

Pathways to better governance in Papua New Guinea



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Good governance stew

20 minutes • Makes 4 servings

INGREDIENTS

- Three kau kau
- Pumpkin tips
- Technical Assistance
- Tin beef
- 3 Chickens

TIP

Let the TA rest for a few minutes.

PREPARATION

Boil the water

Put pumpkin tips in the water.

Preheat the grill to medium-high heat.

Season the chicken with salt, pepper, and a drizzle of olive oil.

Grill the chicken for about 6-8 minutes per side, or until cooked through.

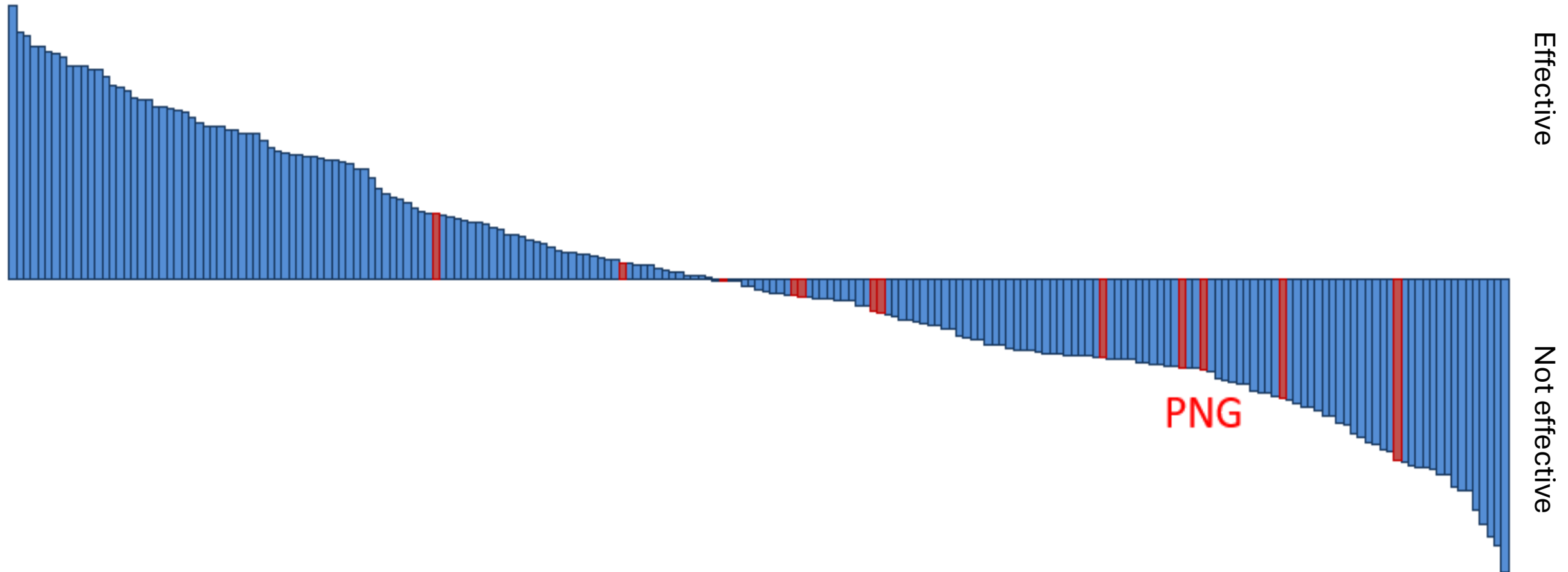
In a large bowl, combine the pumpkin tips with tin beef.

Terence, call your mother for advice.

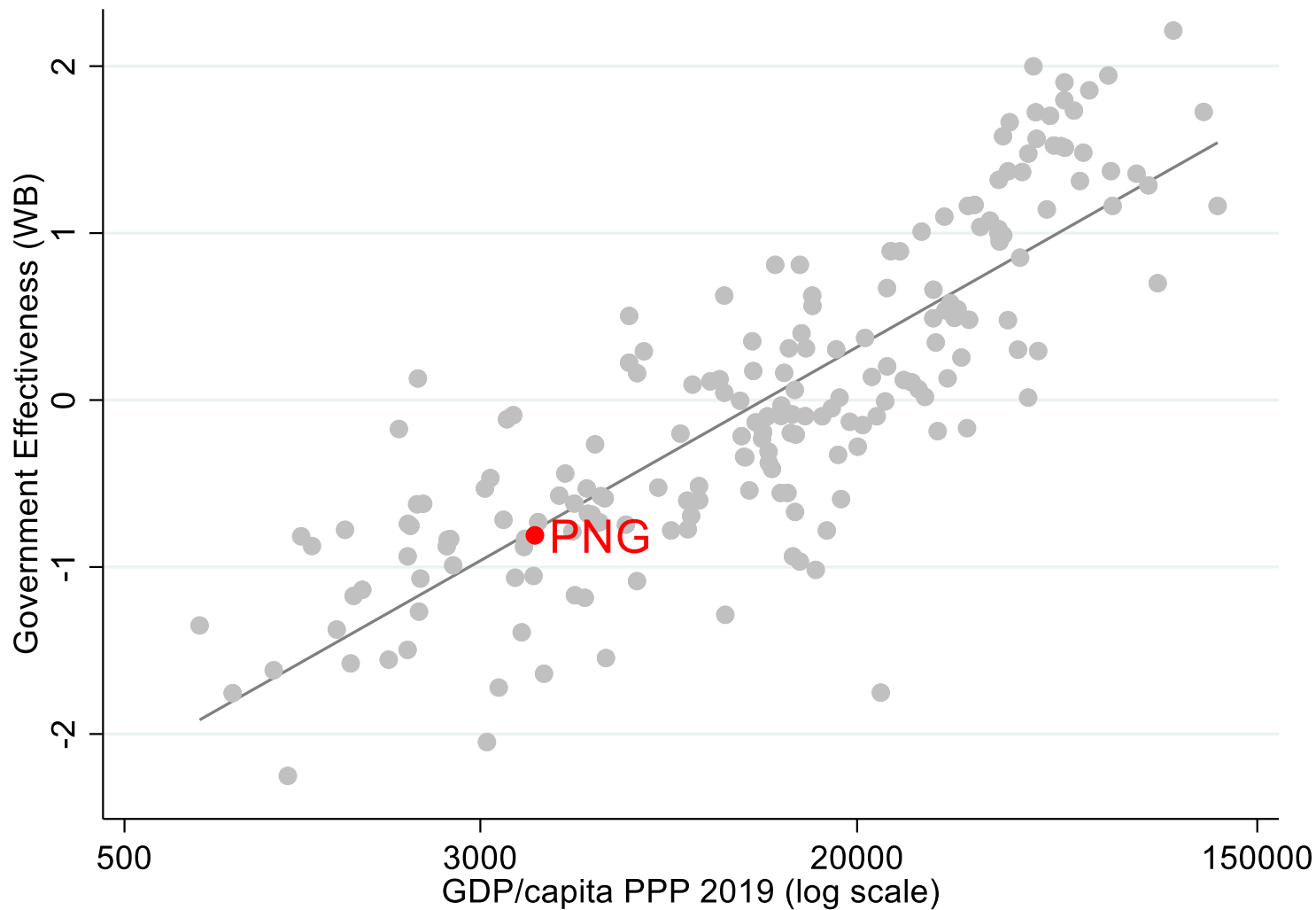
Maybe try something in the microwave?

- I'm not here to provide recipes for success.
- I'm going to talk about possibilities, not certainty.
- My aim is to provide food for thought.

First let's talk about the problem: PNG is poorly governed.



If you don't trust the World Bank, read the headlines of newspapers here.



PNG is not the worst governed country on earth.

It's not the worst governed country in the Pacific.

Governance in PNG is not unusually bad for a country of its level of development.

But governance in PNG is poor.

Not good enough for people of PNG to enjoy the quality of life they deserve.

Before we talk about solutions we need to get a sense of why.

Why governance in PNG is poor: an (overly) parsimonious explanation...



Why is governance in PNG is poor

More than anyone else, politicians play a central role in the governing process.

Meant to make laws. Run government departments.

However, in PNG most politicians pay little attention to the legislative process.

Most ministers either neglect their ministries or use them as tools of patronage.

And most MPs focus most of their time on political manoeuvring and local spending (DSIP/PSIP).

They do not contribute to good national governance



But why do politicians behave this way?



A story that starts with voters: clientelism



When voters free to choose **most** vote for candidates who will help them/family/community directly if elected.

Aka clientelism

Perfectly reasonable:

- Voters have immediate needs.
- State doesn't help meet those needs.
- Voters have no reason to expect elections to change governance. Elections have never done so.
- Collective action problem: only 2 MPs out of 118.

Voters' choices is perfectly reasonable, but it:

Incentivises politicians to focus on the local and neglect the national.

Politicians need to provide *hanmak* to their supporters if they want to win the next election: that's what voters vote for – direct material assistance.

So politicians strive to get their hands on resources for direct material assistance.

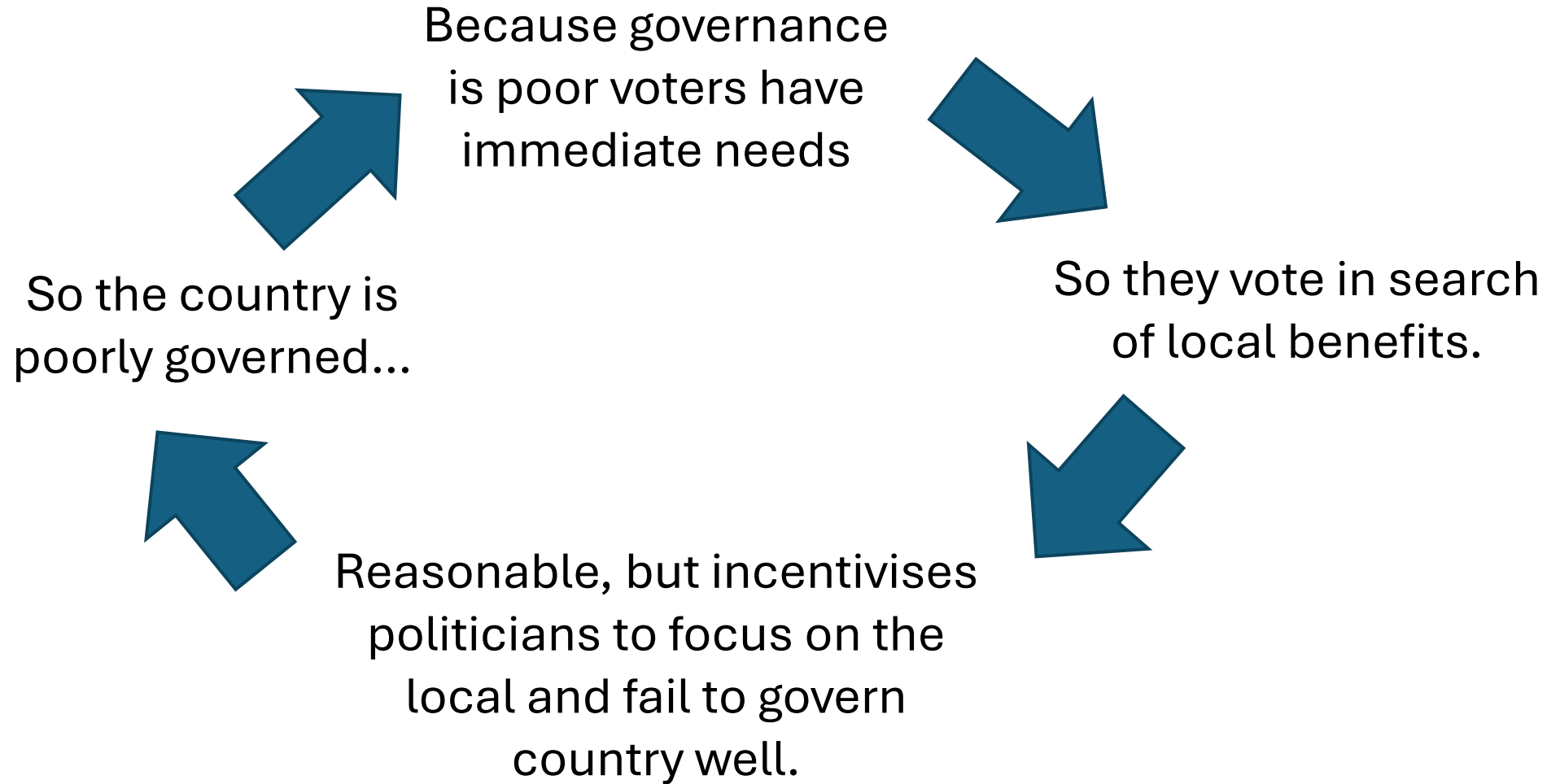
And voters don't vote on the basis of national governance so politicians know they can ignore or exploit national governance.

Reformers face their own collective action problem. A few MPs cannot change much.

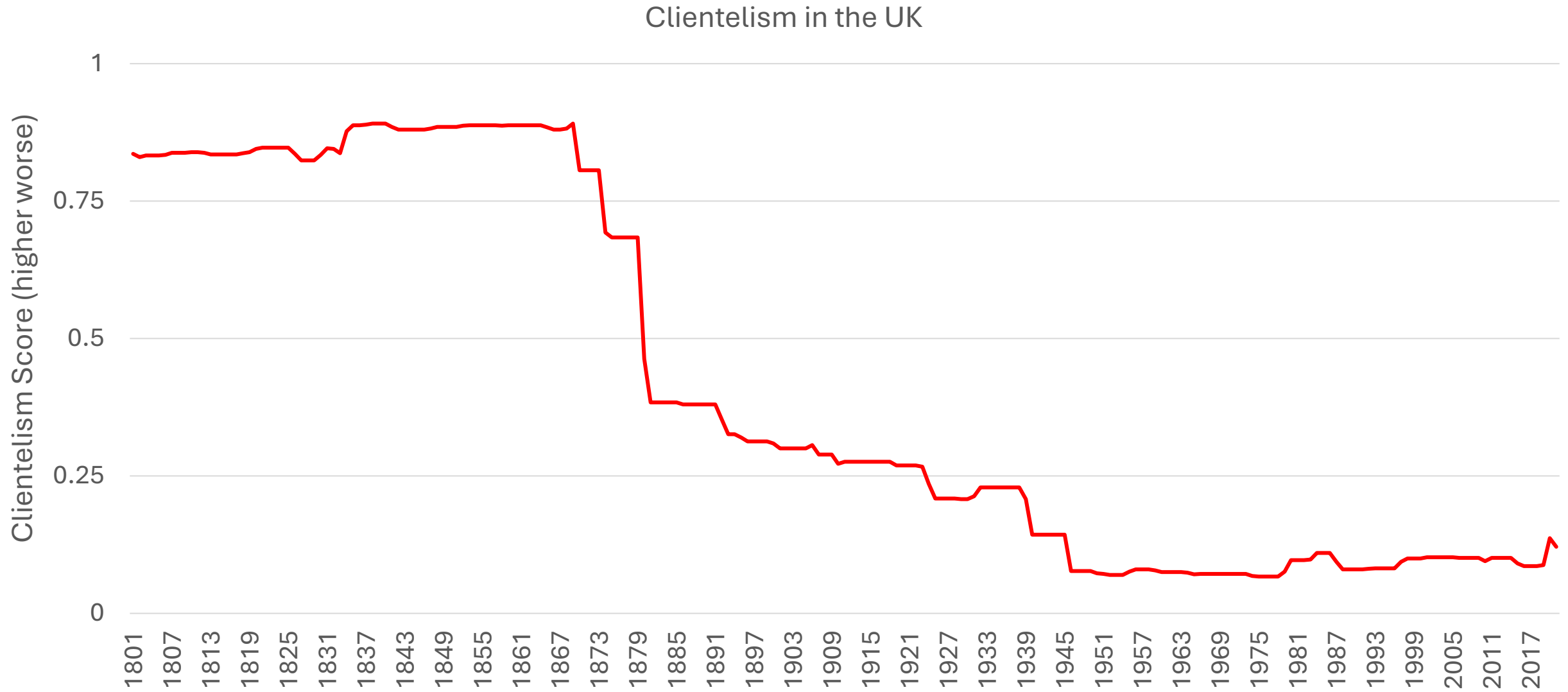
And so the country is poorly governed.

More to the story – but that is the central dynamic.

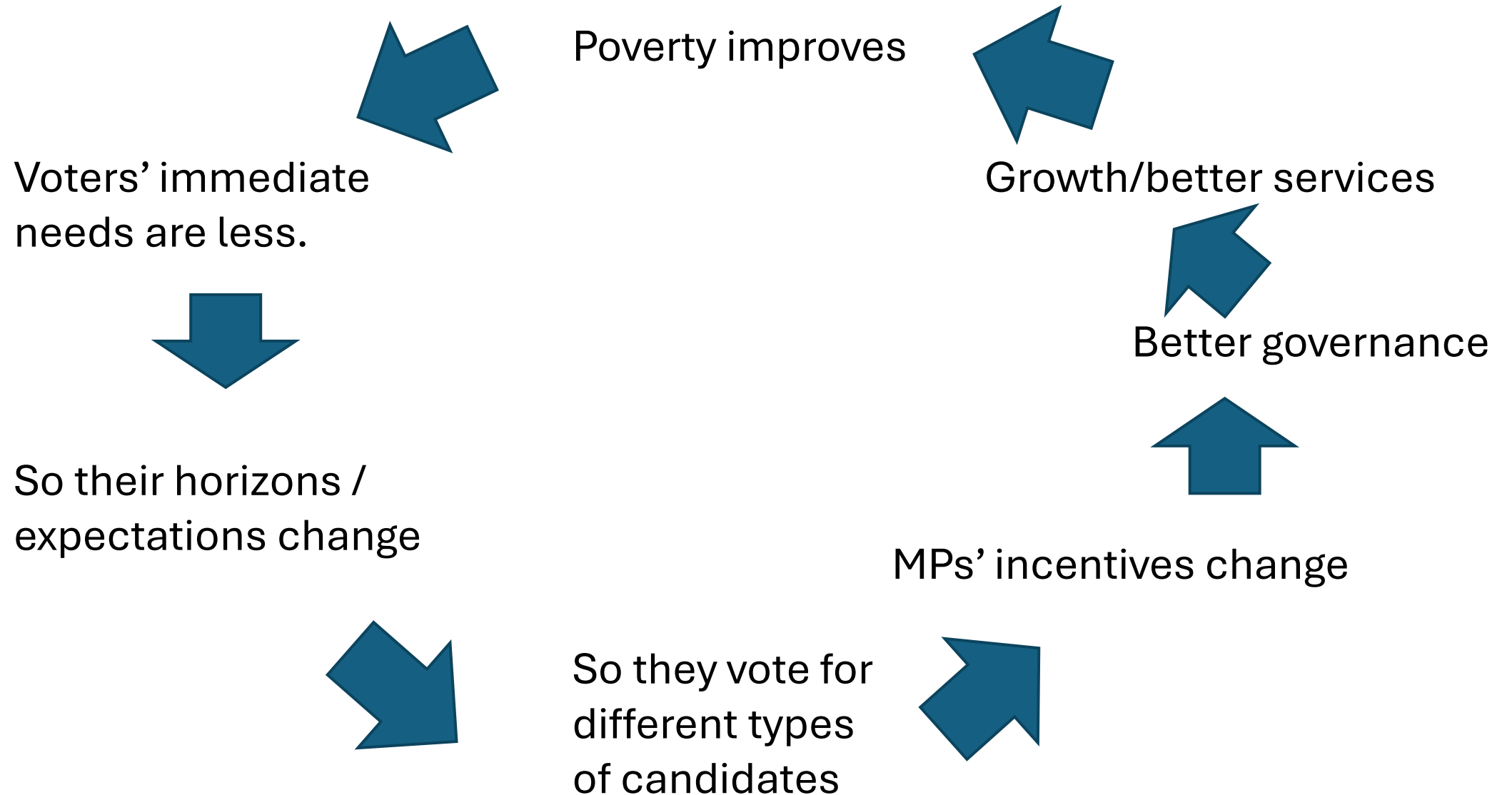
Unfortunately the situation is also a trap...the clientelism trap.



That's the bad news: but countries don't stay clientelist forever...can escape



It might be possible to get onto a virtuous cycle



Change can occur: but how?

Possible pathways to better governance in PNG:

1. The modest improvement approach
2. Orthodox political engineering
3. Unorthodox political engineering
4. The social movement approach

I'm not here to tell you which one is best.

I will talk about limitations as well as potential.

But change is possible.

Pathways to better governance:

1. The modest improvement approach

2. Orthodox political engineering

3. Unorthodox political engineering

4. The social movement approach

The modest improvement approach – small improvements

“Muddling through”

Piecemeal approach: make individual improvements wherever you get the chance.

Small improvements to policy and structures might add up. And maybe a virtuous cycle that promotes better governance and development outcomes.

Main strength of this approach is it is modest: doesn't need a grand transformation.

But sometimes small improvements don't add up to anything much.

Sometimes, muddling though just ends up as muddling.

Lots of small positive changes in PNG post independence. Haven't added up to much.

Pathways to better governance:

1. The modest improvement approach

2. Orthodox political engineering

3. Unorthodox political engineering

4. The social movement approach

Orthodox political engineering

“Political engineering” = changing formal rules of politics to change governance.

“Orthodox” = changing political rules but still representative democracy.

Hope is changes will change political incentives, or political behaviour, for the better.

LPV an example of this: all that was changed was the voting system.

Orthodox change because PNG remained a representative democracy and change just involved change from system used in UK to one similar to that used in Australia (and in PNG prior to independence.)

But has LPV delivered?

Tantalising evidence of voters using preferences to vote in different ways in 2017.

But LPV has not brought major improvements to governance to-date.

Preferential Voting: Popular participation in the elections and representative government

COME ON PING LET'S GO AHEAD... WE NEEDING THE VOTING SYSTEM CHANGED... WE NEEDING SYSTEM IT'S FAIR AN REALLY REPRESENT THE MAJORITY PEOPLE PREFERENCE SYSTEM YES!

PUS!... LON PELES BLO ME AN GAT P'ANT! PLANTI KENDIDEET YAH... HUSGAT I KESIM LILIKLIK PERSEN A VOT GAI WIN... KEMANE SYSTEM STREET YAH

EM NAU YUKI IMAG GAT WANPELA VOT SYSTEM WE WANPELA TRUPE TASOL INO DIMP WEN NATING A?

NAU YUKI MAS KESIM DISELA 'PREFERENTIAL VOTING SYSTEM'... EM WENGA 'FIRST PAST THE POST' HORSE RACE SYSTEM... ENYAM!

YAH... PLANTI KENDIDEET I SANAP SANAS, SANAP NA BUKAH OL VOT OLSEM LILIKLIK HAP RISEET... ME LESIA... ME LAUK LUKAM VOTING SYSTEM I SENE... HARAGATT I KESIM KEPELA VOT TRU EMBAI KANAP MERGA REPRESENTAM LAUK BLO NGOL PPO, OLSEM WANPELA WOPRA BESRET... SWETT SA !!

MEY I WANNA SEE THE VERY BEST VOTING SYSTEM FOR OUR KIDS' FUTURE... I TEACH KIDS TO BE FAIR, SO PLEASE LEADERS THINK FAIR AND DECIDE IF AIR... THIS PREFERENTIAL VOTING WAY ITS TOO GOOD... ITS FAIR... ITS OUR CHANCE... YES OUR CHOICE... YES !!

EXOUSELIS OL LEADERS... TINGEM GLUT NEIS SENESEN SA... NA FUTURE BLO NG YUKI OL PPO OL BLO NG PHE

F.V. SYSTEM IT'S GOOD... ALL LEADERS MUST WIN MORE THAN 50% OF THE VOTING PUBLIC... NOW THAT'S RIGHT!

LAU DEBA... LAU LIRA SENESE BAKANA... INAI PA VOTE SYSTEM LALONAS AT EMAT FUTURE BE DO LA NAIMO MOMOKAND... UIMUJE KANOKNAD?

HELLO, MESTA MP... PLEASE HEAR THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE... WE'RE LOOKING FOR REAL CHANGE... YES, SIR

WHEN THE PREFFERS VOTE SYSTEM IT COMES IN SOME GOOD LEADERS GOT CHANGE TA... YOU SEE LEADERS THEY GOT TRU HEART FOR THE PEOPLES... AHA

THIS PREFERENS VOTE SYSTEM ITS THE SMART THING TO DO... STABILITY IT SCAM COME BUSINESS OLIMATE ITS GEMMA FLOURISH... AND SMART GUYS LIKE WE WILL STAY IN PHE... OH YEAH

NA SAPOS VOTING-SYSTEM KESIM OVER-KOL, BAI ANPELA OL TARANGU LAIN I HARABAS TRU LONG VOT... YU LUKAM NUPELA BELESI I KANAP TAIM ANPELA I GAT SANS LONG VOTIM BUTPELA CANDIDATE

The Proposed legislation to change the voting system from the current 'First Past the Post' to the Preferential Voting system was tabled in Parliament in August 2001 and on August 21st the First Vote was successfully passed.

80 Members of Parliament voted in support of the proposed changes to the Electoral Laws. We thank all the 80 MPs for supporting the First Vote.

The Second and Final Vote will take place anytime after November 2001, which if successful will result in these proposed changes becoming Law.

We ask all MPs to give their support again and vote for the passage of these changes in the Second and Final Vote.

Our appreciation is extended to the many people, individuals, groups and organisations that support the Preferential Voting system.

Please continue your support and lobby your MPs to vote YES to the Second and Final Vote.

Preferential Voting - Majority Support for Winning Candidate - Encourages Good Leadership and Responsible Government - Fairer and Better Representation by far.

Preferential VOTING
Change for a better future!

Electoral Reform Project
Electoral Reform Project Level 6, Pacific Place, P.O. Box 591, Port Moresby
Telephone (675) 321 1793 Fax: (675) 321 3716 email: dtaylor@online.net.pg

TI (PNG) Inc and its coalition partners together with the Constitutional Development Commission and Electoral Commission bringing education and awareness on the constitutional reforms to the people.

SUPPORTED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION

Voters voting directly for a president another example of orthodox political engineering. Big change, but presidential system still a form of representative democracy and a conventional model used in other countries.



Unlike LPV, would certainly change things. But would they be positive changes?

Pathways to better governance

1. The modest improvement approach

2. Orthodox political engineering

3. Unorthodox political engineering

4. The social movement approach

Unorthodox political engineering

“Political engineering” because still changing rules governing politics.

“Unorthodox” because the rules are being changed in more radical ways.

Also “unorthodox” because you make changes that are not common elsewhere.

Typically you add other democratic processes to representative democracy.



Unorthodox political engineering

Participatory budgeting an example.

In some Brazilian cities communities were given a formal & fair voice how some of city budget was spent.

Unorthodox change because grafted a new democratic process (akin to direct democracy) onto an existing one (representative democracy). And no precedent.

Didn't solve all of Brazil's problems, but helped reduce clientelism and improve services. Not a cure, but helped.

Perhaps PNG do the same with DSIP?

But is there capacity?

Would politicians vote for it?



Pathways to better governance:

1. The modest improvement approach
2. The political engineering approach – part 1 orthodox
3. The political engineering approach – part 2 unorthodox
- 4. The social movement approach**

Nature of clientelism trap suggests improvements will require:

1. Changing voters' views of what is possible.
2. Collective action across electorates.
3. This will almost certainly need political parties.
4. But parties will need to be different from current ones.
5. Parties will need to be founded in social movements.

Has this ever happened anywhere?

Yes! In just about every well-governed democracy.



But could it happen in PNG?

Most other places where social movement driven change has occurred have been mostly urban and have been through something akin to the Industrial Revolution.

Industrial revolution = a period in which rapid urbanisation and major economic change meant traditional ties often replaced with new forms of association. New forms of association brought new possibilities for social movements.

But PNG is mostly rural (only 13% urban), often remote, usually traditional ties (clan, family, community) strong.

Papua New Guinea is not going to go through an Industrial Revolution any time soon.

PNG seems like a hard place for social movements to grow nationwide.

However:

Now have new technologies – social media for example – which might bring new possibilities for organising social movements even in a country like PNG.

And there are small NGOs already. And many inspired people, including here at UPNG.

Also, PNG is mostly a democracy: this makes it much easier for social movements to organise than in non-democratic countries.

So perhaps social movement driven change is possible?

Or perhaps it isn't...

Does this all sound complicated?

Not a recipe for success.

Food for thought.

A menu of ideas.

You can choose more than one. (Put potato chips on pizza if you want.)

And I've had to talk about challenges so as to be honest.

But there are always challenges.

And despite them, change can come.

Questions?



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