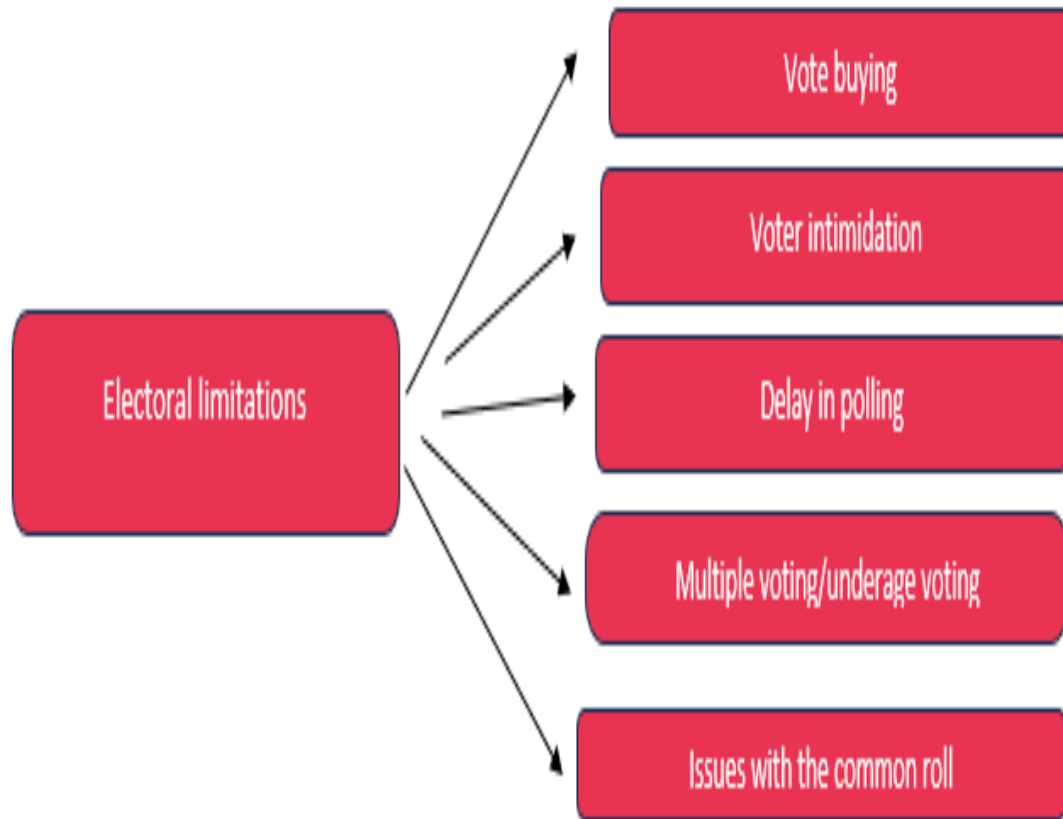
2. THEME TWO: Influence of culture and tradition on voters' participation



Author's Analysis

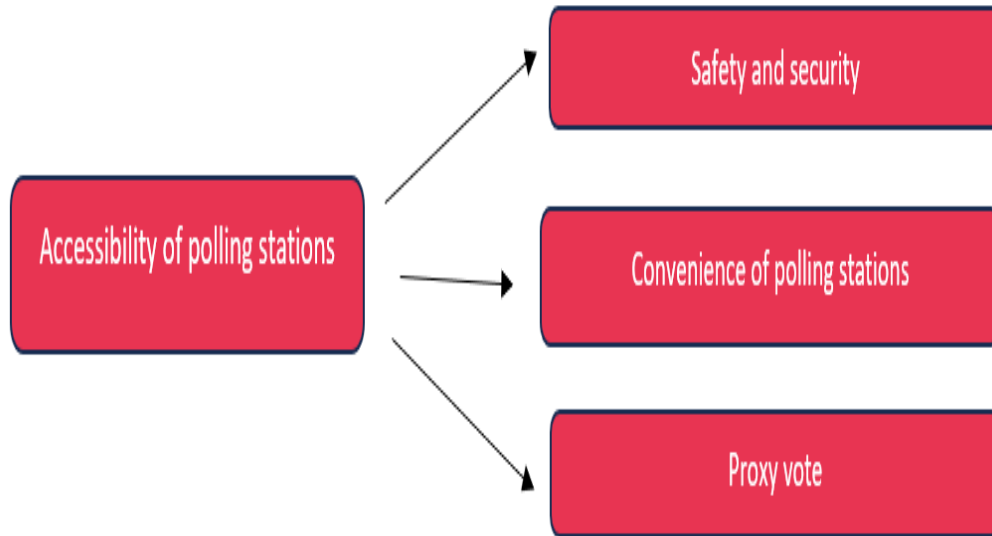
- Apart for a few matrilineal societies, PNG is predominantly a patrilineal society (Eves, R. 2016) and the concept of 'Big man' in PNG's contemporary society amplifies this notion.
- Bloc voting in PNG often **involves clan-based decision-making**, where the **preferences of the clan or community heavily influence individual votes**.
- As findings revealed during the 2022 election in MNW participants acknowledged that having a **female candidate contesting the election has greatly influence their participation in the electoral process**.

3. THEME THREE: Contextual challenges of electoral irregularities on voters' participation



- While there are many contributions to electoral limitations the findings of this study states that the issues with the common roll give rise or provide room for further illegal practices.
- During TIPNG's 2022 Election Observation it was found that the use of other voter's names is a recurring issue.
- As a result, genuine voters missed out and were denied their right to vote. It is highly concerning that in 78.3% of the polling places observed by TIPNG, at least some eligible voters were not able to vote in the 2022 election because of flaws in the electoral roll. (TIPNG, 2023)
- In this study many voters of eligible age, and those who have lived in the area over a decade were not able to cast a vote, owing issues with the common roll.

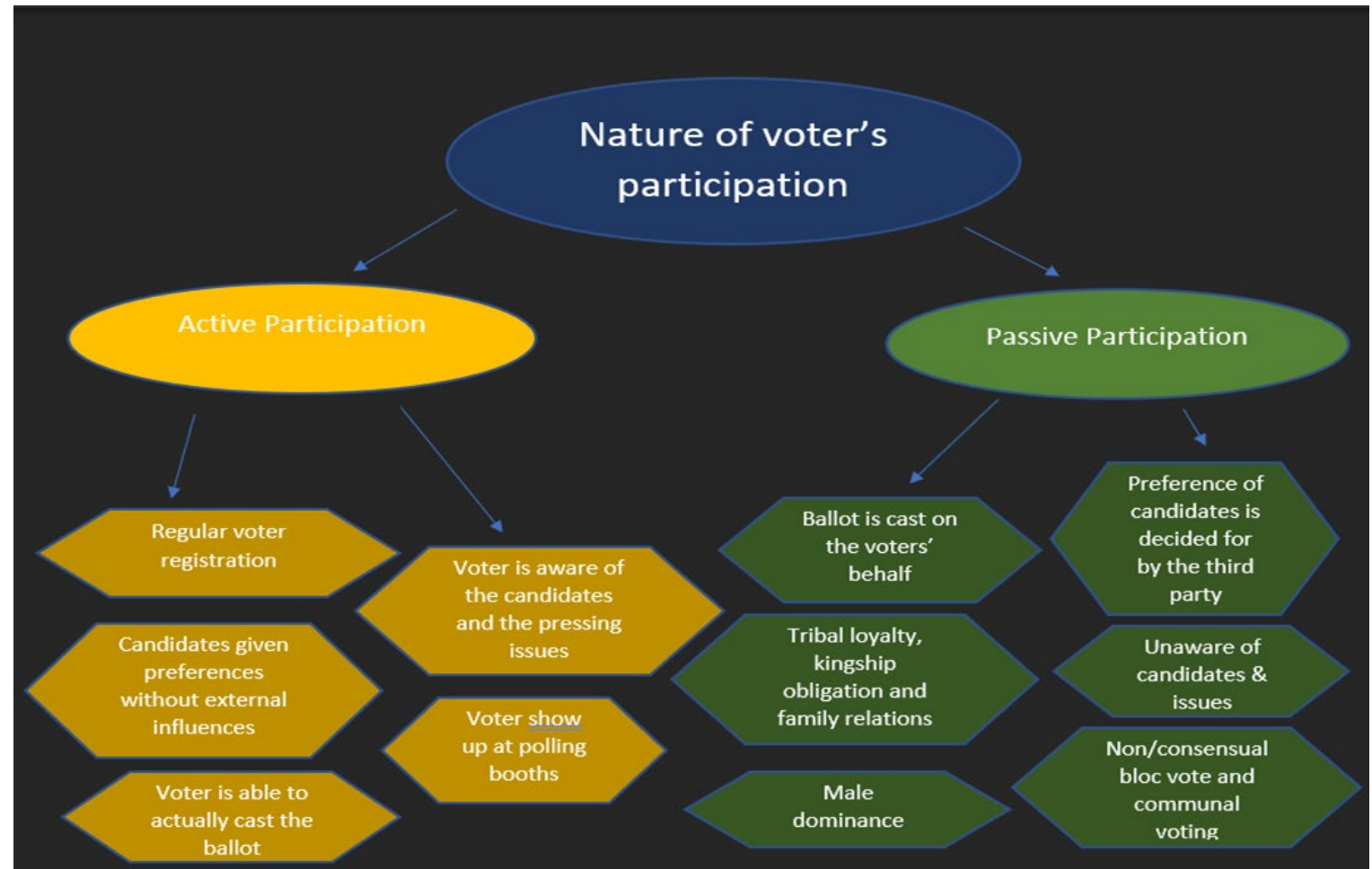
4. THEME FOUR: Impact of Accessibility on voters' participation



Author's Analysis

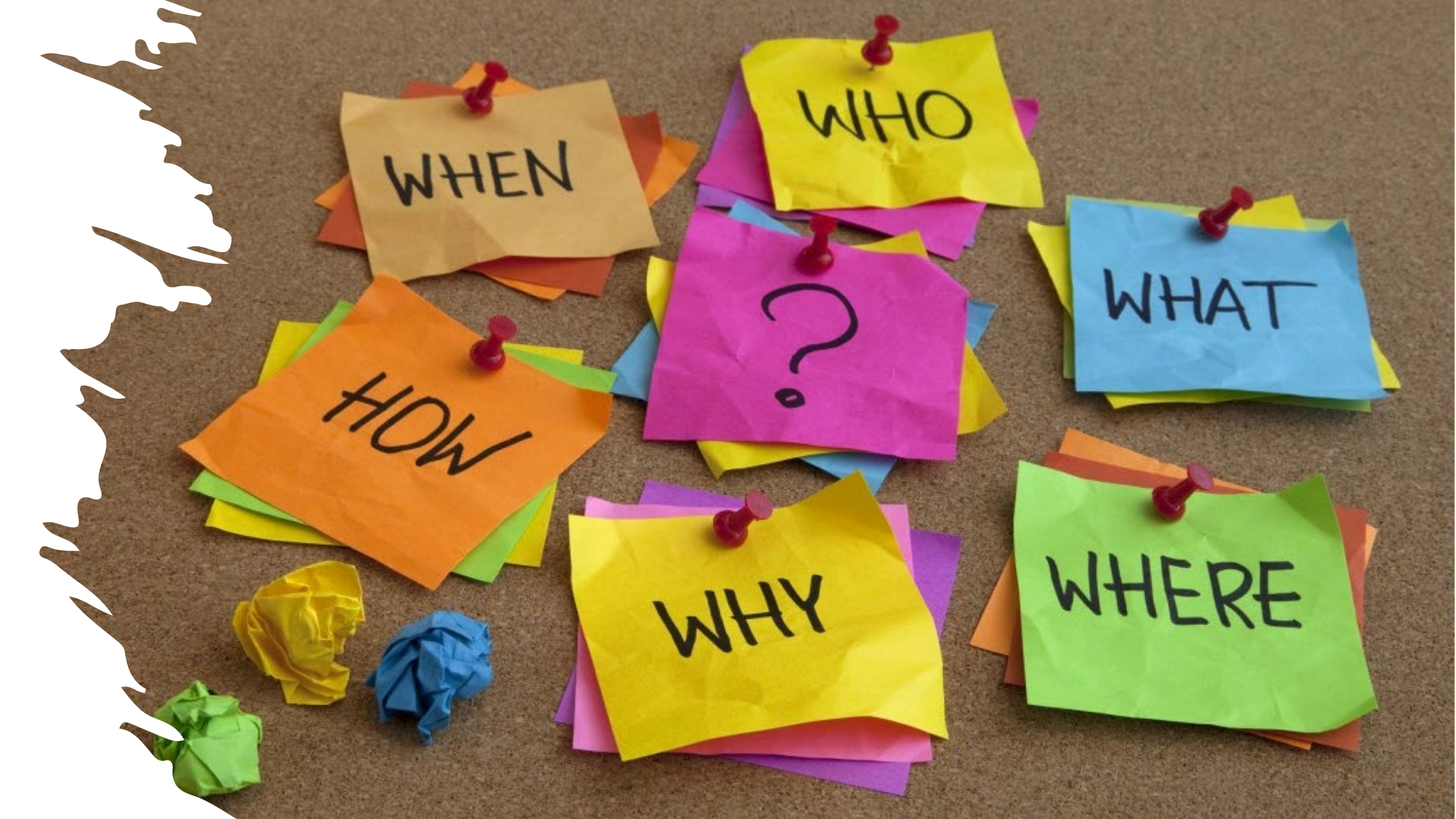
- Interestingly during the recent election, more than three quarter voters in Port Moresby reported that **security was notably better compared to other centers** in the country.
- All participants interviewed responded that polling station was **either close by their residence or was a walking distance enabling them to participate** in the electoral process.
- **Proxy Vote** - the women willingly sought assistance from their male member of the family **to cast the vote on their behalf** and/or the male relative will make the decision to cast the ballot on behalf of the women

Nature of Voters Participation (women voters)



CONCLUSION

- PNG's national general elections is an important event in the country. However, voters' active participation especially among women is often hindered.
- This research utilized the Qualitative methodology and had its focus was on Port Moresby North-West electorate
- Both men and women/voters who were able to cast a vote and those who could not, and other targeted participant were involved in the study to ensure unbiased, equal and fair participation of all voters
- The findings of the research concluded that the nature of women's participation can be categorized into two categories, either as active voters or passive voters. Further research is needed to understand the issue fully.



WHEN

WHO

WHAT

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HOW

WHY

WHERE